

# PowerLines

January 2020

## Welcome to a new decade and 2020

Welcome to a new decade and the year 2020! The last decade certainly was unique. What do you think this decade will have in store for us?

### 2019 Brief Review

The weather during 2019 seemingly deviated from the typical patterns that we have become accustomed to. Even with the unusual weather, your cooperative will end the year approximately 3% above the budgeted kWh sales. We did not meet our safety goal of zero lost time incidents, and fell just short of our annual reliability target, mainly due to severe storm events in May and June, along with transmission supplier outages to our substations.

Your cooperative will meet its annual financial goals, and the Board has approved partial use of the net operating margins to provide the financial flexibility to decrease 2020 wholesale power costs from Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI).

### Looking forward to 2020

Three of our director districts (1/3 of the total) will be up for election in 2020. More information will be provided in future issues, on our website, and in other social media formats. If you are interested in additional information about the election process, please contact us.

PPI budgeted power costs are forecasted to be less in 2020 than those budgeted

during 2019. This decrease will be reflected in reduced power cost adjustment (PCA) charges in 2020.

For the past five years I have been able to inform you that the EIEC distribution portion of your rates would not increase. However, this year, there will be a slight increase in base charges effective with the January usage that is billed in early February. Please refer to the more detailed information on page 2. The increase for a typical Rate 1 member with a 1,000 kWh per month usage is approximately 1.4%.

We are working with an engineering consulting firm to complete a rate study in the first half of the year. We expect this study to recommend incremental increases over time to offset rising fixed expenses and to provide adequate capital and cash flow to maintain and improve the distribution delivery system. We will keep you informed as this study progresses, and of any action taken by the Board of Directors.

On behalf of your cooperative employees and directors, we thank you, and wish you all a happy, safe, and successful 2020, the first year of a new decade!

Sincerely,

*Bob Hunzinger*



**MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT**

## In this issue:

- Base rate increase in February
- You're more than a member
- Smart technologies save money
- Generators
- Help keep line workers safe

## How do you want to save today?



Local Deals  
Pharmacy Discounts  
Cash Back Online  
Hotel Savings

Visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) to register and start saving today.

## Youth to Washington

June 19 - 26, 2020

Attention sophomores and juniors!  
Apply now for the 2020 Youth to Washington trip. Apply at [eiec.coop](http://eiec.coop) by Jan. 31. For more information, contact Gayle Ford at 217-379-0423.

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

# Details on base charge changes

Each month your electric bill has a base rate charge listed under CURRENT BILL INFORMATION and Distribution. You will find the base charge listed on the back side of your bill.

The base charge is a set monthly charge, like a monthly access fee you might pay for your phone or cable service. Regardless of how many kilowatt-hours are used, each member pays a fair share of the cost of having dependable service ready for you to use.

The base charge is a recurring monthly charge that assists in recovering a portion of the fixed costs associated

This is significantly less than the large investor-owned utilities in our communities who average 32 customers per mile of line, resulting in slightly higher operating costs for EIEC. On average, other Illinois cooperatives have 5 members per mile of line.

Even though EIEC has less members per mile of line, the cooperative has always found innovative ways to have competitive rates, while still providing you with safe and reliable electric service.

The chart below shows by rate category the changes in the base rate charge beginning with the February bill.

## BASE RATE CHANGES BY RATE CATEGORY

RATE CATEGORY	RATE	CLASSIFICATION	CURRENT	NEW
1	Residential use	General Service	\$40.00	\$42.50
5	3-phase 415V	General Service	\$75.00	\$80.00
7	Residential use	Residential Prepaid	\$40.00	\$42.50
8	3-phase 415V	Electric Heat	\$75.00	\$80.00
18	Single-phase	Large Use	\$55.00	\$58.00
20	Single-phase 230V	Electric Heat	\$50.00	\$53.00

*Other rate categories not listed here may see a slight base charge increase.*

with the delivery of electric service to each meter location. These costs are incurred by the cooperative regardless of the amount of energy that is consumed at each meter location.

