

# PowerLines

May 2023

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

### EASTERN ILLINI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

**June 8, 2023**

Thursday, June 8, 2023

Iroquois County Fairgrounds 4-H Building

Registration and Chicken Dinner: 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Business Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Notice is hereby given that the 36th Annual Meeting of Members of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will be held on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Iroquois County Fairgrounds in the 4-H Building. The meeting will be called to order at 6:00 p.m. and action will be taken on the following:

1. The reports of officers, directors, and President/CEO.
2. The election of three directors, one each from Directorate Districts 2, 5, 9.
3. In connection with the election of directors, the following candidates have been nominated by petitions: Mark Slagel of Strawn, District 2; Kevin Moore of Hoopeston, District 5; and Lauri Quick of Tolono, District 9.
4. To consider and transact all other business which may properly come before said meeting or any adjournment(s) thereof.



**Steve Meenen**

Secretary/Treasurer

#### In this issue:

- Eastern Illini to install new meters in July
- Eastern Illini board member responsibilities
- 2023 Director Candidates
- Work safely with chainsaws
- Play it safe when operating large equipment
- 2023 Annual Meeting Events

#### You are invited to:

### 2023 ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS

June 1: Tuscola Community Bldg.

June 6: Ford Co. Fairgrounds

June 8: Iroquois Co. Fairgrounds

#### Chicken Dinner:

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Business Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

#### REGISTER TODAY!

[www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)

or

800-824-5102

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative \* 330 W. Ottawa \* Paxton, IL \* 60957

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# COLLECTING AND TRANSMITTING DATA FASTER AND MORE RELIABLY

## Eastern Illini to install new meters in July

Beginning in July, Eastern Illini will be replacing meters throughout our service territory. The installation of new meters will begin in Iroquois County and continue until all meters have been replaced. The goal is to have all the new meters in place by the end of 2023.

### HOW WILL THE METERS BE REPLACED

You will receive communication in advance that the new meters are being replaced in your area. After you've been notified, a meter installation technician will knock on your door to let you know they are installing the new meter at your location. If you're not home, they will leave a hang tag on your door, so you know they have been there.

You don't need to be home when the meter is replaced. When you return home you will find the hang tag on your door, and the clock on your microwave may be blinking and need to be reset. You don't have to do anything in advance of getting the new meter. Most meters are located outdoors, so the technician will remove the old meter and install the new meter in a matter of less than 30 minutes.

*According to Brad Smith, Vice President of Operations and Engineering, the new meters are part of Eastern Illini's on-going commitment to responsiveness and reliability. These meters are an investment in our distribution system and future automation.*

### WHY ARE NEW METERS NEEDED?

We installed most of the current meters between 2005 and 2008, over 15 years ago. They have served us well. The existing meters were state-of-the-art at the time they were installed. Technology has significantly advanced and the new meters have many more features that will benefit the cooperative as well as members.



### HOW DOES THE NEW METER BENEFIT EASTERN ILLINI MEMBERS?

In addition to more quickly getting service installed or disconnected, outage time may be reduced because our team will know instantly when power is out and can quickly dispatch a crew to the site. The new meters report variances in voltage and other line conditions that help us maintain a more reliable power distribution system.

Through SmartHub, a free service from Eastern Illini, you can receive more timely information about your energy consumption to help you make wise decisions about how you use energy. Sign up for SmartHub on the Eastern Illini website: [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)

### WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW METERS?

The new meters, made by Sensus, collect energy consumption, and power quality data and then transmit that data to the co-op. Your new meter records energy usage in 15-minute intervals. You can log on to SmartHub to view this information, which allows you to determine specifics regarding your energy use. Eastern Illini will have up-to-the minute knowledge of what's going on in the service territory.

### HOW DO THE NEW METERS WORK?

EIEC reads the meter remotely from our offices. Information from the meter is transmitted to the co-op via a licensed, encrypted, secure system. The collected data includes usage readings, voltage levels, and outage/blink information. No personal information about members is stored inside the meter, and it can't identify or control individual appliance use. The meter records whole-house energy use.

### DO THE NEW METERS KNOW WHEN THERE IS A POWER OUTAGE?

Yes, in most cases. The new meters report outages, voltage variances, and other line conditions without being prompted by our office.

However, we still recommend that you report your own outages through SmartHub or by calling 800-824-5102 to ensure that your outage is documented.

Paul Crutcher, Eastern Illini Engineer and project manager for the new meter installation project, shared that automation and other distribution system intelligence has the ability to integrate with other sensors, such as fault indicators. By incorporating this additional information, Eastern Illini will have enhanced troubleshooting capabilities during outages and the end result is faster restoration times.

