

# PowerLines

February 2017

## Election Thoughts

We now have a new President of the United States. In a recent column, I mentioned that we would all be glad when the last election cycle was finished. Unfortunately, our political system has developed such that politicians at all levels seem to continually be campaigning for the “next” election instead of governing.

Of course, some people are pleased with the election results, and others are not. That is a consequence of the two party system that has developed in our country. You may be curious – what changes may impact Eastern Illini based on the elections?

Nationally, republicans now control both houses of Congress in addition to the Presidency. Climate change (Carbon emissions), air and water regulations, energy policy, and the mix of electric generation sources will all be viewed in a different manner.

The carbon issue (CO2 emissions) is presently awaiting a ruling by the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. EPA leadership will change course. Expect natural gas, wind, and solar to all continue to gain shares in total generation levels, although coal may be back in play as well. EIEC staff attends an annual legislative gathering in Washington, D.C. with thousands of cooperative representatives from across the country to demonstrate our grassroots power to our elected officials. This year’s meetings should be more interesting than usual.



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In Illinois, as of January 1, 2017, the state no longer has even a stopgap budget in place. The Republican Governor and Democratic controlled state houses have been at odds for two years, with little hope for a quick resolution.

On a direct basis, EIEC is fortunate to be only slightly impacted by the State’s inability to pay utility accounts in a timely manner. Our staff also maintains relationships with state representatives throughout our footprint, along with participating with our statewide organization in political matters at the Capitol in Springfield.

You may have heard about recent legislation to keep three Illinois nuclear power plants operating. Investor owned utility customers of Ameren and Commonwealth Edison will foot the bill for these plant commitments, and we should only be indirectly affected through the longer term impacts on future market pricing.

The old adage that “all politics are local” is most definitely true. We can have the most input in politics and organizations at the local level. That includes Eastern Illini, too! See page 4 of this publication to see how you can get involved with your cooperative.

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](http://www.connections.coop) to get your card and start saving.

## Did you know?

You may be eligible for assistance in paying your winter electric bill.

Contact your local community action agency for more information, or call us at 800-824-5102 for a complete list.

Your Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative

# Saving You Money: Weather Related Fluctuations

## Weather plays a huge part in why your bill fluctuates from month to month.

Most people realize that if your air conditioner runs all summer long, your electric bill will be higher than normal. During the winter, though, it is often tougher to make the correlation between weather and energy use - especially if you have a heating system that uses gas instead of electricity.

## Tips for Managing Your Bill

Even with a gas heating system, you probably still have an electric blower on your furnace that will obviously use more electricity the more the unit needs to run to maintain the temperature in your home.

Even adjusting your thermostat a degree or two can help save you some money in the winter.

Better yet, consider investing in a programmable thermostat that automatically lowers the temperature in the middle of the night and even during the day if everyone is out of the house for an extended period. That way, your comfort level when you're home and awake won't change, but your energy bills should go down a bit.

It's also important to have a good understanding of just how cold it actually was during the billing period. It's often difficult to remember that far back!