The base charge component includes a portion of the distribution wire expense for metering, transformers, and general operations. Also covered in the base charge is rights of way maintenance, billing, labor, accounting, member care, and meter reading. It's everything it takes to bring electricity to you.

The last time the base charge increased was 2013. Beginning with the February bill, members will see an increase in the base charge amount.

The base charge is also influenced by the number of members the co-op has per mile of line. EIEC has an average of 3 members per mile of line.

### How does the base rate charge of Eastern Illini compare with other electric co-ops in Illinois?

There are 23 other electric cooperatives in Illinois. The base rate charge for each of these other co-ops varies as does the rate per kWh. The highest base rate charge in the state is \$65.00 and the lowest is \$18.00. The average base rate charge among Illinois cooperatives is just under \$38.77.

### What can I do to manage my energy use and my monthly electric bill?

SmartHub is a free service from Eastern Illini that gives you insight into your energy by day, month, and year. SmartHub also provides the ability to pay your bill on line, report an outage, and compare usage over time.

Give us a call at 1-800-824-5102 with any base rate charge change questions or any other questions about your account.

**REDUCE YOUR HEATING COSTS**  
this winter



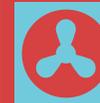
### LOWER THE WATER TEMP

You can lower your energy costs by 3 to 5% by lowering your water temperature by 10 degrees (120 degrees is the ideal temperature).



### TURN DOWN THE THERMOSTAT (EVEN JUST A SMIDGE)

For every degree you turn down your thermostat, you can save about 3% on you utility bill.



### MINIMIZE EXHAUST FAN USE

Exhaust fans that vent outside also take heat from your home, so use them only when necessary.



### ADD INSULATION FILM TO WINDOWS

Adding insulation film to your windows keeps heat inside and can lower your heating bill by as much as 14%.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: energy.gov



## MEMBER DRIVEN AND COMMUNITY FOCUSED

# You're more than a member

**Author Anthony J. D'Angelo observed that, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."**

To a large degree, this reflects Eastern Illini's philosophy toward our members and the broader service territory that we serve. As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe energy, there is another equally important part of this equation. Your well-being and that of the larger community that we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a customer; you are a member of our co-op and without you, we would not exist. Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative was founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. Concerned local leaders came together to build this co-op and bring electricity where there

was none. At that time, members of the community understood we were different because they likely knew someone who helped to create the electric co-op. For most people, our founding and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider. But we are not. We are a co-op that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we can do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you and that of the larger community to guide our long-term decisions. Therefore, we hold annual meetings and other events throughout the year.

We strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently. We're always looking to explore more options that will help you manage your energy. In short, we are always seeking to keep pace with the

changing energy environment, evolving technology and shifting member expectations. EIEC members help guide important co-op decisions that improve and enrich the community. We value the perspective of our board members, who are members of the co-op and community – just like you.

As a local business, we have a stake in the community. Through our programs like Empowering Education Grants for school districts in our service territory and the sponsorship of Youth to Washington trips for high school students, we continue to support local communities in our service area.

While the times may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. We view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and in the future. At Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, we're member driven and community focused.

## Going the Extra Mile

Electric cooperatives maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other types of electric utilities. Even though they serve fewer consumers and acquire less revenue, electric co-ops always go the extra mile to power the communities they serve.



**Electric Co-ops**



Consumers served per mile: **8**  
Revenue: **\$19,000**

**Other Electric Utilities**



Consumers served per mile: **32**  
Revenue: **\$79,000**

# WAYS TO IMPACT YOUR ENERGY BILL

## Smart technologies save money

Some smart devices for your home can help save money. Others are designed for convenience – like phone apps you use remotely to close your garage door, unlock your door or see who is on your front porch. Using smart devices that can impact your energy bill won't make you rich, but they can help lower bills each month, which adds up over time. Here are some devices to consider:

