

PowerLines

December 2016

Merry Christmas

The holiday season is a time of reflection for all of us. It is very important that we take time to step back and relax, separating ourselves from the daily bustle of life, and contemplate what is important for all of us.

For many, our thoughts turn towards community. The importance of community involvement is magnified during the holiday season. "Community" can mean many different things, including family, friends, church, social groups, neighborhoods, and even schools and universities.

Electric cooperatives, like Eastern Illini, are unique in our emphasis for support and involvement in our communities. For us, our community includes our member/owners, and the service territory in which we serve.

This month, we are highlighting the return of over \$1 million in capital credits to our members. You can

find more information on page 2 of this publication. The paying back of capital credits is a tangible investment that goes right back into our communities.

We're also promoting our Youth to Washington Tour program this month. Page 3 of this publication will give you more information about how we are working hard to engage the youth in our communities by providing them an opportunity to see both state and national government in action as they travel with our cooperative youth from around the country.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This holiday season, please consider how all of us - as individuals - can help improve the life of someone (or even a larger group) in our communities. Whether it is making a donation, volunteering your time, or giving back in other ways, each of us can work to make a positive impact in our communities. Those individual efforts can quickly multiply into a dramatic change!

From all of us at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, THANK YOU for allowing us to provide service to you. We pray you have a very Merry Christmas, a happy new year, and a safe and joyous holiday season!

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



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How do you want to save today?

Co-op Connections® Card



Pharmacy discounts
Cash Back Mall
Healthy Savings
Coupons.com
Appliance rebates

Visit www.connections.coop to get your card and start saving.

Holiday Schedule

Eastern Illini's offices will be closed on Dec. 23 and 26 for Christmas, and on Dec. 30 and Jan. 2 for New Years. As always, please call us any time at 800-824-5102 to report an outage.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday season!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Capital Credit checks mailed

The retirement of capital credits is a tangible benefit of being a member/owner.

Last month, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative began mailing capital credit checks to member/owners that received electricity in 1985 and the first part of 1986. The payments totaled \$1,141,008 and are part of an overall retirement of \$1,622,817.

Each year, Eastern Illini's Board of Directors carefully looks at our financial condition to determine how much, if any, capital credits can be retired.

Eastern Illini's President/CEO Bob Hunzinger noted, "The retirement of capital credits is one of the key components of being in a cooperative.

The financial stake that you, and all of our previous member/owners, have, really makes this *your* cooperative. We are fortunate that our financial condition allows us to return this portion of our members' equity investment."

What are capital credits?

Since we are a not-for-profit cooperative owned by you, whenever our revenues exceed our expenses, we refer to those profits as margins.

At the end of each year, any available margins are allocated back to you - into your capital credit account - in proportion to the amount of electricity you purchased that year. When the allocated funds are returned to you as capital

credits, we say that those capital credits have been retired.

The retirement of capital credits - so-called because member/owners provide capital to the cooperative for it to operate and expand - depends on the co-op's financial status. Eastern Illini holds on to the allocated capital credits to cover emergencies, such as a natural disaster, and other unexpected events, and to expand our electric system, all of which may require large-scale construction of poles and wires.

By utilizing the capital credit allocations, we can lessen or eliminate the need to raise rates or borrow money to pay for the infrastructure.

Hunzinger concluded, "Our board has set a target of getting to a 25-year payback cycle. That number is relevant because it is similar to our average infrastructure lifespan."

We need your help

There are many former member/owners of Eastern Illini for whom we don't have current addresses. We'd like to be able to get them their capital credit payments, so we've set up a database on our website to try to locate them.

Please visit www.eiec.coop and follow the link to the capital credit's page where you can search by name or download the complete list of former members who have unclaimed capital credits. You may even find some money you weren't expecting!

How Do Capital Credits Work?

Because Eastern Illini operates at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned back to you in the form of capital credits.

5 We then notify you of how and when you'll receive your capital credits retirements.

1 Eastern Illini tracks how much electricity you buy and how much money you pay for it throughout the year.

2 At the end of the year, Eastern Illini completes financial matters and determines whether there are excess revenues, called margins.

4 When our financial condition permits, your board of directors decides to retire, or pay, the capital credits.

3 We then allocate the margins back to you as capital credits based upon your use of electricity during the year.

Electric co-ops
have retired
\$13.8 billion
to members
since 1988.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

Scholarships available

Eastern Illini shows its commitment to our rural community by offering several scholarship opportunities.

Bob Hunzinger, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's President/CEO, has announced that Eastern Illini, in conjunction with the other electric co-ops in Illinois, will award ten academic scholarships in 2017 to high school seniors through a memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the electric cooperative family.

Value of Scholarships

The scholarships, each valued at \$2,000, will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Five of the scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from their cooperative. A sixth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee.

The next three scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college. The sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors are eligible to apply for these three scholarships.

The tenth annual scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois

Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College.

Sons and daughters of co-op members, relatives of co-op employees or directors, individuals enrolled in the Lincoln Land Lineworker's School, and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for the lineworker's scholarship.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," said Eastern Illini's Manager of Communication and Community Relations Mike Wilson. "Eastern Illini and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this."