## Credit Causes Confusion

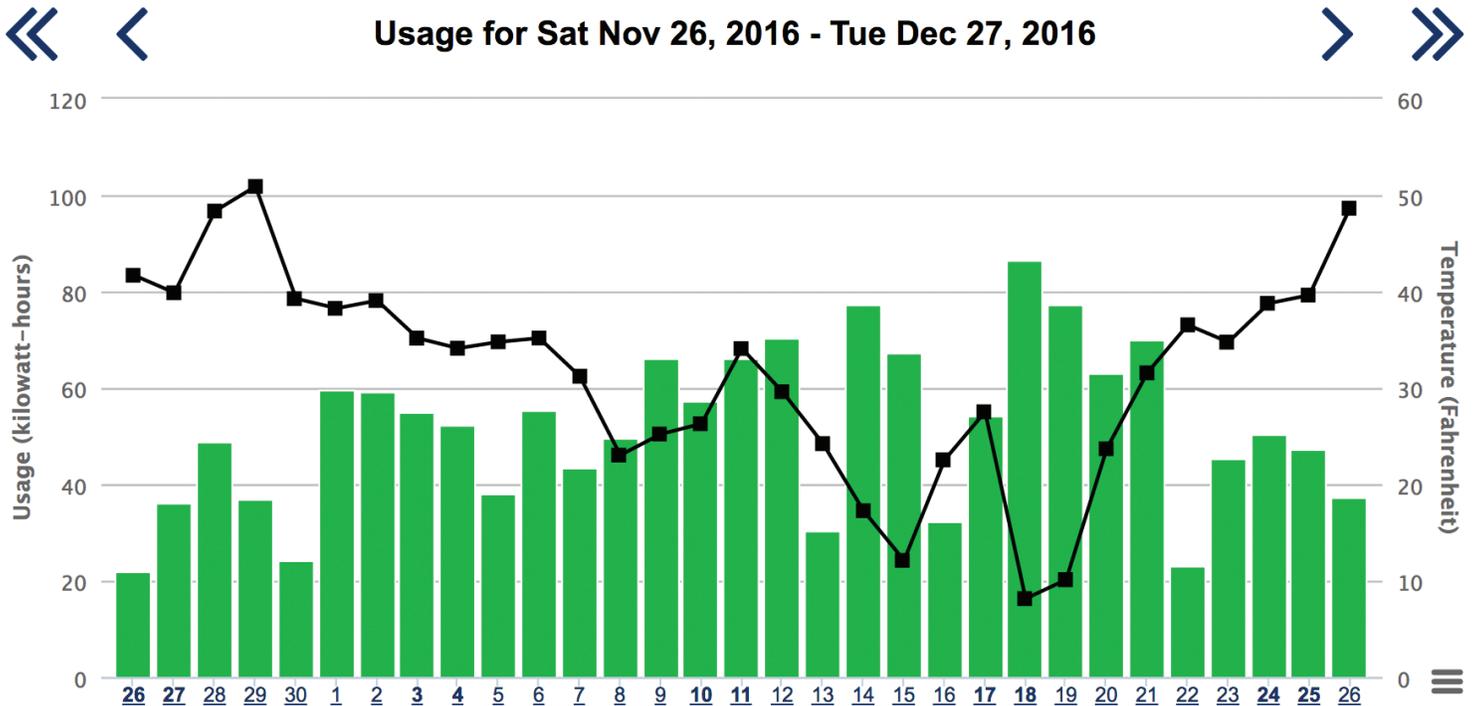
This issue is compounded in February for Eastern Illini member/owners again this year - but with very good reason.

After a positive 2016, we were fortunate to be able to offer a bill

credit to all Eastern Illini member/owners. That bill credit - which averaged about \$40, was applied to your last month's bill. That means, for the bill that was due in the middle of January, your actual total due was less than it should have been because of the credit.

This month, unfortunately, there isn't a credit. Since January is traditionally much colder than December, your bill may seem higher than it was last month. That is because of a combination of a colder month to begin with, and because of the credit that was applied to your bill last month.

Even though the "sticker shock" may be tough at first glance, we certainly hope this makes sense, and you enjoyed your lower bill last month!



*Weather Matters: This chart shows daily kWh use (in green) and average temperature (in black) for each day of this recent billing period. The coldest days of the month (December 14, 15, 18 and 19) clearly show the highest electric use for the billing period. You can find charts like this for your electric account by using SmartHub. See Page 5 of this publication for more information.*

# Safety Spotlight: Winter Preparedness

## Make sure you're ready in case of a major winter storm.

Heavy accumulations of ice and snow coupled with fluctuating winter temperatures can bring down utility poles, trees and limbs with the ability to disrupt power for days on end. With this comes a threat to property and also to life itself.

