

Eastern Illini PowerLines

April 2012



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Eastern Illini's 2012 Annual Meeting

Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting of Members will be held June 14, 2012 in the commons area at PBL High School/Junior High School in Paxton.

This year's meeting will again feature a \$25 bill credit for all attending members, a free meal, and tons of activities for everyone in the family.

Eastern Illini Electric Co-op
330 W. Ottawa
Paxton, IL 60957
800-824-5102
www.eiec.coop

Geothermal Open House

Come see the benefits of the most energy efficient way to heat and cool your home on April 14 in rural Strawn.

Geothermal heating and cooling systems use the Earth's stored energy to heat your home in the winter and cool it in the summer. By using the renewable energy below the ground, geothermal systems are far more efficient than any other system available.

With a 30 percent tax credit still available, now is the time to invest in a geothermal system. Join us near Strawn to see first-hand how to upgrade your current heating system to a new ultra-efficient geothermal system.

Representatives from Eastern Illini and Kupferschmid, Inc. will be on hand to answer your questions about geothermal. Other companies that will be featured at the open house include: Sealtite Insulation; Edelman Electric; P&L Construction; Kickapoo Well Drilling; and Forrest Plumbing & Heating.

To get to the open house, go west on CR 200 North from Route 47, just south of Strawn. Follow the signs to the house on the south (left) side of the road.

**Saturday, April 14
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
25874 E 200 N Road
Strawn, IL**

The open house will be hosted by Ed and Renee Wenger. Their home is located west of Route 47 on CR 200 N.

A free lunch will be provided!



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Unclaimed Capital Credits

One major benefit of being a member/owner of Eastern Illini is the return of capital credits to you.

Sometimes, though, we can't find past members to whom we owe money.

Please visit our website, www.eiec.coop, to check the list of unclaimed capital credits.



PrePaid Advantage Program

A unique prepaid bill payment system offers great benefits to members.

Food. Gasoline. Even cell phone minutes. We pay for those and a score of other goods and services before we actually use them. Now, pay-as-you-go electric service, is available at Eastern Illini!

With our PrePaid Advantage Program, members can pay a certain amount up-front, and a special website, an email, or a simple phone call lets you know when your balance is almost "out" of electricity. You can then make another payment - over the phone, online, or even in person - and your electric service automatically continues. You can pay how much you want, whenever you want.

The PrePaid Advantage Program offers a good solution for members who move frequently, own rental properties, are in college or the military, or are facing financial difficulties. For starters, it eliminates the need for large deposits that are based on credit checks. It also eliminates late fees, and disconnect and reconnect fees.

In addition, members who prepay generally use less energy than folks on traditional billing plans because they're more aware of how much power they are consuming.

Prepaying can also help members plan more accurate monthly budgets and make smaller, incremental payments. For example, if you only have \$10 to put gas in your car, you pay \$10. The same goes for prepaid electricity. You are able to pay for your electricity on your schedule!

"Members are empowered to manage their electric use in a way that best suits their individual situation," says Dave Champion, Eastern Illini's President/CEO. "Even better, when they use less energy it lowers demand on our entire system, which saves everyone money in the long run."

The PrePaid Advantage Program is available to most Eastern Illini residential members. Members that have already paid a deposit might be able to apply some of that deposit to their PrePaid Advantage account.

For more information, contact us at info@eiec.coop or 800-824-5102.

How to buy an energy efficient appliance

With so many choices, how do you know what to look for?

You go shopping for a new refrigerator, and you're on a budget. The best buy is the fridge with the lowest sales price, right?

Not necessarily. If you buy the lowest-priced refrigerator, you may end up spending more than if you buy a more expensive one. The reason? The cost of owning a home appliance has three components: the initial purchase price, the cost of repairs and maintenance, and the cost to operate it.

