

PowerLines

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

May 2014

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Co-ops in all shapes & sizes

When you hear the word "co-op," what comes to mind? We hope you think of your friends here at Eastern Illini, but maybe you think of a local farmers' co-op or a credit union. You might be surprised to learn that co-ops, or cooperatives, can be found in many industries—and they offer a variety of services, each designed to serve their members in the best way possible.

A cooperative is a not-for-profit organization owned by its members. Across the globe, cooperatives remain steadfast, annually generating more than \$500 billion in revenue and providing more than 2 million jobs.

Co-ops offer a variety of services

So what other kinds of co-ops are out there? Co-ops fall under a variety of categories and services, including agriculture and forestry; consumer and retail; banking and credit unions; health

and wellness; and utilities, to name a few.

Here are a few other national co-ops you might recognize.

- C-SPAN
- Welch's Grape Juice
- Best Western
- Sunkist
- Ace Hardware
- FTD Florists

The list of cooperatives goes on and on, and as you can see, we come in all shapes and sizes.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

Annual Meeting on June 12

One of the great benefits of being a member/owner in your local electric cooperative is that you have a major say in how we operate.

On Thursday, June 12, from 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. we will host your annual meeting in Paxton, where you have a chance to elect board members and receive a status report on the co-op.

At Eastern Illini, though, we take it a big leap further. Our goal is to make your annual meeting a family-friendly and entertaining event that you don't want to miss!

Reasons to attend the Annual Meeting

- \$25 bill credit
- Free meal
- Inflatables
- Bucket truck demonstrations
- Miniature golf
- Oscar the Talking Robot
- Engaging seminars
- Desserts and snacks
- Meet and greet our new CEO
- Elect board members

Next month's PowerLines newsletter will include a full schedule of events, including a full seminar listing.

Blind runner completes half-marathon

Local teenager inspires everyone around her with effort and determination.

Ashley Eisenmenger is a 17 year-old high school senior at Unity High School in Tolono, Illinois. She ran the 13.1 mile half-marathon as part of the Illinois Marathon on April 26.

That, in itself, would be impressive enough for most people. Ashley, though, is also legally blind. Her father, Matt, is a line foreman for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative.

Ashley has been running for many years. She has completed several 5Ks, 10Ks and ran in her first half marathon last year. She began running with a guide runner a few years ago, but just recently starting using a tether that is attached to both Ashley and her guide runner.

Running with a tether is a new experience for Ashley. She said, "I thought I could gain more fluidity and run faster with the use of a tether. It has been exciting getting used to it."

She can now react to slight tugs on the tether instead of waiting for verbal cues. Verbal cues, though, are still a very important part of the guiding process. These cues need to be short and concise. For example, "go left", "incline up", etc.

Choosing a guide runner requires research and trust. The guide runner must be able to run at a faster pace than the person they are guiding and must be able to take cues from the blind runner. Ashley reached out to the Second Wind Running Club (based out of Champaign/ Urbana) to find a guide runner. After meeting several candidates, Ashley

chose Elizabeth Jones. The pair have been running together with a tether for about five months.

Since Jones is - in essence - acting as Ashley's eyes, tether running requires a great deal of trust between the runners. Since Ashley cannot see things like potholes, cracks in the sidewalk, or loose gravel, her guide's number one priority is her safety.

Part of the fun of running with a guide is having someone to talk to. Ashley and Elizabeth have grown close, and often have friends and co-workers join them for runs.

The Second Wind Running Club organizes long runs on Saturdays to help with training. Ashley has met many other runners and greatly enjoys the social aspect of running.

Training for a half-marathon takes many months, which posed a bit of a problem during the extremely cold winter. Ashley, however, chose to view the terribly cold and snowy days as a challenge, and she pushed through. Ashley's parents are



Ashley Eisenmenger (left), and her guide runner, Elizabeth Jones, train for the recently completed Illinois Marathon. The pair ran the half-marathon (13.1 miles) through the streets of Champaign/Urbana on April 26.

obviously very proud of her. Amy, Ashley's mother, noted "She never accepts 'no' or 'I can't' as an option. Her determination and perseverance is awesome to see, and it will definitely serve her well in life."

Ashley will graduate later this month and will attend Parkland College in the fall. She is a member of the National Honor Society, and is an Illinois State Scholar. She is also a member of Teen Titans, a branch of Relay for Life. In addition to running, Ashley enjoys playing basketball and hiking and fishing with her family.

Member/owner spotlight



Country Health Care & Rehab Gifford, Illinois

Country Health is a not-for-profit, locally owned, 89-bed facility in Gifford, Illinois. They have recently completed a major renovation and expansion that includes larger rooms, additional common areas, a new therapy gym and dining room, a new activity room, and much more. They offer short and long-term care, respite and hospice care, outpatient therapy, and adult daycare services.

“Country Health is the perfect example of what dignified, affordable, and high quality short and long-term care should be,” says Administrator Chris Kasper. “We feel that the loving, dedicated care provided by our long-standing staff is the primary reason families stay with us. In our discharge surveys, many families praise our quality of care and compassion.”

In 2010, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative worked with Country Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help secure financing for the recently completed renovations through the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. The goal for the REDLG program is to create and retain employment in rural areas.

For more information, call 217-568-7362 or visit heritageofcare.com/gifford.

Take a vacation from high energy bills

Soaring temperatures can cause energy bills to heat up.

This summer, take a vacation from high energy bills by making your home—and your family’s habits—more energy efficient.

Beat the Heat

Air conditioning helps most Americans beat the sweltering summer heat. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), air conditioning accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average household electric bill. Proper maintenance and smart use of your home’s cooling system will help keep your electric bill in check.

