



Hi-Lites



Navigating Reliability in a Changing Energy Landscape

Luke Johnson
General Manager

Illinois is the first state in the Midwest to set a timetable for reaching 100% renewable energy in 2050. A component of Illinois' Clean Energy Law is focused on gradually eliminating the use of coal and natural gas, with a requirement for private coal facilities to achieve zero emissions by 2030, and municipal coal and natural gas facilities by 2045. In addition, Illinois aims to put 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030.

As your cooperative manager, it's my responsibility to keep you informed about any developments that may affect the reliability of your electric supply. This loss of baseload generation capacity in Illinois without dependable replacement can strain the grid and jeopardize reliability, particularly during times of extreme hot or cold temperatures.

Nuclear power is often touted as a reliable and low-carbon energy option. Still, the development of nuclear plants is notoriously slow and costly, sometimes taking up to a decade or more.

Alternative energy sources such as wind and solar are gaining greater prominence within the energy landscape. Despite offering a novel approach to power

generation, they also bring forth challenges linked to intermittency. When the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow, we can't rely on these sources for consistency and dependability.

Here are a few things that we are doing to overcome these challenges:

1. Advocating for policies that promote an "all of the above" energy approach while maintaining reliability,
2. Continuing to upgrade and modernize our infrastructure to optimize energy distribution, improve system resilience, and reduce outage durations, and
3. Researching possible load curtailment and demand side management strategies.

As we strive to enhance our infrastructure to meet the rising demands for energy in the future, we are also faced with a dwindling supply of dependable energy. Put simply, even if we upgrade all our equipment, it won't improve the reliability if there isn't enough energy available to deliver.

The energy choices and policies made today will dictate the availability of resources to meet tomorrow's demands. Electric cooperatives will persist in our advocacy efforts to guarantee a consistent supply of electricity for our members' everyday needs.

MISSION STATEMENT

To safely provide our member-owners with reliable electric service, superior customer service, and practical energy solutions, all at reasonable prices.

3906 Broadway
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

618-244-5151
Toll-Free: 800-244-5151
Fax: 618-244-1496
NEW Pay by phone:
844-968-1991

**Mt. Vernon
Office Hours**
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Salem
Office Hours**
Tuesday - Thursday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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HAPPY EARTH DAY
22 APRIL



Free Milkweed Seed Packets in April!

Throughout the month of April, while supplies last, you can pick up a free packet of milkweed seeds from our Mt. Vernon and Salem offices!

Why milkweed?

Monarch caterpillars eat milkweed. In fact, the monarch butterfly is also known as the “milkweed butterfly.” A monarch butterfly begins life as a tiny egg on the bottom of a milkweed leaf. Monarchs lay their eggs exclusively on milkweed because it will provide enough food for the caterpillars once they emerge. The caterpillars feed on the milkweed for approximately 2 weeks.

Why are monarch butterflies so important?

Monarch butterflies have a short lifespan of 4-5 weeks, but in that short amount of time, they are able to pollinate plants, crops, flowers, and trees. Their survival is important because 35% of the world’s food comes from pollinated plants that we depend on.

How do you grow milkweed?

Germination rates will be greatly reduced if not planted correctly. Milkweed seeds can be very slow to germinate and do take time and patience. For best results and to speed up the germination process, place the seeds in a wet paper towel in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 30 days prior to planting. Then plant the seeds in a sunny place about 1/2” deep and water them for at least two weeks.

After about two months, your milkweed plant will be big enough for caterpillars to eat. Each monarch caterpillar will eat through about 20 leaves!

Milkweed plants are food for caterpillars but



poisonous to humans. Do not get milkweed sap on your skin or in your eyes. Milkweed is also toxic if eaten, so keep plants away from young children and pets.



Cooperative Calendar

April 12, 2024

Petitions must be filed in person along with an affidavit stating that the person filing the petition meets the qualifications to become or remain a board member. Petitions must be filed at our Mt. Vernon office no later than close of business on April 12th, 2024

July 13, 2024

Annual Meeting - Mt. Vernon

TCEC recognized at Safety and Energy Conference in Springfield



Director of Operations Brad Grubb (above) accepted awards for 2023 Best Lost Time Rate and Best Incident Rate on behalf of Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Safety is of utmost importance, especially in the electric industry. To further safety education, supervisors from electric cooperatives across Illinois gathered in Springfield to attend the annual Safety and Energy Conference Jan. 31-Feb. 1, hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).

The conference focused on safety and leadership in the energy industry, and attendees received relevant training to keep them informed and safe while on the job.

During the conference, safety leadership awards were presented to recognize individual and cooperative-wide commitment to safe work culture. Tri-County Electric Cooperative was recognized with a 2023 award for Best Lost Time Rate and a 2023 award for Best Incident Rate.

The AIEC Cooperative Safety Leadership Awards recognize safety awareness and reward cooperatives that demonstrate safety leadership, promote safety culture, and go above and beyond normal safety expectations.



Strawberry Brownies

Ingredients

- 1 box strawberry cake mix
- 2 large eggs
- 1/3 cup vegetable or canola oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Glaze Ingredients

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp. strawberry preserves
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons milk
- 1 Tablespoon cream cheese

Brownies

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray an 8x8 pan with nonstick spray or line with foil or a glass baking dish lined with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, mix strawberry cake mix, eggs, oil, and vanilla extract. Press into the prepared pan. Bake for 18-22 minutes, until just done. Let cool completely

Strawberry Brownie Frosting

In a small bowl, whisk together powdered sugar, strawberry jam, cream cheese, and milk. Spread over the cooled strawberry brownies. Enjoy after brownies have been cooled and frosted or store them in a single layer in an airtight container in the fridge.

Plan Ahead to Avoid Supply Chain Issues

If you are thinking about upgrading your current service or installing a new service, please let us know as soon as possible. Supply chain issues have caused a much longer lead time on materials here at the cooperative. Some materials have a 1-year lead time!

Manufacturing and shipping delays have resulted in extended lead times to acquire routine materials and equipment. Unfortunately, these lead times are beyond our control. We ask that you plan ahead and notify us as soon as possible so that there is plenty of lead time for your materials to arrive.

Going Solar? We Have Resources for You!

Are you interested in installing solar? Requesting three bids from qualified contractors before hiring for any project can potentially save you a lot of money and hardship down the road. You may be surprised at how different the prices for each contractor can be! We know that the cheapest option isn't necessarily the best option - "You get what you pay for".

However, we have seen instances where members were taken advantage of. We want you to be informed before making a large investment. It takes a little more homework to get three bids, but it's time well spent.

In addition to getting bids, make sure you review any contracts and service agreements thoroughly.

Solar units are a major purchase, so discretion and careful review is necessary. Once you have done your due diligence, you can rest easy in your choice, knowing that you made an informed decision.

Want to learn more? On our website, you can find Tri-County Electric Cooperative's solar policies and interconnection agreements. You can also find informational resources, including:

- Solar Energy Brochure for TCEC Members
- Steps to Solar Commissioning
- Questions to ask a Solar Contractor
- Links to State and Federal Solar Resources

*For more information, visit:
www.tricountycoop.com/solar-energy*



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

It's Easy! It's Free!

Planning a digging project in your yard or on your property? If you dig without knowing what is located below, you could damage an underground line.

Not only could you become seriously injured, but you will be responsible for the cost of repairs. To avoid hassles and fines, call 811, the Call Before You Dig number, at

least two business days prior to breaking ground. (811 locators do not mark privately owned underground lines or pipes, such as service to outbuildings, sprinkler systems or invisible fences.)

An uneventful digging project is the best kind to have.

**Safe
Electricity.org®**