To figure out how much you'll spend over the lifetime of the appliance, you have to look at all these factors. The appliance with the lowest initial purchase price, or even the one with the best repair record, isn't necessarily the one that costs the least to operate. Here's an example of how an appliance's energy consumption can affect your out-of-pocket costs:

Suppose you're in the market for a new refrigerator-freezer. Different models of refrigerators with the same capacity can vary dramatically in the amount of electricity they use. For one popular size and configuration, the annual electricity consumption varies across models from a low of about 600 kilowatt-hours a year to a high of more than 800 kilowatt-hours a year. Based on Eastern Illini's electricity prices, that means the annual cost to operate this refrigerator can range from about \$80 to \$110, depending on the model you buy.

A \$30 difference in annual operating costs might not sound like much. But remember that you will enjoy these savings year after year for the life of the appliance, while you only pay the difference in purchase price once. As a result, you may actually save money by buying the more expensive, but more energy-efficient model.

You can learn about the energy efficiency

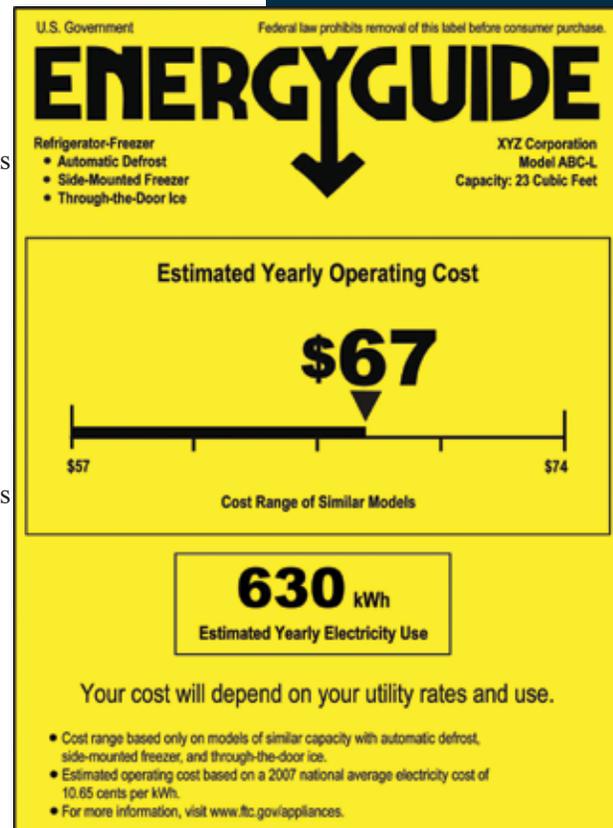
of an appliance that you're thinking about buying through the yellow-and-black EnergyGuide label. The Federal Trade Commission's Appliance Labeling Rule requires appliance manufacturers to put these labels on:

- Refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers
- Water heaters, furnaces, boilers
- Central air conditioners, room air conditioners, heat pumps
- Pool heaters

When you shop for one of these appliances in a dealer's showroom, you should find the labels hanging on the inside of the appliance or secured to the outside. The law requires that the labels specify:

- The capacity of the particular model
- For refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and water heaters, the estimated annual energy consumption of the model
- For air conditioners, heat pumps, furnaces, boilers and pool heaters, the energy efficiency rating
- The range of estimated annual energy consumption, or energy efficiency ratings, of comparable appliances.

Some appliances may also feature the ENERGY STAR logo, which means that the appliance is significantly more energy efficient than the average comparable model.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