Also in the not too distant future, we may integrate automating and remote switching which will help reduce the size and scope of outages.

We are excited about the numerous advantages of the new meters. They will bring increased efficiency and reliability. As the saying goes, knowledge is power and for us, knowledge about power is extremely valuable.

If you have questions or concerns about the new meters or about installation, you can always call us at 800-824-5102.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

# Eastern Illini board member responsibilities

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative has nine co-op members who serve on the board of directors. Directors advocate for the cooperative business model and establish the strategic direction of the electric cooperative.

Directors attend all regular monthly board meetings, usually held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative office in Paxton.

Directors also attend special board meetings, committee meetings, and EIEC annual meeting events. Other meetings directors attend include educational seminars.

Directors are required by Bylaw to complete their NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Certificate within nine years or three terms. Directors also participate in continuing education offerings and stay updated on financial reports regarding the cooperative as well as current information provided by state and national associations.

A director represents all members of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, not a geographic region or directorate district. In their role, board members are entrusted with the direction and oversight of a co-op's assets and resources. Board members identify potential risks and ensure effective systems are in place to manage risks and leverage opportunities.

Prior to monthly board meetings, board members review, analyze, and evaluate materials and information provided by the President/CEO of Eastern Illini. Cooperative members also approve, maintain, and amend Eastern Illini bylaws, as recommended by the Board.

Directors embrace and ensure that the safety of employees, members, and the public is always a primary objective in all business decisions.

Directors operate with integrity and uphold the mission of providing members with safe and reliable energy solutions and exceptional service.

## 2023 Director Election Candidates

A sample ballot can be viewed at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)



**Directorate District 2**  
**Mark Slagel**

Strawn, IL

Mark Slagel, Strawn, is running for the Eastern Illini Board of Directors. Slagel is running for the seat previously held since 2006 by Tom Schlatter, Chatsworth. Slagel is President of Slagel Manufacturing and farms with his brothers.

Slagel has served on the Strawn Fire Department, Prairie Central School Board and is a member of the Fairbury First Baptist Church and Prairie Central Athletic Boosters.

Slagel and his wife, Suzanne, have four children.



**Directorate District 5**  
**Kevin Moore**

Hoopeston, IL

Kevin Moore has served on the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since 2014.

Moore received the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Board Leadership Director Certificate in 2021.

Moore currently serves as Eastern Illini's alternate director on the Prairie Power Board of Directors.

Kevin and his wife, Kasey, reside near Hoopeston in Vermilion County where he operates a grain farm.



**Directorate District 9**  
**Lauri Quick**

Tolono, IL

Lauri Quick has served on the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since 2018. Quick earned her Board Leadership Certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in 2022. Quick is the EIEC alternate director for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Quick retired from the University of Illinois. Quick is a member of the First Christian Church of Champaign, and is involved in Effingham Performance Center and Cunningham Children's Home. Quick and her husband, David, reside in rural Tolono.





# WEAR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

## Work safely with chainsaws



Chain saws are one of the most widely used power tools at home and in the workplace. They also have the potential to be among the most lethal. Each year, approximately 36,000 people are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries caused by using chainsaws.

When trimming trees, do not trim near power lines. Only line clearance, tree trimmers who have OSHA certification are allowed by law to trim within 10 feet of power lines.

Aside from serious injury or electrocution from contact with or getting too close to an overhead power line or other electrical source, the three most common injuries from chainsaws are caused by kickback, binding, and pull-in.

**Kickback** occurs when the chain's teeth catch on something as they rotate around the tip of the blade.

It may also happen when the nose strikes another object, starts to bore a cut improperly or catches the bottom or side of a cut while being reinserted.

**Binding** (or pinching) occurs when the material clamps down and stalls the cutting chain.

**Pull-in** happens when the chain at the bottom of the bar stops suddenly due to pinching or striking a foreign object, which can draw the saw forward.

Basic safety tips include:

- Read the owner's manual before operating a chainsaw.
- Choose the proper size and type of chainsaw for the job.
- Be sure that bystanders maintain a safe distance from cutting activities.

- Check for hazards near the job, such as power lines, poles, or other cables.

When trimming trees and branches:

- Take extra care when cutting branches that have been bent, twisted, hung up on or caught under another object under high wind.
- Realize that branches and trees react in different ways when they are cut, depending on the type, age, and condition of the tree, as well as external factors such as weather and wind speed/direction.

When using a chainsaw always wear Personal Protective Equipment.

