

INSIDE

20B

Petitions available for June 2021 board elections

20C

Surge Protection 101

20D

Rate change beginning March 1


Staying safe during an outage



Welcome EnerStar's new employees

EnerStar is proud to announce three employees have been added to the co-op team. Scott Wilmes (left) has been hired as a 2nd year apprentice lineman. A resident of the Clinton, Ind. area, Scott has experience in the electric field and with operating heavy equipment. Paris resident Carter Hays (center) and Martinsville resident Colton Propst (right) have both been hired in the forestry department. While they did not attend at the same time, both men graduated from the Southeast Lineman Training Center in Trenton, Georgia. Congratulations guys and welcome to the co-op!



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

11597 Illinois Highway 1
Paris, IL 61944
800-635-4145
Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Petitions available for June 2022 board elections

EnerStar Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members is set for June 2, and cooperative members have the opportunity to run in the upcoming board of directors election. Members who are eligible candidates and can commit the time and energy to the member-owned corporation may want to consider this opportunity.

The role of director is a huge commitment – of time, energy and education – more than most members realize. Thankfully, there are members who are willing to serve in this important capacity. Decisions made can affect the membership into the next generation.

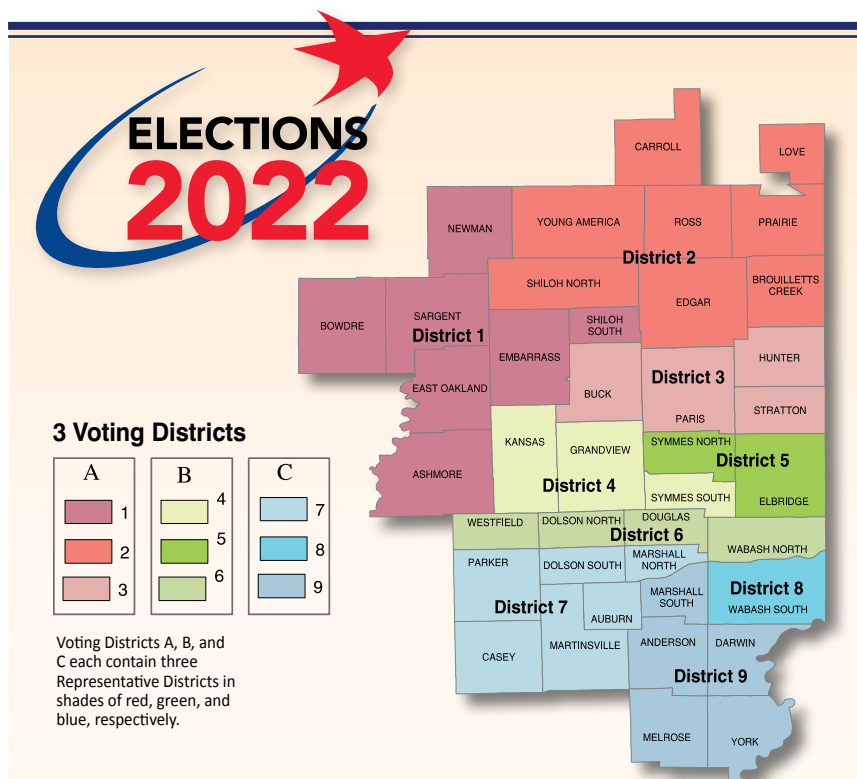
For the 2022 election, EnerStar has three director seats, which are three year terms in Districts 3A, 6B, and 8C.

Members interested in running for the board should contact the cooperative office to verify eligibility and receive a petition packet. The packet includes all the necessary information one would need to learn more about the cooperative and the role of the director.

Board petitions require the signatures of 15 EnerStar members who live in the candidate's Voting District. All members signing petitions must have an original membership card on file and must be currently receiving electricity from the cooperative. Candidates will also need to check with cooperative personnel to make certain they reside within the correct Representative District.

Petition packets will be available beginning February 22, 2022.