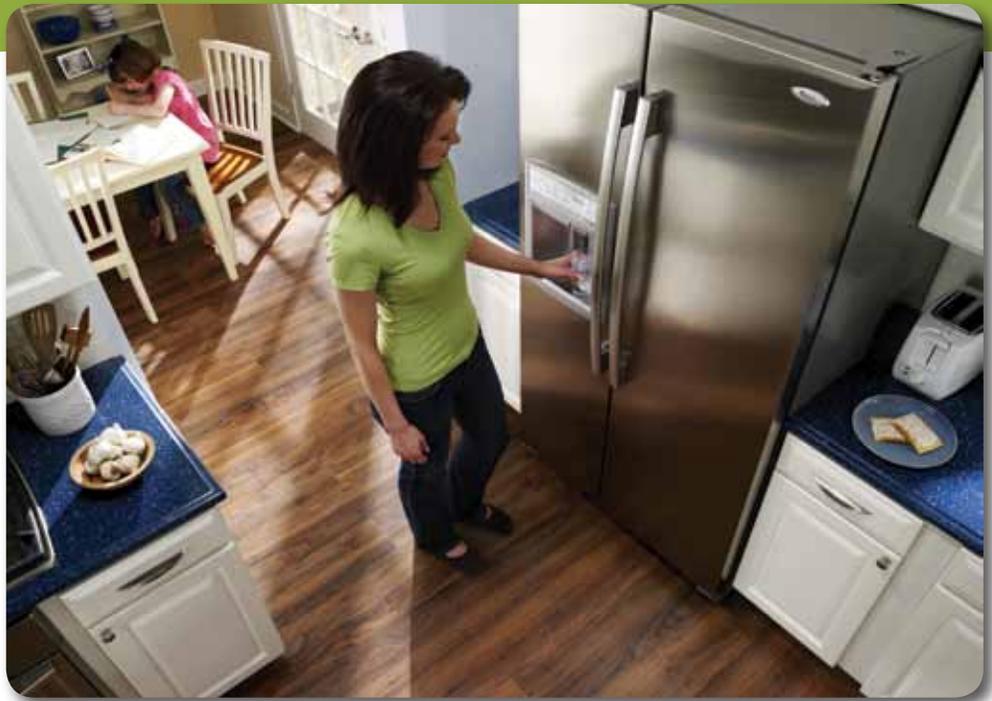
Don't get your electric bill caught in a spin cycle! When doing laundry, use cold water. If your dryer has a moisture meter, use it to prevent over-drying clothes—50 minutes often works best for a full load. And remember to check your lint filter each time before you run a load to help your dryer run more efficiently (and save energy). Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Co-op Connections Card

Pharmacy discounts, coupons galore, specialty medical work discounts, a rewards program, online specials and deals, and savings at local businesses.

Eastern Illini's free Co-op Connections Card offers something for everyone! Contact us at 800-824-5102 or info@eiec.coop to get your card!



Message from the President

Out with the old, and in with new... and old, too?

When my daughters go shopping, fresh outfits don't replace last year's looks—instead, new clothes are added to the bulging closet. No one gets around to recycling the clothes they never wear anymore. The same situation often applies with refrigerators. In both cases, it can lead to waste.

In 2010 and 2011, a lot of folks got federal rebates for a new fridge, water heater, or other household appliance. About 1.7 million rebates were redeemed, and the U.S. Department of Energy estimates these appliances will cut \$65 million from electric bills every year. Around \$48 million of that chunk will be saved mainly by consumers who bought energy-efficient refrigerators, clothes washers, and dishwashers.

Great news, right? Sure, if folks really follow the adage, "Out with the old, in with the new." But for many households, that's not the case. A national survey by the Cooperative Research Network, an arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, found 19 percent of homes have two refrigerators; 2 percent own three or more refrigerators.

I understand why my daughter might hold on to an outfit from last year. But the problem with keeping an old refrigerator is simple: You're not saving money. By sending these "energy hogs" to the basement or garage to keep sodas and popsicles cold for the kids, you jack up electric bills even more.

Appliances already use 13 percent of your home's electricity, and older appliances drain even more. A refrigerator from the 1970s costs \$200 more to operate every year than a current model; a 1980s fridge isn't much better, wasting \$100 in energy dollars annually.

Are you in the market for a new fridge or another energy-efficient appliance? Although most of the federal rebates are gone, there are still a few ways to save. Check dsireusa.org for incentives in Illinois.

Save your money—we all know every dollar counts. If you buy a refrigerator, trade in the old one and save on your electric bill. Want to save even more? Find out how little changes add up to big savings at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Dave Champion