

PowerLines

A monthly publication for member/owners of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

February 2013

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MEMBER MEETINGS

Beginning this month, we will be hosting a series of member meetings to fill you in on your new rates, our new bill format and unbundling, and anything else you are curious about.

Turn the page to see a complete list of meeting dates and locations.

Unbundling your bill

In a few short months, your bill will take on a new look.

In an effort for complete transparency in what you pay each month and why we need to collect it, we have decided to break out (unbundle) the components of your electric bill.

This change, which will take effect with the bill you receive in May, will coincide with a slight restructuring and adjustment of your electric rates.

Your current electric bill consists of a facility charge, an energy charge, and taxes. The facility charge collects a portion of the fixed costs associated with making electric service available to you. The energy charge currently covers the rest of our fixed costs, variable costs, our actual energy costs, and distribution and transmission expenses.

To give you a better understanding of the actual costs associated with providing you safe and reliable electric service each month, we will soon unbundle the various components of your bill.

Your facility charge will be paired with a delivery charge that will make up the first section of your bill. This is the *facility and delivery* portion.

The next section will be the *electric supply* portion, and will consist of energy, transmission, and our investment in the Prairie State Generating Campus (generation).

The last section of the bill will include taxes and other miscellaneous items like security light rentals and energy efficiency loan payments.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

It is important to note that even though your bill will have a new look, the total amount that you pay each month may not change much - if at all. For instance, your facility charge will go up, but the charges for your kWh (kilowatt hour) use will go down.

These changes may sound (and indeed may look) overwhelming, but please know that we are making them to be transparent in what we charge, and - as closely as we can - have the rates match up with the costs that we incur on your behalf.

We are offering a series of member meetings beginning this month (see page 2 of this newsletter for a complete schedule) to go through all of these changes with you. Plan on attending one of the meetings.

Our website (www.eiec.coop) will have plenty of information about the changes. You can also call us at 800-824-5102 anytime you have a question.

Sincerely,

Dave Champion



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A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

Exceeding expectations every day

Value has different meanings for each of us, so how can we provide you with value?

Kids often like to comb their grade-school report cards for EEs, which signified they had attained the coveted “exceeds expectations” rating in aspects of school life that couldn’t be assigned a letter grade.

As they grow, EEs turned into (we hope) As and Bs. Yet I don’t think any of them lost that desire to exceed expectations.

At Eastern Illini, we also strive for EEs every single day. We don’t want to do what you only expect us to do—provide you with affordable, safe, and reliable electric service. We want to go farther and do better, from providing superior member service to offering programs that help you save time and money.

Eastern Illini lineworkers provide the public face of our mission to exceed expectations. They routinely

work in inclement weather and put in long hours. But they do it gladly, because they care about doing an exceptional job for you.

However, we have many people behind the scenes who also make our co-op the best it can be. Our engineers continually explore new technologies

to improve service reliability. Our finance department works to make bill payments more convenient (like with our new SmartHub service). Our marketing department includes energy experts that routinely visit member’s homes to offer tips to save on energy bills.

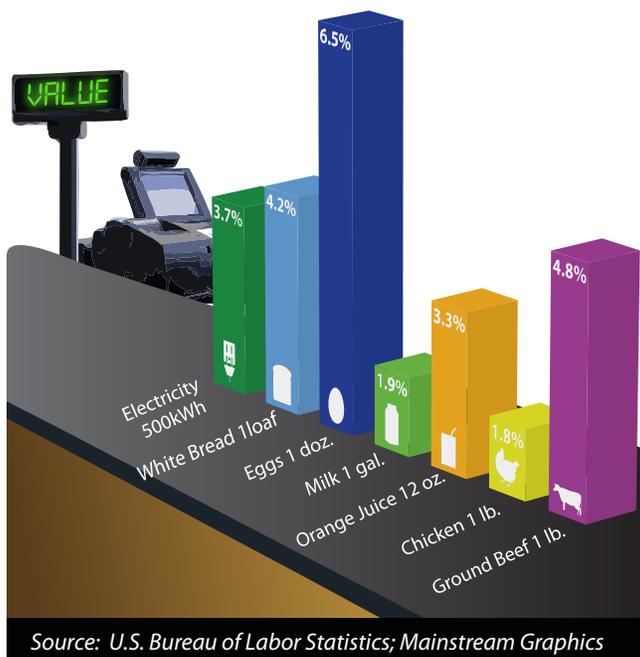
Whether it’s a power outage or energy audit, a billing question or community event, we’re working hard to achieve those EEs from you every day. **And we must be doing something right, because in our recent American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey, you gave us the highest score we’ve ever received - a 90!**

With the national average for utilities an 80, we are excited you rated our service - and the value that we provide to you - that high.

“Check out” the value of electricity!

Next time you’re at the grocery store, think about the way prices for bread, eggs, and other consumer goods have risen over the years. Electricity remains a value!

Average annual price increase between 2000-2010:



Member Meeting Schedule

Attend an upcoming member meeting to learn about your new electric rates. **Each meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.**, and snacks will be provided. Visit www.eiec.coop or call us at 800-824-5102 for directions or more information.