Utilities are devoted to restoring power to customers, but severe damage can take days or weeks to repair. Safe Electricity wants you to know how to stay safe and comfortable during winter power outages. Preparation for power outages begins before cold temperatures set in. Your home should be properly insulated, with caulking and weather-stripping around doors, windows, and other cracks. If you have trees with limbs that could fall on power lines, the limbs should be trimmed by a professional.

You should also have an emergency kit ready to go. The kit should have flashlights, a radio, batteries, nonperishable food, water, medicines, and extra blankets.

If you have done all of this preparation, a winter power outage will be less stressful for you. When a storm hits and you are without power, keep the following in mind:

- Avoid going outside. Power lines and other energized equipment could be hidden by snow, ice and debris.
- Switch off lights and appliances to prevent damaging appliances and overloading circuits when power is

restored. Leave one lamp or light switch on as a signal for when your power is restored.

- Treat all downed lines as energized, and dangerous. Downed power lines do not have to be sparking, arcing or moving to be dangerous.
- To prevent water pipes from freezing, keep faucets turned on slightly so that water drips from the tap. Know how to shut off water valves just in case a pipe bursts.
- Check on elderly or disabled friends and neighbors.
- Stay inside and dress in warm, layered clothing.
- Close off unneeded rooms.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Cover windows at night.

- Stuff towels and rags underneath doors to keep the heat in.
- Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home. Infants or people over the age of 65 are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends, relatives or in a shelter if you can't keep your home warm.
- Consider installing ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) for electrical outlets in areas that might be affected by melting snow or ice. This will help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries. Portable GFCIs that do not require tools for installation can also be purchased for winter emergency supply kits.

Here at Eastern Illini, we hope you will not have to endure an extended winter storm related power outage this winter. If you do, though, a little knowledge and preparation can make the experience much less stressful.



# Cooperative Benefits: Nominating Petitions Available

**Nominating petitions for the June 8, 2017 director election will be available February 23.**

John Lee of Wellington, Jason Neiman of Chatsworth, John Rothermel of Homer, Steve Smith of Broadlands, and Doug Walder of Hoopeston have been appointed by Eastern Illini's Board of Directors to each serve a 1-year term on the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee will meet at Eastern Illini's headquarters in Paxton on Wednesday, April 12, 2017, to review the qualifications of all candidates who file nominating petitions to determine their eligibility to serve as Eastern Illini Directors.

Directors in Directorate Districts 2, 5, and 9 will be elected at Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting on June 8. Incumbent directors Tom Schlatter of Chatsworth, District

2; Kevin Moore of Hoopeston, District 5; and Jay Hageman of Fairmount, District 9, have indicated they will seek reelection.

Nominating petitions can be picked up at 8 a.m. on Thursday, February 23, 2017, at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, 330 W. Ottawa, Paxton. Each co-op member who desires to be elected to the board of directors must have a petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members of the cooperative. Petitions must be filed at Eastern Illini's headquarters in Paxton by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 7, 2017.

The nominating process is conducted in accordance with the following provision of the Cooperative's bylaws, Article III, Section 3.5: Nominations: *Any member of the Cooperative in good standing who desires to be elected to its Board of Directors may be nominated by petition*

*signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members and filed with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting of members. Nominations from the floor shall not be permitted. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative shall cause to be prepared and posted at the principal office of the Cooperative at least forty-five (45) days before the annual meeting, a list of the nominations for Directors thus filed with him or her.*

*A specimen ballot marked "Ballot for Directors" containing the names and addresses of all nominees listed in the order determined by lot conducted by the Board of Directors of the Cooperative shall be printed in or mailed with the notice of the meeting. The Secretary/Treasurer shall also have printed in or mailed with the said notice of the meeting or separately not less than seven (7) days prior to said annual meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the district from which they are to be elected.*



*Eastern Illini's Board is made up of co-op member/owners just like you. Pictured, from left to right, are board members Steve Gordon (Rantoul), Brad Ludwig (Fithian), Chad Larimore (Bement), Harold Loy (Beaverville), Jay Hageman (Fairmount), Kevin Moore (Hoopeston), Steve Meenen (Melvin), Tom Schlatter (Chairman, Chatsworth), Bruce Ristow (Cissna Park).*

# Your Account: Take Control with SmartHub

## With SmartHub, you have complete control over your electric account.

SmartHub is the quick and simple way to view and pay your bill, report outages, manage your electric account, and track your electric use...all from the palm of your hand or from your computer!