Trip information has already been sent to area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at Eastern Illini's website (www.eiec.coop) under the "Community Involvement" tab.

Scholarships are awarded based on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, biographical statement and knowledge of electric cooperatives, as demonstrated by a short essay.



New for 2017

In the past, we've combined a scholarship program with our Youth to Washington Tour program. To simplify our offerings, and to give more students the opportunity to participate, we've changed our programs this year.

Graduating seniors from co-op member families are still eligible to apply for the IEC scholarships. New this year, students who are sophomores or juniors will be eligible to apply for the Youth to Washington Tour (see page 6 of this publication for more information about the Youth to Washington Tour). To ease in the transition this year, we're also allowing current seniors to apply for the Youth to Washington Tour. Those seniors can also apply for the IEC scholarships.

For more information about Eastern Illini's scholarship offerings, or the Youth to Washington Tour program, please contact our office at (800) 824-5102 and ask for Debbie Laird, or visit www.eiec.coop.

Moore & Moore Express

A rural Rossville couple has turned their love of trains into a year-round display.

Growing up in rural east central Illinois, Dewain Moore lived near the railroad tracks. He was fascinated by the steam trains and how they were so instrumental in helping build our country's infrastructure.

A visit to a train shop in Zionsville, Indiana in 1996 rekindled that passion when Dewain purchased his first train set. From then on, Dewain and his wife, Marilyn, were hooked.

As his love for building train sets blossomed, so did the size of the sets. In 2002, they decided to go "all-in" and built a separate train shed, exclusively for showing off the train creations. Marilyn noted, "Well, I lost my living room because of the train sets,

so something had to give. That's when we decided to build the train shed."

In the fourteen years since, there has been a steady stream of tinkering and updating. There are currently two separate tracks. One is upstairs accessible via an elevator, and there is one set on the main floor that is actually suspended from the ceiling.

The main floor also includes several other train displays and memorabilia, as well as Christmas decorations and an antique heating stove.

Dewain said, "Just a train, all by itself, is no big deal. The key to a great display is how everything is decorated. Marilyn has a great eye for that, and she does a wonderful job bringing our displays to life."

In 2010, the couple purchased a train trailer and began restoring it. The trailer was on display during Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting in Paxton last June.

They now have over 600 feet (more than two football fields) of track between the two sets in the train shed and the trailer.

The couple's vacations usually include train adventures, too. They recently celebrated their 50th anniversary with a train trip through the Australian outback.

The M&M Express is open, free of charge, on weekends during the holiday season. Visit them between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. on December 3, 4, 11, 17, 18, 25, 31, and on January 1.

They are located in rural Rossville, at 36078 North 880 East Road.





The M&M Express is open most weekends during the holiday season from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge to view the M&M Express. Visit them Dec. 3, 4, 11, 17, 18, 25, 31, or Jan. 1. 36078 North 880 East Road, Rossville, IL

LEFT: Dewain and Marilyn Moore built a barn to house their trains in 2002 because the various trains and tracks were beginning to overrun their home.

ABOVE: The Christmas theme is prominent throughout the train shed. The Christmas season is when most people visit.

ABOVE RIGHT: The couple's train barn features over 600 feet of track, divided between two separate locations - one upstairs, and one on the main floor.

RIGHT: The level of detail throughout the train setups is incredible. Dewain handles the trains and electronics, while Marilyn takes care of all the decorating.



Win a trip to Washington, DC!

Sophomores and Juniors (and Seniors this year) from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative member families are eligible to apply for the 2017 Youth to Washington experience.

Winners will receive a FREE trip to our nation's capital, June 9-16, 2017!

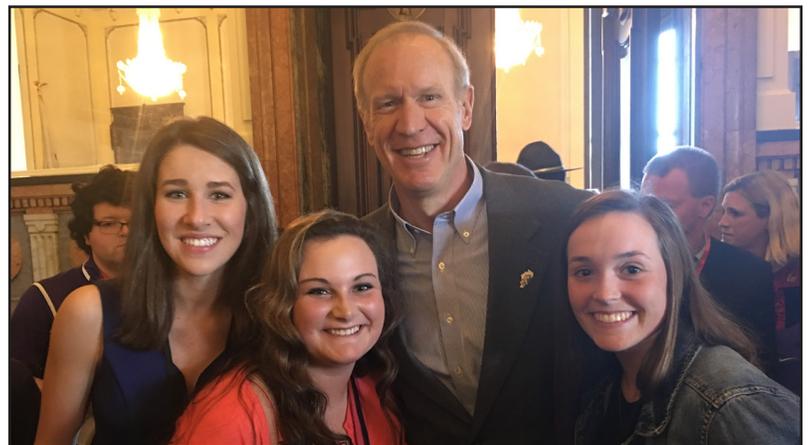


A group of finalists will also be selected to attend Youth Day to Springfield on April 5.

"I learned more than I ever thought I would, developed a passion for co-ops and our country, experienced the U.S. government, and made lifelong friends. I couldn't be more thankful for going on this trip."

Emma Johns, Villa Grove

- **Make new friends**
- **See the sites of DC**
- **Meet elected officials**
- **Get a "behind the scenes" look at Springfield**



For more information, or to apply, visit www.eiec.coop or call 800-824-5102.