Tuesday, February 5 in St. Joseph
Living Word Family Church
1000 Park Avenue

Thursday, March 7 in Watseka
Super 8 Motel
710 West Walnut Street

Thursday, March 28 in Tuscola
Tuscola First Christian Church
100 East Church Street

Thursday, February 7 in Onarga
Ford-Iroquois Extension Office
912 West Seminary Avenue

Thursday, March 14 in Hoopston
Hubbard Trail Country Club
13937 East 3680 North Road

Tuesday, April 2 in Paxton
Eastern Illini’s Office
330 West Ottawa Street

Thursday, February 14 in Forrest
Forrest Public Library
301 West James Street

Tuesday, March 19 in Mahomet
Farm Credit Services
1100 Farm Credit Drive

Tuesday, February 26 in Broadlands
Immanuel Lutheran Church
390 CR 2400 East

Thursday, March 21 in Pesotum
Eastern Illini’s Warehouse
987 CR 200 North

Clearing the air

Replace air filters regularly for efficient heating and cooling

Clogged air filters could add \$82 to your electric bill every year. Checking, changing, or cleaning your filter once a month saves money and extends the life of your home's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

More than half of your monthly energy bill goes toward keeping your home comfortable. While air filters prevent pesky dust and annoying allergens from clogging your HVAC system, dirt, like aging arteries, builds up over time. If left unchecked, a dirty filter strains a home's heart and forces the HVAC system to work harder to push conditioned air through tight spaces. This results in higher energy bills and possible system failure.

Filter Facts

Air filters protect HVAC systems and perform double-duty by collecting some loose dirt from the air. These handy sieves live in duct system slots or in return grilles of central air conditioners, furnaces, and heat pumps.

Successful filters have a short

lifespan—the better a filter catches dirt, the faster it gets clogged and must be cleaned or replaced. Leaving a dirty air filter in place cuts a home's air quality and reduces HVAC system airflow.

While removing a clogged filter



altogether relieves pressure on the system, the system can't perform well without one. Unfiltered dust and grime accumulate on critical parts like the evaporator coil, causing unnecessary wear and tear.

Monthly Check-up

The U.S. Department of Energy advises checking an air filter once a month and replacing it at least every three months. It's critical to inspect and replace filters before seasons of heavy use like summer and winter.

If you have pets or smokers in the

home, filters clog quickly. Remodeling projects add more dirt than normal; a filter may need to be changed before the average three-month lifespan expires.

Turn your heating and cooling system off before checking your filter. Slide the filter out of your duct work, and look for layers of hair and dirt. Run a finger across the filter. If your finger comes away dirty or there's a line left on the filter, it's time for a change.

When replacing the filter, make sure the arrow on the filter indicating the direction of the airflow points toward the blower motor. To help schedule monthly check-ups, write the date on the side of the filter so you know when it needs to be checked again or put it on your calendar. Once you've made the change, turn your system back on. Also make sure your new filter is size appropriate for your system.

More Efficiency Boosters

Before summer hits, clean cooling system coils inside and outside the home. Leaves, dirt, and other debris gather around a home's air conditioner throughout fall and winter months. These intruders keep the coils from operating at top efficiency, both shortening the lifespan of the unit and ratcheting up summer cooling bills.

Just as clogged air filters force your system to work harder, blocked vents strain your system. Clean air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators. Make sure air ducts are not blocked by furniture, rugs, or window treatments.

Want more ways to save? See how little changes add up to big savings at www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Your heat pump can use 10 percent to 25 percent more energy if it's not properly maintained, which includes regularly checking and replacing the air filter when it's dirty to keep parts from working too hard or even becoming damaged. Keep brush and plants tidy around the outdoor unit, and dust the return registers inside. For more details on heat pump maintenance, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Home rebates available

Popular rebate program returns for energy efficiency upgrades installed in 2013.

We all like to save money. With the return of the HomeE rebate program, you can not only save money every month with an energy efficiency upgrade, but you can also get some money back now!

Most everyone would agree that they would like to save money on their utility bills each month. Performing the upgrades around your home to make it happen, though, is not always easy. Normally there are two obstacles: not knowing what to do; and figuring out how to pay for the upgrades.

The HomeE Lite rebate program is designed to take care of both of those issues. To start with, an Eastern Illini representative will offer energy efficiency ideas. You then work with a local contractor to have the work done (or, in some cases, you can do it yourself).

Once the work has been completed, we will send you a rebate check to cover a portion of the costs.

Options for rebates include both air-source heat pumps and geothermal systems, insulation and weatherization projects, and even a full blown BPI energy audit. The maximum rebate for each Eastern Illini member/owner is \$1,500.

The HomeE Lite rebate program is available for any Eastern Illini member/owner that owns and lives in their home and performs an energy efficiency upgrade in 2013. There is a limited amount of rebate dollars available, though. The program will continue until the allotted funds are used up, or until June of this year.

Federal tax credits for energy efficiency products have also been extended through 2013. Be sure to check with your tax professional to see if you qualify for any of those.

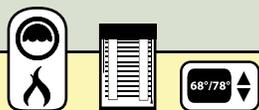
These rebates, plus the the federal income tax credits that are available for some of the projects, make this a great time to make your home more energy efficient.

For more information or to apply for the program, please contact us at 800-824-5102 or www.eiec.coop.



Invest in Efficiency

The benefits of some home efficiency investments aren't seen as quickly as others. Here's how a few upgrades compare over time:



Set Water Heater to 120°
No Cost; Save \$73/yr

Open Window Blinds in Winter; Close in Summer
No Cost; Save \$35/yr

Adjust Thermostat 1° Down in Winter, 1° Up in Summer
No Cost; Save \$82/yr

Instant Benefit



ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer
Costs \$194 extra; Save \$140/yr

ENERGY STAR Refrigerator
Costs \$97 extra; Save \$100/yr

Wrap Hot Water Tank
Costs \$85; Save \$23/yr

1-5 Year Payback

Upgrade to ENERGY STAR Heat Pump (From 10 to 15 SEER)
Costs \$5,700; Save \$408/yr

Long Term Investment

Find more ways to save at **TogetherWeSave.com.**

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Saver, Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. Based on national average savings; actual savings will vary by climate.