Completed petitions may be turned in to the cooperative office from March 18, 2022 to April 4, 2022. Candidates should also provide a short biographical sketch, 250 words or less, and a digital photo



Representative Board District Descriptions 3 year terms

✓ Voting District 3A

District 2 - Currently served by Dale English, Paris

The Townships of Buck, Paris, Hunter, and Stratton in Edgar County, Illinois

✓ Voting District 6B

District 4 - Currently served by Jeff Murphy, Marshall

The Townships of Westfield and Douglas in Clark County, Illinois; all that portion of the Township of

Dolson lying north of the 2000th Road in Clark County, Illinois; and all that portion of the Township of Wabash lying north of Interstate Highway 70 in Clark County, Illinois

✓ Voting District 8C

District 7 - Currently served by Greg Robinson, Marshall

All that portion of the Township of Wabash lying south of Interstate Highway 70 in Clark County, Illinois

to be published with the Annual Meeting Notice. Candidates should also make plans to attend the 2022 Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday, June 2, 2022.

The tentative mailing date of the official notice of the meeting will is

late April. Please watch for further information in this magazine, the co-op's website, and the co-op's social media for changes that may happen due to COVID.

Surge Protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home.


Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere—unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Similar to advice for a surge caused



SURGE PROTECTION
Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- **Easy to use (just plug them in)**
- **Protect electronics plugged into the device**
- **Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event**

REMEMBER:
Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.

by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage—then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are two ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases,

whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a qualified electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact EnerStar Electric Cooperative's Tim Haddix at 800-635-4145 or thaddix@enerstar.com if you have further questions about ways to protect your home from power surges.

Reminder: Rate change beginning March 1

From groceries to building materials, restaurants to automotive repairs, there seems to be few sectors of our economy that remain unaffected by recent price increases. Your local cooperative is no exception.

Some of the most notable cost increases for EnerStar have been related to material, such as wire and service transformers. We have seen some material costs increase by more than 25 percent. On a side note, besides the increases, we are experiencing longer delivery times for many of these products. As you might anticipate, notable and widespread cost increases will naturally cause pressure on retail electric service rates.

It is important to note that your local co-op board reviews EnerStar's electric rates on a regular basis, and based upon budget indicators, determines if and when rates need to be updated. In order to offset the rising costs, the board has scheduled a rate change impacting both the residential and small commercial rates effective March 1, 2022.

The single-phase rate will see a \$5 per month grid access fee (GAF) increase, along with a decrease in the energy (kWh) rate of \$0.0018 per kWh. The grid access fee for small commercial accounts will increase by \$15 per month while the energy rate remains unchanged. For the average residential account that uses around 1,100 kWh per month, this equates to a \$3.30 per month net increase.

Under the current rate structure, a portion of the cooperative's fixed costs are covered in the kWh rate that you pay. Because these are fixed costs directly related to the cost of providing electric service, the rate revision is intended to properly allocate these costs while modestly increasing cooperative revenue. The grid access fees will become a better reflection of the fixed cost of service identified within the cooperative's most recent cost of service study.

It is important to keep the financial stability of your cooperative strong, and therefore rate changes are necessary from time to time. While few of us would like to see energy costs increase, the EnerStar board and co-op staff believe these to be modest increases in light of the recent increases in goods and services. One thing you can count on is that we will continue to source reliable and competitively priced material/services so that we may continue to provide the level of electric service that our membership has grown to appreciate.

Should you have any questions regarding the upcoming rate change, please contact EnerStar Electric Cooperative at 800-635-4145.

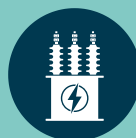
STAYING SAFE DURING AN OUTAGE

We work hard to provide the most reliable service possible. Rest assured, if the power is out, we are on it!

The length of time it takes to restore your power depends on several factors, including the:



Extent of the storm's destruction



Severity of utility equipment damage



Number and extent of outages



Accessibility to damaged equipment

STAY SAFE UNTIL POWER IS RESTORED

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines, which could be live and deadly.
- If you come across a downed line, immediately call 9-1-1 to report it.
- Never enter a flooded room; the water could be energized.
- If you are standing in water, do not turn on/off power or flip a switch.



Prepare for a storm by gathering these items:

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Bottles of water |  Extra batteries |
|  Non-perishable food |  Pet supplies |
|  Portable phone charger |  Blankets |
|  Prescriptions |  Warm clothing |
|  Battery-operated radio |  First-aid kit |
|  Flashlights |  Hand sanitizer |

THANK YOU for your patience during outages. When the lights go off, we are working safely and efficiently to restore power. The safety of our employees, as well as those we serve, is our TOP priority.

