

# PowerLines

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

November 2014

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Shining light on those in the fight

## PLUS:

Geothermal is for everyone  
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## Office Closing

Our office in Paxton, and our warehouse facilities in Gilman and Pesotum will be closed on November 11 in honor of Veteran's Day, and on November 27 and 28 as our employees celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with their families.

As always, please call us at 800-824-5102 if you experience an outage or other issue.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Keeping your lights on

**System reliability is one of our key organizational goals in providing service to our member/owners.**

All of our employees are dedicated to providing you with safe and reliable service. A special thanks goes out to our employees who often work outside in extreme weather and challenging physical conditions.

During our recent member meetings, we received a variety of questions. One topic often discussed (and complimented) was our level of service and reliability.

### How do we measure reliability?

There are three main types of system outages that we typically track. Routine outages that occur on our distribution system, larger outages that occur on higher voltage transmission lines, and major outages related to storms.

Our goal for 2014 is to keep the outages on the distribution system - the ones that we have the most influence on through our construction and system maintenance practices - to an average of less than 2.5 hours per account.

These outages are typically caused by wind, trees, weather, animals, vehicle incidents, equipment failure, or planned outages for safety or operational reasons.

With 8,760 hours in a year, that means our target success rate is keeping your lights on 99.97% of the time. Based on our performance to date in 2014, we are on track to exceed that number, with an annualized value of approximately 1.8



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

hours per account.

**“We have also initiated the process in the St. Joseph and Homer area to construct a new substation that will upgrade our distribution facilities and improve service and reliability in that area.”**

There is less that we can control when it comes to outages on the higher voltage transmission system.

Our generation and transmission cooperative, Prairie Power,

Inc. (PPI), has contractual rights for delivery of power to EIEC through Ameren's transmission facilities in our service territory. You might notice these outages when larger areas of our distribution system are out, or nearby towns and cities are also affected.

We know that whatever the reason, any outage is an inconvenience to our member/owners. In addition to quick response by our employees when an outage occurs, we also work proactively with PPI and Ameren to address issues and improvements to the transmission network to improve

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# Geothermal is for everyone

## Now is the time to consider a geothermal system.

Your own backyard has the potential to be an energy source for heating and cooling comfort. Outdoor air temperatures fluctuate throughout the year with the changing seasons.

In contrast, ground temperatures about four to six feet below the Earth's surface remain relatively moderate and constant all year. That's because the Earth absorbs heat energy from the sun. A geothermal system circulates a water-based solution through a buried loop system to take advantage of these constant temperatures.

A single piece of equipment has the ability to heat and cool your home, while providing some or all of your home's hot water as well. Geothermal systems can save you 30 percent to 70 percent on your monthly utility bills.

### Positive cash flow

From the day you install your new geothermal system, you'll see immediate savings.

A perfect example of this is in new home construction. The extra cost

of installing geothermal marginally raises the mortgage payment but the energy savings more than make up the difference.

So, not only do you have better comfort, lower energy costs, and higher property value, it's like someone is paying you to live in your new home from day one! Retrofitted systems in existing homes can work much the same way.

### Heating cycle

During the heating cycle, the fluid circulates through the loop extracting heat from the ground. The heat energy is transferred to the geothermal unit.

The unit compresses the extracted heat to a high temperature and delivers it to your home through a normal duct system or radiant heat system.

### Cooling cycle

For cooling, the process is simply reversed. Because the earth is much cooler than the air temperatures on a hot day, the geothermal system removes heat from the home and deposits it into the ground. The fluid is cooled by the ground temperatures and returned to the unit for cooling your home.

comfort and savings for many years into the future. Your local geothermal dealer will help you select the proper loop system based on a site survey and by conducting a detailed energy analysis of your home.

### What are people saying?

With well over 1,000 geothermal systems installed in Eastern Illini's service territory, it is a good bet that some of your friends and neighbors already have a geothermal system. Here are some of their thoughts:

Aaron Tuller: "It's quiet and clean, and I appreciate that there is no open flame in the house. I actually put in a propane furnace first, but then quickly replaced it with the geothermal system. I'm now saving over \$1,000 a year on my utility bills."

Ken Suits: "We like it because of the efficiency and comfort. It provides clean, even heat. We liked the geothermal system so much that we convinced our daughter to install it in her home. Now they love it just as much."

Dale Albin: "We've had our system for about nine years now and are still very happy with it. The house is a constant temperature, and we are very comfortable. Even during heating season, our total electric bill is under \$250 a month."

### Tax savings

Through 2016, you can get a 30 percent tax credit for the entire cost of your geothermal system. That tax savings makes the normally higher up-front cost more manageable.

For more information, visit the energy efficiency section of [eiec.coop](http://eiec.coop) or call us at 800-824-5102.



## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

To save energy this month, try lowering your water heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy you consume. Turn the water heater's temperature to the warm setting, which is around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy *and* help you save on your monthly bill.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

### The heart of the system – geothermal loops

Your loop system is the heart of geothermal technology. Regardless of the option you select, it will deliver over 300-plus percent efficient

# Keeping your lights on, continued

service and reliability.

This past winter, the wind, cold, and occasional icing contributed to some challenging conditions on the transmission system in the Clifton and Gilman area. EIEC and PPI worked with Ameren to identify specific problem areas and solutions.

We have also initiated the process in the St. Joseph and Homer area to construct a new substation that will upgrade our distribution facilities

and improve service and reliability in that area. We plan to break ground in 2015.

These are just two examples of what we do every day to provide excellent member service and reliability.

My mom was a fan of Ivory soap when I was growing up; we still use it today in my family. Do you remember their slogan? Ivory soap is 99 and 44/100 percent pure. Not bad for soap, but we take pride in providing much better.

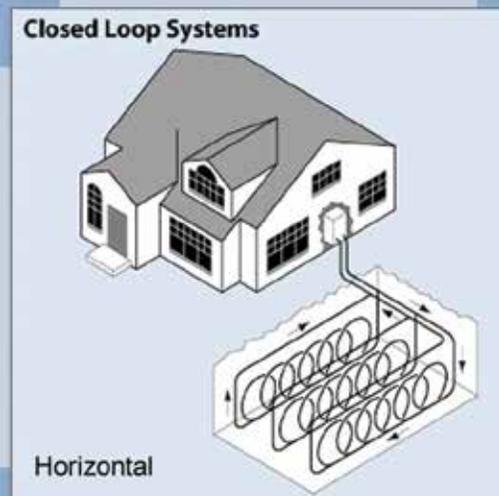
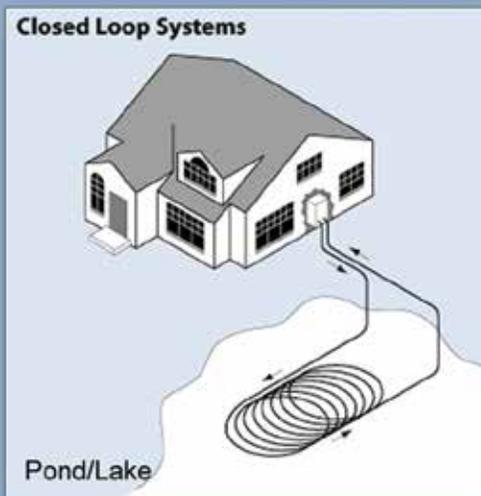
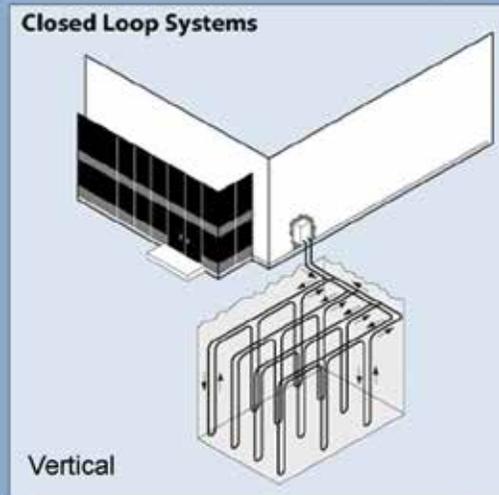
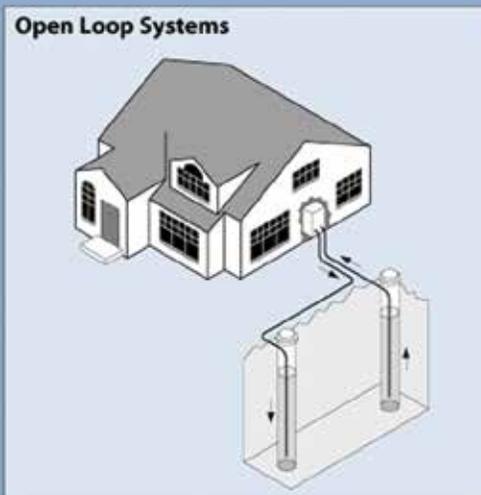
It is hard to believe, but the holiday season is fast approaching. Remember to take time to thank our many armed forces Veterans on the 11th. Travel safe and enjoy family and friends over the Thanksgiving period. We do have many things for which to be thankful.

Sincerely,

*Bob Hunzinger*

## Types of Geothermal Heat Pump Systems

There are four basic configurations for geothermal heat pump ground loops. Three are "closed-loop systems," where a water and antifreeze solution is continually moved through pipes; the fourth is an "open-loop system," where groundwater or well water is used.



# Moore appointed to co-op board

## Board representation from fellow members is a key benefit of being part of a cooperative.

Kevin Moore, of rural Hoopeston, has been appointed to Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors, representing board directorate district 5.