The first vital piece of safety equipment you should wear is eye protection. This is because chainsaws produce chips of wood that can fly up into your face which can put you at risk for a serious eye injury.

Ear protection is considered necessary when using a chainsaw as noise levels exceed 85dB for long periods of time. Proper gloves are also essential. Proper footwear is also important. Many chainsaw boots are similar to regular work boots with steel toecaps but also incorporate protective fabric in the areas that may possibly come into contact with the chain. It's also important to wear chainsaw chaps. Injuries to the legs are the single most common type of chainsaw-related injuries. Finally, always wear a helmet or hard hat when using a chainsaw.

Here are some other safety tips to follow when using a chainsaw:

### DO:

- Make sure all safety functions on the saw work properly and are in place.
- Keep the chain clean, sharp, and lubricated with the correct oil.
- Keep the cutting area clear.
- Work with a partner.
- Avoid overhead hazards, such as utility lines or dead, hanging limbs that may fall.
- Be careful of uneven ground.
- Stand to the side of what you're cutting.
- Keep both hands on the saw handles.
- Let the saw come to a complete stop before reaching for the chain or bar.
- Turn off the saw or activate the chain brake when carrying the saw.
- Ensure the saw is well-maintained and in proper working order.

### DO NOT:

- Do not operate a saw alone.
- Do not wear loose clothing.
- Do not use the tip to cut.
- Do not cut with a chainsaw above shoulder height.
- Do not refuel a hot saw.

Remember, an injury is much more inconvenient, painful, and costly than taking the time to do the job safely.

# MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE WHEN WORKING NEAR POWER LINES

## Play it safe when operating large equipment

Millions of workers operate large equipment every day. Examples include cranes, dump trucks, farm equipment, bucket trucks, hydraulic lifts, and concrete trucks. If the equipment you are operating raises or extends, follow OSHA's rules for the minimum approach distance to power lines.

If you are planning to work within 20 feet of a power line, most situations require you to contact us, in advance, to deenergize the line. On the farm, examples include loading, unloading, or moving or relocating a grain bin within 20 feet of an overhead line.

Always use a spotter when equipment might come near overhead power lines. A spotter's view from the ground provides a much better vantage point than what you can see from the cab.

### BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

When operating heavy equipment, you need to be mindful of the area you are working in and any obstacles you may encounter. Whenever possible, workers should be kept out of areas where

heavy equipment is being used. Operators should be aware of their swing radius, especially when working in tighter spaces, to avoid hitting other workers or other vehicles or equipment in the vicinity.

### ENTERING AND EXITING EQUIPMENT

This one should go without saying, but based on the number of injuries workers suffer each year, there is a right and a wrong way to mount and dismount from heavy equipment. When climbing onto equipment, always maintain three points of contact just like you do when climbing a ladder. Never carry anything with you as you enter or exit the cab. Never jump out of the cab or off the equipment to exit. Never enter or exit equipment that is moving or in operation. Make sure you completely shut off the equipment, engage the parking brake and release any pressure from hydraulic controls. Make sure to take the keys with you to avoid any unauthorized use.

### INSPECT EQUIPMENT BEFORE USE

Visually inspect heavy equipment before each use to ensure it's in good operating condition. Check tires and tracks for any

wear and damage. At the very least, you should check fluid levels such as engine oil and hydraulic fluids before you start up the equipment for the first time each day. Check hydraulic hoses, buckets, booms and other components for cracks and damage. Make sure all attachments are securely locked into place.

### ONLY USE EQUIPMENT AS INTENDED

Each piece of equipment was designed to perform a specific task. Excavators aren't cranes and wheel loaders weren't made to carry workers in the bucket and used as an aerial lift. Pick the right piece of equipment for the task at hand and use it as the manufacturer intended.

### WEAR YOUR SEATBELT

Those seat belts aren't just a suggestion, they could save your life. In the event the equipment starts to tip or roll over, the seatbelt is probably going to keep you alive. If equipment starts to tip or roll over, you might instinctively be compelled to jump out of the cab - avoid doing that as you might get caught or flung out and seriously injured.

## Stay safe around energized lines



# Look up and Live



800-824-5102  
[www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)

*You're invited*

## EASTERN ILLINI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS

Chicken Dinner: 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Business Meeting: 6:00 p.m.



*Hope to see you there!*

**JUNE 1: TUSCOLA COMMUNITY BLDG.**  
**JUNE 6: FORD CO. FAIRGROUNDS**  
**JUNE 8: IROQUOIS CO. FAIRGROUNDS**



Register at **[www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)** or call us at  
**800-824-5102** to let us know you are attending