

PowerLines

August 2018

Dog Days of Summer

The calendar has turned to August and crops are rapidly maturing. Some refer to the early to mid-August hot and humid weather as the dog days of summer (what did dogs do to deserve this comparison). Students will soon be returning to school and will start participating in related activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jerry Haile, and his wife Cindy. Jerry recently retired from EIEC after nearly 30 years of service! Jerry held various positions during his tenure (the last of which was an area serviceman), all of which involved daily contact with members. Thank you, Jerry, for your loyalty, dedication, and hard work on behalf of members over many years, and for your friendship. Jerry's efforts moved the cooperative forward in many areas. We wish them good health and the best in retirement.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

At the June EIEC Board meeting, your Directors voted to both allocate and pay out another round of capital credits to members. These capital credits represent members' contribution to equity in EIEC. This equity provides funding to help operate, maintain, and upgrade cooperative facilities, while helping to reduce borrowing costs. Member economic participation is one of the seven cooperative principles that contribute to a unique business model.

The amount of your equity contribution for the prior year is shown annually on the August bill statement. Take a moment and look for your 2017 calendar year allocation on your August statement. In

the cooperative not-for-profit business model, current allocated margins (such as 2017 above) are returned to the members in a future period, typically within 25 – 30 years, based on your board of directors' assessment of the financial condition of your cooperative at that time.

This coming November, EIEC will return nearly \$1.6 million in capital credits in cash to members from amounts that were previously allocated and capital credits will have been returned to the members for years up to and including 1991. We are progressing toward achieving a 25-year payback cycle by 2020.

EIEC and its predecessor co-ops have paid back more than \$17.5 million to members since our formation over 80 years ago.

If you have questions about the capital credit process or anything else, please give us a call at 800-854-5102. We are happy to assist.

Halfway through the year, EIEC energy sales to members are ahead of budget by nearly 8 percent, and expenses to date are below budget as well. We will keep you informed of Board decisions on various options that may be considered to utilize any surplus margins, should this trend continue.

Thank you for allowing EIEC to be your local and trusted energy provider.

Please stay cool and safe!

Bob Hunzinger

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SmartHub is your online and app portal to:

- View and pay your bill
- Report an outage
- Track your electric use
- Update your account info

Visit www.eiec.coop to get started!

Capital Credit

Allocation on Bills

Check your electric bill included in this mailing for your 2017 capital credit allocation.

Allocations are made for all members based on our overall financial condition and the amount spent on electricity relative to our margins.

Allocations cannot be applied to your electric bill, or used as payment for any other services.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

Enhancing Electric Resiliency

According to a recent reliability report, 67% of electrical outage minutes were weather related, with contributing factors of lightning (6%), weather (31%), and vegetation (30%), typically due to wind, ice, or snow encountering power lines, poles and transformers.

Resiliency of the grid is an important concept being discussed in the electric industry today. This concept recently made headlines in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which caused extraordinary damage to Puerto Rico's electric grid resulting in the longest sustained outage in U.S. history. Lack of resiliency became the go-to phrase to describe Puerto Rico's grid. Here in Illinois, what does grid resiliency mean for you?

Resiliency is many things – it's reliability in your electric service, it's our ability to efficiently restore your power, it's being able to meet the demands of new technology and it's how we serve you with various generation sources without skipping a beat. Ultimately, resiliency is how we deliver on our promise to improve your quality of life.

When it comes to having a resilient electric grid, it begins with a system that is designed and built to withstand high winds, powerful storms, cybersecurity threats and other disruptions that could result in outages. A resilient grid is also flexible and adaptable by allowing different types of generation – such as wind, solar, coal and hydro – to seamlessly work together to provide you with safe and reliable power. The way our systems react to advancements in technology - from demand response investments to serving the



needs of electric vehicles – all factor into the resilience of our grid.

Resiliency is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year task. Whether it's the power lines, substations or generation facilities on our grid, it takes proactive maintenance to keep them running smoothly.

With thousands of consumers without power for months, the lack of resiliency in Puerto Rico's power grid wasn't solely caused by hurricane damage; it was the result of years of neglect in taking care of their system and preparing for a worst-case scenario.

In a similar way to how we maintain our vehicles with regular oil changes, inspections and tire rotations, a grid must also be properly maintained.

Maintaining our 4,520 miles of line takes hard working, dedicated employees who make safety and reliability a priority every day. Employees provide service to over 13,500 meters in a ten county area of East Central Illinois.

