

# PowerLines

October 2017

## Cooperation among Cooperatives

During October, we participate in National Cooperative Month, in which people across the country celebrate the movement's history and economic impact. The sixth cooperative principle is Cooperation among Cooperatives. It seems that national or regional catastrophes bring out the best traits of people.

Even before Hurricane Irma had entered Florida, electric cooperatives in the southeast U.S. had requested mutual aid assistance from their cooperative family.

Illinois cooperatives responded in a big way. EIEC contributed to this effort by sending ten line personnel along with equipment and trucks. As of this writing, they ended up initially providing restoration help in the Atlanta, Georgia area.

We, too, will request help from other cooperatives when needed. Generally, our biggest and most widespread outage risk is a devastating ice storm. However, severe storms with widespread straight line winds (a derecho) could also impact our service territory.

Our mission is to provide you - our member/owners - a combination of reliable electric supply and excellent service from our loyal and dedicated

employees at a reasonable cost, given the constraints of our low density service territory. We have been fortunate in the recent past to have missed any widespread outage conditions, and our distribution rates have remained stable since 2013.



**MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT**

We hope that we, as employees, exceed your expectations daily. We take great pride in our ability to provide you with electric service.

Please know that we are constantly seeking ways to improve this service and to continue providing a reliable and cost effective supply of electricity. However, we also understand that we are not just in the business of selling electricity, but as a cooperative, are part of a larger family of businesses to help improve your quality of life.

Please take a moment to complete our annual survey on page 3. We value your input on how we are doing, and how we can improve our service to you.

Please put safety at the forefront of your harvest and daily activities.

Cooperatively,

*Bob Hunzinger*

## In this issue:

- Air Filter Efficiency
- Member Survey - Win \$25
- Utility Pole Accidents
- Lineman Safety
- National Co-op Month



SmartHub is your online and app portal to:

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

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

## Complete our survey for a chance at \$25

Simply complete the short survey on page 3 of this publication for your chance to win a \$25 bill credit from Eastern Illini Electric Co-op!

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

# Energy Efficiency:

## Not all air filters are created equal

Forced air heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems require effective air filtration for optimum energy efficiency, maintaining clean(ish) ductwork and good indoor air quality. Air filters should be changed regularly.

How often they need changing depends upon a number of factors including, but not limited to:

- Presence of pets that shed
- Amount of carpeted versus hardwood floors
- Where you live – amounts of dust, pollen, etc.
- Use of wood-burning supplemental heat sources
- Presence of cigarette smoke

The air inside our homes is full of particles originating from inside and outside sources. As the name “forced air” implies, conditioned air is blown into the house through ductwork. In order to operate efficiently, the air supplied is returned to the system for reconditioning, taking with it all the particles in the air and the occasional “tumbleweed” of pet hair that many of us are familiar with.

This junk-laden air flows through a filter before encountering the HVAC equipment. For cooling, there is usually an A-frame arrangement of what looks like car radiators. For heating, it is generally a combustion chamber. Without a filter, the cooling coils would get clogged and the heating side would burn off whatever was in the air.

Air filters trap a lot of debris that otherwise would end up back in the house, stuck in ductwork, clogging HVAC equipment – or in our lungs. But enough with the HVAC and air

quality primer. Let’s tackle types of air filters.

Filters have more choices than you can shake a stick at. Fortunately, they can be broken down into two nicely defined categories, making the selection process manageable. The two are:

- Permanent or disposable
- Flat or pleated media (with a handy MERV rating)

Disposable are the most prevalent. Some in the flat media group look like they will stop only particles larger than a golf ball. They have flimsy cardboard frames and a thin, flat mesh you can easily see through. While they are cheap, don’t waste your money. Your HVAC system and lungs deserve better.

Pleated filters perform better using media you cannot see through. While they look impervious, air can move through under pressure leaving its airborne cargo trapped. Pleated filters are better.

Remember MERV? That is a rating system that tells you how effective a filter is at trapping particles. Standing for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value, it’s a measure of efficiency. The scale runs from one to 16 (higher is better) and is based on trapping particles three to 10 microns in diameter. Research shows that residential filters with a MERV rating between seven and 13 are likely to be as effective as true HEPA (high-efficiency particulate arrestance) filters. This

class of filter is used in clean room manufacturing and at the extreme end can trap particles much smaller than the diameter of a human hair, as small as one micron.

So, should you jump in and grab a supply of high MERV filters?

Not without some research. All filters increase resistance to air flow. HVAC systems are designed to operate at a particular pressure and should support MERV ratings of one to four. A higher MERV value increases resistance, making the system work harder. It loses efficiency and increases wear on operating components.

So, how do you decide which level of filter to use? If you have your system’s operating manual or can grab it online, check for recommendations. Otherwise, go with a decent (MERV three to five) pleated filter and check it once a month to see how it is performing. Also, check to see if the dust inside abates.

Spend a little more and breathe a lot easier with a regular schedule of air filter replacement. A simple change that pays big dividends.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Cooler temps will be here soon! No matter what kind of heating system you have in your home, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. Contact a licensed professional to inspect your system *before* the winter chill arrives.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



# Complete our survey for a chance at \$25

Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey. Answer the following questions, then simply mail it to us along with your electric bill payment. You can also complete the survey on our website at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop).