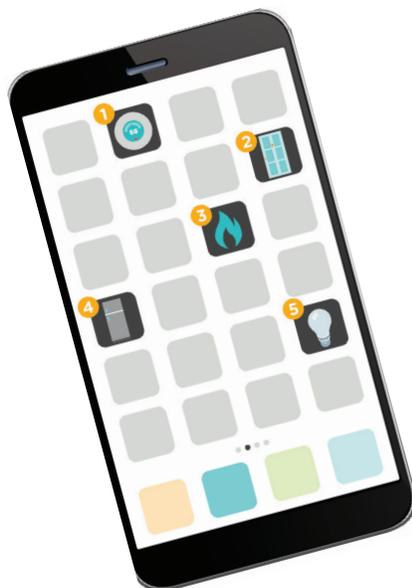
### Smart thermostat

A smart thermostat studies your heating and cooling trends over time and can help reduce your energy bill by optimizing energy-saving tactics. You can adjust the temperature of your home remotely and know how much energy you are using to heat or cool your home in real time. While a programmable thermostat can help save money, a smart version earns its name by all the extra things it can do above and beyond programming. In either case, adjusting your thermostat up (air conditioning) or down (furnace) just one degree can make a difference in your utility bill. Households can save up to 3 percent on the heating and cooling portion of their bill by making that adjustment.

### Smart light bulbs/lighting

The first way to save money on lighting comes from good old-fashioned smarts and not a literal smart bulb, per se. Look around and see what kind of light bulbs you have in your house. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with Energy Star versions, you can save as much as \$75 a year.

Upgraded light bulbs don't need replaced as often. For example, a 60-watt incandescent bulb lasts an average of 1,000 hours, while a 12-watt LED bulb has an average life span of 25,000 hours. Then there are smart light bulbs, which allow you to "schedule" lights and control them



- 1 Smart Thermostat Apps:** Geofencing is great enhancement for smart thermostat apps. Set a boundary with your smartphone and when you leave the boundary, the thermostat switches to away or return mode.
- 2 Smart Security Apps:** Video doorbells are becoming increasingly popular, allowing consumers to keep a watchful eye from anywhere. Smart security apps send alerts to signal activity outside your home, giving you peace of mind.
- 3 Smart Smoke and CO Sensor Apps:** These apps have the ability to send alerts, conduct status checks and silence alarms – even when you're away.
- 4 Smart Appliance Apps:** App functionality depends on the appliance. Refrigerator cameras allow you to see what needs to be stocked (while grocery shopping!), and smart dryers can sense when electric use is high and turn off.
- 5 Smart Lighting Apps:** Control lighting options for individual rooms, adjust brightness and color, create lighting scenes based on mood – all from the convenience of your smartphone.

remotely. This could save you a little money if you or someone in your house is always leaving the lights on.

### Smart window coverings

Smart window coverings are pricey, but they can help save money on energy bills over time. For example, they allow you to lower blinds on a hot, sunny day even if you're not home, which may prevent your air conditioner from kicking on.

About 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters a home to become heat, according to energy.gov. Conversely, about 30 percent of a home's heating energy is lost through windows, and the efficient use of window coverings can reduce energy loss when it is cold outside.

### Smart water valves

According to the U.S. EPA, an average household's water leaks can account for 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Collectively, that's 1 trillion gallons of water each year in the U.S.!

Smart leak sensors monitor leaks under sinks, behind toilets and near other water sources in a home. Like most smart home devices, the sensors can be linked to a smartphone to alert you of leaks. There are also smart water valves designed for the main water line for catastrophes like bursting pipes, although these are pricey and require professional installation.

### Smart plugs

This device plugs into a regular outlet and allows you to control appliances remotely via a phone application. Most smart plugs track energy use so you can see how efficient (or inefficient) an appliance is. Some have a convenient away feature that allows you to program lights.

# What you need to know about generators

Generators are classified by how much power or watts they can produce. That wattage measurement is important because it determines how many devices you can power.

According to Consumer Reports (CR), the typical home requires 5,000 watts to cover the basics.