Throughout the year, our employees regularly conduct pole and line

inspections. Our ultimate goal is to find a problem before it becomes one. If we find a pole that has damage, we replace that pole. Doing so ensures that the pole is as strong – or as resilient – as it can be.

We strive to prevent problems and our goal is to always restore power as quickly as possible. Our aim to have a system that can survive even the most devastating situations.

Living in Illinois, we know that power outages can occur, especially during spring and summer storm seasons. We have confidence in the resiliency of our system to recover from the situation with minor disruption.

In the dictionary, resilience is defined as “the ability to bounce back, recover quickly and go back into shape or position after being stretched.”

When it comes to providing our members with resilient service, this is what we work toward – day in and day out!

Eight Tips for Eating Well

- **Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.**
- **Eat more fish.**
- **Cut down on saturated fat and sugar.**
- **Try to eat less salt – less than 6 grams a day.**
- **Get active.**
- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Drink plenty of water.**
- **Don't skip breakfast.**



Instead of focusing on what to remove from your meals, try adding a few new habits to make your meals healthier!

Add more vegetables the easy and tasty way. Grab the microwavable steam bags from the freezer section and top with your favorite herbs or a sprinkle of cheese.

If you don't enjoy soft vegetables, consider hard vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots or sweet potatoes. Wash, cut into bite-size pieces, toss in a little olive oil, salt,

garlic and herbs then roast at in the oven at 425 degrees F for 20 to 25 minutes for crunchy-tender veggies.

Sautéed veggies, like mushrooms, peppers, onions and other favorites, add flavor to your eggs and provide nutrients to power your day. If you like avocado, add it to your sandwich for a dose of healthy fats and good cholesterol.

Not a fan of vegetables at all? Consider hiding your veggies in pasta sauce or meatballs. It's easy to search on-line for "hidden vegetable recipes" that will be sure to please even the pickiest eater.

Instead of refined flour pasta, try whole grain or legume-based pastas, like chickpea or black bean. These pastas are higher in fiber, which can help you feel fuller longer. You can even mix them half and half with traditional pasta.

Add more protein and fiber to your diet by trying quinoa instead of rice. Though the calorie counts are similar, quinoa has more protein and fiber than brown rice.

When sautéing, replace butter or coconut oil with olive oil to trade saturated fats for healthier fats.

A great way to beat the mid-afternoon sugar craving is to keep apples, tangerines, berries or another favorite fruit on-hand to satisfy your need for sugar; eat fruit with peanut or almond butter for extra protein and fat to keep you feeling full after your snack.

If you're craving chocolate, try a vanilla or chocolate Greek yogurt and add some dark chocolate chips, nuts and berries. You'll feel like you're indulging while giving your body important nutrients.

Drink more water. Increasing your water intake can help curb cravings, boost your energy and support every single system in your body, including your immune system. By drinking more water, you'll likely think clearer, digest food easier and your joints and muscles will feel better.

Eating well takes just a few new habits that will enhance your health and well being.

Summer Energy Savings

Summertime means vacations are in full swing. If you are planning an extended summer vacation - one week, two weeks or more, there are several simple steps you can take to save energy in your home and save money.

Turn down the temperature on your water heater. Water heating accounts for as much as 20 percent of annual energy costs. No sense heating the water if you are not home to use it. Instead of the recommended setting of 120 degrees F, lower the temperature 10-20 degrees or turn the control knob to "vacation mode."

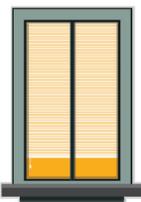
Set your thermostat (programmable or manual) at a higher temperature than usual. Again, no sense cooling your home if you're not there. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends setting your air conditioning system thermostat at 85 degrees so the AC will occasionally turn on to remove the humidity. Turning up your thermostat to 85 degrees could lower your bill by 35 percent a week. If you have pets, 85 degrees will still be cool enough to keep them comfortable while you are away.

Some smaller things to lower bills include shutting the blinds and curtains to keep the sun from heating up your home. Turn off power strips and unplug small appliances.

Make sure all lights are turned off. For lights on a security timer, use energy-efficient LED lights. The timer will ensure that your lights will be on for a short amount of time versus using energy all day.

Summer Energy-Saving Tips

Costs associated with cooling your home can make up a large portion of your summer electric bills. Stay cool and save money with these energy efficiency tips!