First, make sure your air conditioner’s external unit is clean and free of debris. Clear away dead leaves or overgrown plants and weeds to enable the unit to perform as it should.

Second, change all of the air filters inside your home quarterly, or more often in homes with allergy sufferers or smokers. Fresh filters not only reduce the strain on your cooling system, but improve the air quality in your home.

Third, the DOE recommends that you set your home’s thermostat as high as possible, while still maintaining a comfortable environment for your family during the summer months. Bumping the thermostat up at least two degrees can make a noticeable difference on your power bill.

Investing in a programmable thermostat can lead to even greater savings by automatically adjusting it so that the cooling system runs more often when you are at home and less often when you are away.



A programmable thermostat can help you save money on your utility bills all year long. They are designed to automatically control temperature settings based on when you are home.

Made in the Shade

Windows are not only great sources of natural light in your home, but also great sources of heat during the summer. Curtains, blinds, and shades are some of the most cost-effective ways to make your windows and home more energy efficient.

These window coverings offer low-cost, stylish solutions to shield the sun’s rays and keep the interior of your home cool and comfortable. Proper weather stripping and caulking around window panes and casings will also improve the function of your windows by keeping the cool air in and the hot air out. Solar film applied to your home’s existing windows will further repel the summer heat.

Daily Grind

Today’s appliances are more energy efficient than ever, performing better and using less electricity than they

did in the past. But despite their functionality and efficiency, most major household appliances give off heat when in use. During peak daytime temperatures, the residual heat from appliances can put an unnecessary strain on your home’s cooling system and send your power bill soaring.

Cooler temperatures in the early morning or late evening make these ideal times for running the dishwasher or washing and drying clothes. When possible, turn off your dishwasher’s dryer cycle. This prevents even more residual heat from warming your home and saves on your power bill. Washing your clothes in cold water and hanging them out to dry are also great strides in reducing your household energy consumption.

As your summer heats up, call on the experts at Eastern Illini for more ways to lower all of your energy bills.

Make your yard work for you

Plan your landscaping now for summer savings.

Location, location, location is the mantra in real estate, but it also applies to your yard this time of year when the search is on to lower energy bills and create curb appeal.

Positioning the right combination of plants and trees can yield shade, beautify, and unearth energy savings. Such smart or energy-efficient landscaping, claims the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), can on average, provide enough energy savings to see a return on your initial investment in less than eight years.

Again, think location. Carefully positioned trees can reduce a household's energy consumption for heating and cooling by up to 25 percent. Using computer models, the DOE determined that proper placement of only three trees on your property can save an average household between \$100 and \$250 in yearly energy costs.

This spring, make your yard work for you. Just a few simple landscaping considerations can make a big difference in how comfortable you are in your home and in the efficiency of

your heating and cooling systems. The

Use trees and plants to shade a window air conditioner. Having shade can increase its efficiency by as much as 10 percent. For good airflow and access, position plants more than three feet from the air conditioner.

Shrubs and trees can form windbreaks or protective walls that keep wind chill away from a home. That's important because wind speed lowers outside air temperatures, and ultimately saves on higher heating costs. Common turf grass and other low-growing plants are ideal barriers. So are evergreens, especially when combined with a wall or fence to deflect or even lift wind over a home. For best protection, plan on leaving between two to five times the mature height of the trees or shrubs between the windbreak and the protected home.

Made in the Shade

Indoors, you may be protected from the sun's rays, but your energy bill can rise as your air conditioner works harder to keep your house cool and comfortable. Planting shade trees can add to your comfort at home by dropping the surrounding air temperature by as much as nine degrees Fahrenheit. But choosing just the right tree may require a compass and patience while they grow to work for you.

When selecting shade trees, keep in mind the mature height of the tree and the shape of its shade canopy in relation to the height of your

home. These factors are important because they should influence how far from the house you decide to plant a tree. Always avoid planting near underground utility lines.

Shading takes time—a 6-foot to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near a house will begin shading windows in a year. Depending on the species and the home, the tree will shade the roof in five to 10 years.

Make planting shade trees due west of west-facing windows your first priority.

Select a tree that can be planted within 20 feet of the window and that will grow at least 10 feet taller than that window. If you have the space, use as many trees as needed to create a continuous row along all major west- and east-facing windows.

Contrary to intuition, the least energy efficient place for a tree is to the south of a house.

Different trees can serve a variety of purposes. To block summer heat while letting sun filter through in the winter months, use deciduous trees or those that lose their leaves seasonally. Evergreens and shrubs, on the other hand, are ideal for providing continuous shade and blocking heavy winds. Also, keep in mind that not all shade plants are tall. Shrubs and sturdy groundcover plants also provide good shade by reducing heat radiation and cooling air before it reaches your home's walls and windows. Start planting savings and let your yard do all the work—a well-placed tree, shrub, or vine can deliver effective shade, act as a windbreak, and reduce your energy bills.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

A well-designed landscape provides both energy efficiency and curb appeal for your home. The type of vegetation you choose is as important as where they are planted. Sunlight streaming through windows and bearing down on the roof can drive up air conditioner use. Using shade trees and shrubs in your landscaping plan can help reduce cooling costs. In the winter, deciduous trees lose their leaves and let in warmth.

Source: Energy.gov

Eastern Illini's ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 12
3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
PBL Junior/Senior High
Paxton, Illinois

\$25 BILL CREDIT
ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS
FREE MEAL
ELECT BOARD MEMBERS
ENGAGING SEMINARS
MEET YOUR NEW PRESIDENT/CEO



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