**All submitted surveys will be eligible to receive one of 10 \$25 bill credits!**

Please rate your satisfaction with Eastern Illini on each of the following:

	not at all satisfied									very satisfied
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing excellent customer service	<input type="radio"/>									
Ability to resolve issues or problems	<input type="radio"/>									
Conducting business in a professional manner	<input type="radio"/>									
Friendly and courteous employees	<input type="radio"/>									
Knowledgeable and competent employees	<input type="radio"/>									
Charging reasonable rates	<input type="radio"/>									
Providing valuable programs and services	<input type="radio"/>									
Delivering good value for the money	<input type="radio"/>									
Community involvement and support	<input type="radio"/>									
Providing information about energy efficiency	<input type="radio"/>									
Supporting renewable energy	<input type="radio"/>									
Having a minimum of outages	<input type="radio"/>									
Restoring power quickly after an outage	<input type="radio"/>									

For the following four questions, please rate your answers based on a scale of 1 to 10.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Considering all your experiences, how satisfied overall are you with Eastern Illini?

not at all satisfied                                            very satisfied

To what extent has Eastern Illini fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?

falls short                                        exceeds

Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think Eastern Illini compares?

not very close                                        very close

If you could choose your electric company, how likely is it that you would choose Eastern Illini again?

very unlikely                                        very likely

How do you view your relationship with Eastern Illini?     I'm a member/owner     I'm a customer

Do you currently purchase high-speed internet access at your home?     Yes     No

If so, what type of internet service do you have?

Satellite     Wireless     DSL     Cable     Other \_\_\_\_\_

How much are you willing to pay each month for high-speed internet service?

\$40 - \$50     \$51 - \$60     \$61 - \$70     \$71 - \$80     More than \$80     Not interested

Please list your account number so we can contact you if you are one of the winners of the \$25 bill credit drawing.

Your account number can be found on your electric bill. Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT TO DO: IF YOUR CAR CRASHES INTO A UTILITY POLE

Accidents happen. Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

**Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!**

## IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS **NO** FIRE:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.

## IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS **A** FIRE:

Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire.

### To exit safely:

- Jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.



Eastern Illini  
Electric  
Cooperative

# Safety: Give 'em a Brake!

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative utility crews want to remind you to stay safe when you come upon a work zone. Orange cones, flashing signals and other warning signs are placed along roadways to slow traffic when linemen are repairing or replacing electrical lines and poles.

When the weather knocks out electricity, linemen arrive on the scene as quickly as possible, to restore power.

This often requires establishing a work zone, sometimes on a narrow country road or in a rain or snow storm. Linemen may need to place their equipment in traffic lanes and at intersections to quickly repair the problem.

Work done by EIEC linemen often involves electrical lines high above the ground - lines usually carrying high-voltage electricity. Linemen must be fully engaged and alert to do their jobs and avoid injury or death. They need you to take precautions and pay attention when you come upon a utility truck in a work zone.

To help prevent fatalities and injuries, follow these guidelines when you are driving and come upon an electric utility truck and work zone:



**1. Keep a safe distance** between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment, and workers.

---

**2. Be patient.** Traffic delays are sometimes inevitable, so try to allow time for unexpected occurrences in your schedule.

---

**3. Obey all signs** and utility crew instructions. Use caution, slow down and be prepared to stop, if necessary, for crew members or on-coming traffic.

---

**4. Reduce speed** even more during inclement weather. Rain, snow and ice can cause hazardous situations for linemen as they repair and replace electrical lines and poles. Crews are often

working under extreme conditions and need your assistance to decrease speed to avoid an accident.

---

**5. Minimize distractions** Avoid activities that limit your awareness of your surroundings. Avoid operating a radio or cell phone and limit eating while driving. Focus on the road ahead and be prepared for any potential dangers or hazards.

---

The next time you are driving on a rural road and come upon a work zone and linemen, follow these five guidelines and keep everyone alive.

Safety comes first at Eastern Illini when it comes to you, our member/owners, and our employees.



Providing powerful solutions  
Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative  
is always on for you!

## Co-op Month 2017

### 8 reasons to support your local co-op, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

1. A co-op is not-for-profit. After bills are paid, any remaining funds are either reinvested in the co-op or retained as capital credits and returned to members when it is financially prudent to do so.
2. Eastern Illini provides resources like the Co-op Connection Card Program that offers discounts at local businesses and national retailers. You can receive discounts on prescription drugs and other services.
3. Eastern Illini is headquartered in the area it serves. EIEC supports the community through fundraisers, donations and community involvement.
4. Eastern Illini provides energy expertise on efficiency upgrades, generators, geothermal and renewable energy options.
5. The Seven Cooperative Principles, to which all cooperatives adhere, insure that co-ops are ethical businesses.
6. As a member-owner, Eastern Illini puts your needs first.
7. Cooperation among cooperatives – cooperatives help one another by pooling resources to provide better products and services at a lower price.
8. One member, one vote – each cooperative member has equal voting rights to help guide the cooperative's business.

Call in or click in  
800-824-5102  
[www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)



Eastern Illini  
Electric  
Cooperative