Eastern Illini's Chairman of the Board Thomas Schlatter noted, "We're very happy to welcome Kevin to the board. He will be a great asset to our membership."

The board selected Moore after an extensive search of potential candidates residing in district 5.

Moore takes the place of Marion Chesnut, who recently retired from the board after moving out of the cooperative's service territory.

Moving forward, there will be

an election at Eastern Illini's 2015 annual meeting to determine who will represent district 5 for the duration of the term, which will expire in 2017.

"I'm excited for this opportunity, and I

thank the board for their confidence," Moore said. "I've spent almost my whole life in rural east central Illinois and I can't wait to do what I can in support of our members."

Moore was born and raised in rural Rossville and attended Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology where he earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He now farms in rural Hoopeston. Moore has three children; one attends the University of Illinois, and the other two are in middle school.

Moore is involved with the Hoopeston Area Healthcare Foundation, and is very active with the Hoopeston Area Youth Baseball League. His wife, Kasey, is an instructor at Danville Area Community College.

Please join us in welcoming Moore to the Eastern Illini family.



# Capital Credit retirement announced

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

Later this month, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will begin mailing capital credit checks to member/owners that received electricity in 1982 and the first part of 1983. The payments are part of an overall retirement of \$1,382,148.

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, "I'm excited that the board has decided to retire these

capital credits. This is a great benefit of being a member and a major part of the cooperative business model."

### What are capital credits?

Any profits made by Eastern Illini are referred to as margins. Margins result when our revenue is more than our expenses. 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 holding on to the capital credit allocations, we can lessen or eliminate the need to raise rates or borrow money (which could also lead to higher rates) 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."

# Take control with SmartHub

**SmartHub can help you manage your electric account - from your computer, phone, or tablet.**

You may have heard about SmartHub, Eastern Illini's new and innovative tool for account management and more.

SmartHub can help you take control of your electricity and your electric account like never before.

## Features, galore!

SmartHub has several features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, view your electricity use, contact our member care representatives, and much more.

As soon as you log in, you'll be able to view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks... or taps, if you're using the app!

## Track your electric use

You'll be able to see your current bill, along with bills from the previous month or even the previous summer, if you want to compare costs. Not only will you see your billing history, but you'll be able to view your actual electricity use. You can see how your use is trending over time, which will

allow you to take steps to reduce your consumption and lower your bill.

## Payments are a breeze

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment either through the website or your mobile device, you'll be able to securely store your payment



## With SmartHub you can:

- View your bill
- Pay your bill
- Track your payment history
- Check your daily and monthly kWh use
- Contact our office
- Update your account information
- Keep up with news & events

information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, the information will be saved, and it will only take a couple of clicks.

You'll also be able to manage your account notifications with SmartHub. By logging in to SmartHub on the website, you'll be able to select how you want to be notified about your bill, including email

and text messaging. You'll even be able to set usage thresholds so that you'll know when you're using more electricity than you'd like to help you keep your bill as low as possible.

If you do need to drop off a payment or stop by our office, SmartHub can help you with that, as well. Use SmartHub's map feature on your GPS-enabled mobile device to quickly find our office location in Paxton.

## Contact us easily

You can also contact us with a request or a question for our member service group. SmartHub's contact feature makes it quick and easy.

Do you want to get the latest news and information from Eastern Illini? Stay connected with us through SmartHub. With the SmartHub news feed, you'll get our latest news, updates and more without needing to leave the app or the website.

## How do you get SmartHub?

Access the online version of SmartHub by visiting our website at [eiec.coop](http://eiec.coop).

To download the app on your mobile device, search for SmartHub on the Apple App Store for iPhones and iPads, or on the Google Play Marketplace for your Android phone or tablet.

For support with SmartHub, please contact our office at 800-824-5102.



Providing value  
for your  
electric dollar

**Did you know that you can get text message updates to let you know when your bill is available to view and pay? Sign up through SmartHub by visiting our website at [eiec.coop](http://eiec.coop).**

**This is one more simple way that we are looking out for you!**

# Pink Power

**Eastern Illini employees supported breast cancer awareness month in many ways.**

Almost everyone has been impacted by breast cancer at some level. During October, you probably saw more pink - especially on men - than normal.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's employees participated in several breast cancer awareness initiatives during the month.

Lee National Denim Days featured an opportunity for employees to donate \$25 for the "right" to wear jeans to work all week. That program resulted in a donation of over \$800. Eastern Illini Accountant Gayle Ford, who



spearheaded the program noted, "This is a simple way we can promote breast cancer awareness. We've all seen friends and family battle breast cancer, and this is our way to shine a light on those battles."

The cooperative also provided pink hard hats for linemen and pink shirts for inside employees. Ford said, "I'm excited that the outside guys wore the pink hard hats all month. It was an amazing show of support from them."