When considering which generator to buy, decide what you can't live without when the power is out. Then add up the wattages to get an idea of how much power you will need.

For example, a refrigerator typically takes 600 watts to run; a sump pump requires 750 to 1,500 watts; a portable heater can take 1,500 watts; and lights can require from 60 to 600 watts (depending on how many you power and the size of your home).

Here is some general information about supplemental power sources:

### Portable generator

Because these usually run on gasoline, they are extremely dangerous since they can produce carbon monoxide (CO). Because of that, never run these indoors or in an enclosed space and always keep them at least 20 feet from your home when operating them. Additionally, do not use them in damp or wet conditions. Some newer models feature a built-in CO sensor that triggers an automatic shut-off feature if it detects CO buildup. Other advanced models are designed to emit less poisonous fumes; both of these safety features help to save lives. Prices range from \$400 to \$1,000.

### Inverter generator

This type of generator has a more complex engine than its portable cousin. Because of that, inverter generators usually cost more than portable versions. They are much quieter than portable generators since they throttle up and down to match demand.

They also boast more advanced exhaust systems, which also helps with excessive noise levels.

Inverter generators typically cost \$500 to \$4,000, and if you pick this kind of generator, you should follow the same safety precautions as with a portable version.

### Standby generator

This is the most expensive type of generator and models range from 5,000 to 20,000 watts. Standby generators are also the most convenient, since they are permanently mounted and they kick on automatically when the power goes out. They run on propane or natural gas and cost \$3,000 to \$6,000, not including installation. Installing them is definitely not something you can do yourself; they should be installed by an electrician.

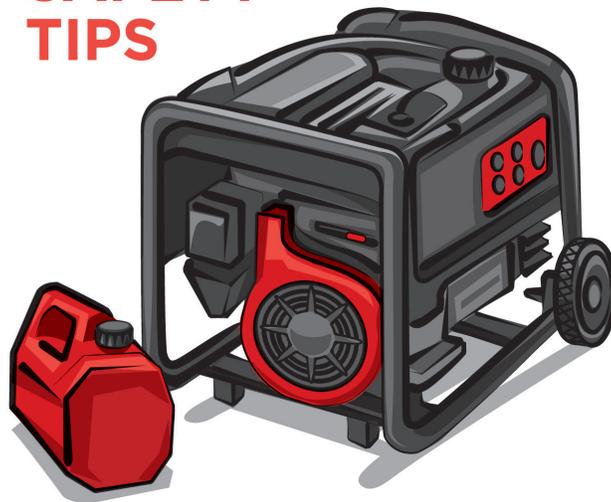
### Portable power stations

These stations don't use gasoline or propane; instead they are powered by a battery that can be charged by electricity or by a solar.

They do usually cost more than traditional portable generators at a price of \$750 to \$3,000. They are extremely quiet and don't produce fuel emissions so you can use them indoors.

The downside is they won't power as many appliances as portable generators and they don't run for an extended period of time.

## GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS



**N**ever connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

### Stationary Generator:

An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

### Portable Generator:

Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is **deadly**.

Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

Start the generator first **before** connecting appliances.

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**Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative partners with Dwain and Eric Dippel of Dippel Electric in Buckley, IL. Give them a call at 217-841-2159 and they can provide details on Briggs and Stratton generators along with an estimate for installation.**

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# HELP KEEP ELECTRIC **LINE WORKERS** **SAFE**



**Be patient** when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.



## **ZONE IN** ON SAFETY



Respect roadside work crews.



Don't drive distracted.  
Reduce your speed.  
Change lanes.

1 work zone crash occurs every **5.4 minutes**



70 work zone crashes result in **injuries each day**



12 work zone crashes result in at least **1 fatality each week**



**Never plug a generator into a wall outlet** in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line could **electrocute a utility worker** or neighbor.



**DON'T** post signs on utility poles.

Foreign objects can tear utility workers' **protective clothing**, which is the first line of protection from an **electric shock**.



Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!