NO-COST TIPS

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.



Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home. Set it to a higher temperature when you're away.



Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.



LOW-COST TIPS

Plant trees and shrubs to shade the exterior of your home.



Replace disposable air filters (or clean permanent filters) once a month to maximize efficiency.



Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install, low maintenance and provide free electricity.

People to Know: Jeff Blackford

Keep Calm and Drive a John Deere

Smitten with John Deere's iconic green and yellow colors, you'll find Jeff Blackford, an Eastern Illini serviceman, on a John Deere tractor, repairing and restoring John Deere tractors, collecting John Deere tractors and driving John Deere tractors in local tractor pulls. Some say that Jeff bleeds green.

There are many similarities between John Deere and Jeff. The saying goes, *Nothing Runs Like a Deere*, and that sums up Jeff as well. He's extremely reliable and can always be depended on. He comes through for members every day without fail. His job responsibilities cover a wide array of tasks. Outages are always his number one priority. He also gives precedence to on-going maintenance of poles, lines, meters and electric systems in his territory which spans from Mahomet to Potomac. You'll find him outside of Gifford one day fixing a security light and in Osman the next, doing a JULIE locate.

One great example of Jeff's dependability happened December 24, 2017, when most people were spending time with their families drinking eggnog, opening presents and eating Christmas cookies. Jeff was called out to an auto accident when a driver's vehicle slid on ice and hit a utility pole. Not just any utility pole, but a three breaker, double dead-end pole an hour from headquarters. After addressing the injuries of the driver and securing the safety of the area, Jeff went about restoring power in the ice, cold and snow. He worked as quickly as possible, because members in the area were out

of power. Jeff met the challenge of restoring power head on and the lights were on for Christmas.

Jeff began working at Eastern Illini as summer help in 1989. He became an EIEC employee in October 1992 and has spent his 25-year career assisting members. He wants members to know employees at EIEC pride themselves on being responsive. Everyone at Eastern Illini has the goal of restoring power as quickly as possible.

Jeff also wants members who farm to know that today's agricultural equipment is expansive and it's important to be cognizant of power lines when moving equipment. This past fall, Jeff was called to a location when tillage equipment became entangled with power lines. The farmer waited in his tractor until Jeff arrived and was able to cut power and the farmer could safely exit.

When Eastern Illini decided to restore the antique digger truck a few years ago, Jeff used his many talents to assist with that monumental undertaking. The repainting of the truck took place in his father's shop on the family farm.

When he's not assisting members, Jeff himself farms near Rankin. He raises corn, soybeans and goats and when he's not in the field farming, he tinkers on his John Deere Model A tractor that has been passed down from his grandfather, Raymond Blackford. The Model A is just one of Jeff's many treasured tractors. He won't divulge exactly how



many tractors he owns, but let's just say he could probably host his own tractor show.

Jeff is the son of EIEC members Dean and Phyllis Blackford. Jeff and his dad are very involved in the I & I Tractor Club. Jeff has three children who have followed in his footsteps and are passionate about agriculture. His daughter Kirsten teaches ag at PBL High School and his other children Katie and Andy are pursuing agricultural degrees as well.

There is a song by Don Walser that sums up Jeff Blackford's love of John Deere tractors. The lyrics are:

"Well, I work an old John Deere tractor every day, plowin', plantin' crops and cuttin' hay. Well, the good Lord knows that I wouldn't want it any other way. The good Lord gave this country boy a place to run and play and work his old John Deere tractor every day."

2018 YOUTH TO WASHINGTON DELEGATES

Eastern Illini is extremely proud of the six local students who represented the Cooperative as part of the annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour from June 8-15, 2018.

The students toured Capitol Hill and met with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, Congressman Rodney Davis, Congressman Adam Kinzinger and Congressman John Shimkus. They also visited historical and cultural sites including Arlington National Cemetery, the Supreme Court, Newseum, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, a variety of memorials and the U.S. Capitol. Among fun activities the students enjoyed were the Marine Corps Sunset Parade, the Smithsonian Museums and an assembly of Youth Tour participants from across the nation.

The 2018 Youth Tour delegates from Eastern Illini are from left to right: Spencer Meenen and Mitchell Meenen of Melvin, Kaitlin Marry of Paxton, Owen Heuring of Watseka, Mackenzie Niedfeldt of Newman, and Kylie Decker of Philo.



"All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual." *Albert Einstein*