With SmartHub, you have access to charts and graphs that let you easily track your monthly, daily, and even hourly electric use. You can also view weather data to see just how much of an impact temperature has on your electric use (see page 2 for more information).

## How to Register for SmartHub

Visit our website at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop) and click on the SmartHub link to get started. From there you simply

register online. Once registered, you are free to use either the website or the free smart phone and tablet app, which is available for both iOS and Android systems.

## Managing Multiple Accounts

If you have more than one electric account within your membership, you will have access to all of them using SmartHub. You will see your total due for all the accounts, and can pay them all in one easy step.

## Notifications

In the "Notifications" section of SmartHub you can easily set up several contact methods, including text messaging so you can quickly know when your bill is available and other important information.

## Take Control of Your Account

To really leverage the power of SmartHub, visit the "Billing & Payments" section. There, you can easily pay your bill. But it doesn't stop there. You can also track your previous bill amounts and your previous electric use with graphs and statistical information (see Page 2 of this publication for more information).

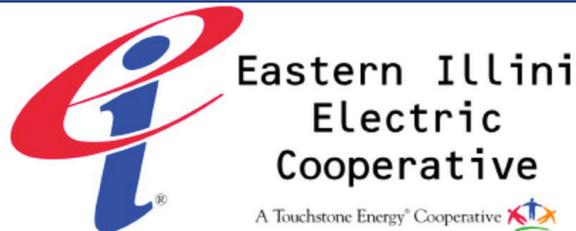
You can find patterns in your electric use to make it easier to manage your energy dollars and try to identify ways you can lower your bill.



SmartHub is your online and app portal to:

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

Visit [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop) to get started!



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Electric  
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## Online Account Access

Enter e-mail address & password to login

E-Mail Address

Password

Login

[Can't access your account?](#)

**New User?** [Sign up to access our Self Service site.](#)

Version: 4.0.7



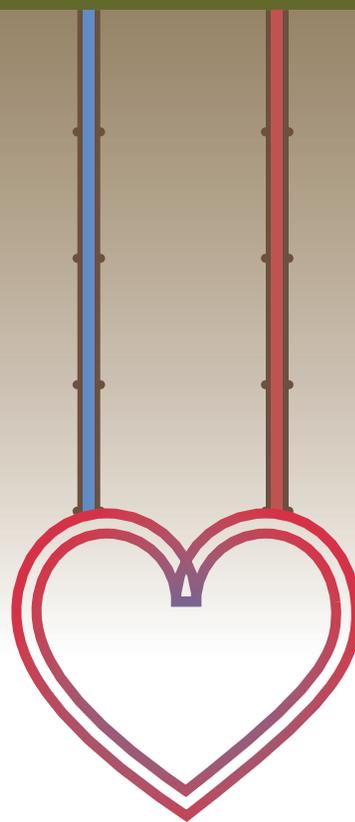


# Looking for love: Geothermal Heating & Cooling

## PROFILE

- ♥ I can lower your utility bills
- ♥ I'm safe
- ♥ I'm very quiet, both inside and outside
- ♥ I love the environment
- ♥ I'm never too hot, or too cold
- ♥ I don't complain
- ♥ I'm low maintenance
- ♥ I don't take up much space
- ♥ I'm reliable
- ♥ You don't have to buy me flowers, candy or jewelry on Valentine's Day

There are many geothermal systems still looking for a long-term relationship. They will save you money and keep you comfortable. For more information about helping make a connection, contact Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative at 800-824-5102 or [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop).



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Electric  
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