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Time for an upgrade

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Many of us cannot live without cell phones. You have probably upgraded several times since your first phone. Sometimes, the upgrade is to remain current, while other

times, the changes can be significant. Like a cell phone upgrade, EnerStar's current metering system needs an upgrade. The update will be revolutionary and will change how we conduct business. It's a win-win situation; the co-op as a corporation will benefit, and individuals who want more control over their electric bill can also benefit personally. The new system promises a brighter future for all of us.

Current metering system end-of-life

Many members will recall the days when they manually read meters and mailed the readings back on a post-card for the next month's billing statement. In 2010, the co-op implemented its first automated metering system. The technology was revolutionary back then, using power lines to transmit data. The co-op office communicated with the meters in the field, which transmitted meter readings and power quality data. This system has served us well beyond its expected lifespan and saved the co-op money; we are grateful for that. However, the day has come when this one-way communication

technology is out-of-date, and finding replacement parts has become difficult, if not impossible.

New metering system to be installed

In our rapidly changing electric industry, our electric meters must allow for two-way communications to be compatible with our other systems. Just as important, the outdated metering system has been a significant obstacle to modernizing the rate options and services we provide to our members.

That is why, over the next year, EnerStar will gradually replace our metering system with one that uses



EnerStar has started beta testing the new meters that will be installed at all account locations over the next year. Here, EnerStar's Chad Cornwell switches one of the first meters deployed. The current electric meters in use were installed in 2010.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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industry-standard wireless technology. We will begin with commercial accounts and, as meters are delivered, work our way to residential meters. We will communicate more about the installation when the time arrives.

While the new system offers many benefits to the cooperative's day-to-day operations, this article will focus on direct membership benefits. Here are a few highlights:

- 1. Improved outage communications.** Because the new metering system will communicate wirelessly instead of over the power lines, your meter will alert the cooperative so crews can be dispatched even quicker if your power goes out. It will also improve outage communications for those members using our SmartHub app.
- 2. Improved reliability.** The new metering system will provide more robust data, like power quality reporting. We can identify hazards or weak spots before they cause outages, enhancing electric reliability.
- 3. Real-time data reporting.** The co-op can offer incentive rates and rebates for load shifting using real-time data. Members can take advantage of lower energy rates by using more "off-peak" power, allowing them more control over their electricity usage and costs. For example, they can avoid running the washing machine or dishwasher between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays to benefit from better pricing.

The co-op employees are excited to get the new metering system up and running. It will revolutionize our operations, making us more efficient across many work areas. Most importantly, we look forward to using this new technology to continue improving your service experience. To keep you updated, you will continue to see future articles in this magazine, and information will be mailed directly to your home or business.

POWERING YOUR FUTURE

17 SCHOLARSHIPS \$2,500 EACH

The electric cooperatives of Illinois are proud to offer scholarships to deserving students in our co-op family. Whether you're a high school senior planning to attend college or interested in a career as a lineworker, there's a scholarship opportunity for you.

Applications are now open for the 2025 Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships. **Apply by December 31, 2024, for most scholarships, or by April 30, 2025, for the lineworker scholarship.** Scan the QR code or go to <https://bit.ly/IECScholarships> for more details.



**IEC MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIPS**



JUNE 16-23, 2025

Applications for the Youth to Washington tour will launch on November 1. Watch our magazine, social media channels and website for more information!

Getting to know your co-op employees

Forestry Department

As part of our ongoing series introducing our co-op employees, we highlight four employees from our Forestry Department.

At our cooperative, we share your passion for trees. We understand that trees provide beauty and shade to our community. However, trees and power lines can be a dangerous mix without regular trimming.

EnerStar has a dedicated team of employees focused on vegetation management. From left to right, the team members serving the co-op membership in this critical role are Forestry Level 2 Josh Willmoth, Forestry Journeyman Colton Propst, Forestry Level 2 Bryce Walsh, and Forestry Foreman Tyler Robison.

Vegetation management is essential for providing safe, high-quality, reliable and affordable electricity. Just a few of the benefits include:

- Increased safety for our employees and the public
- Increased reliability in both preventing outages and reducing their duration when they occur
- Lower costs at the co-op by minimizing materials, fuel and possible overtime during outages
- Increased energy efficiency by reducing line losses when trees come into contact with power lines, thereby reducing wasted energy



A dedicated vegetation management team serves the cooperative membership in the Forestry Department. From left to right, the team members serving the co-op membership in this critical role are Forestry Level 2 Josh Willmoth, Forestry Journeyman Colton Propst, Forestry Level 2 Bryce Walsh and Forestry Foreman Tyler Robison.

Thank you, Forestry team, for your commitment to the cooperative and its membership!

TRICK OR TREAT

Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. **To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:**

- Discard any decorations that have **cracked or frayed cords** or damaged plugs.
- **Do not** put any decorations on power poles, padmount transformers or any other electrical equipment.
- Use decorations that are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are **rated for outdoor use**.
- **Secure all cords** so they do not become tripping hazards.
- Plug all cords into circuits protected by **GFCIs** to prevent electrical shock.
- **Do not use nails or tacks** to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- Keep decorations **away from flammable items** like bales of hay, cornstalks or witch's brew.

Have a safe and festive Halloween complete with safe tricks and tasty treats.

Learn more at:



Electric co-ops power communities with purpose

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

EnerStar Electric Cooperative is deeply committed to our member-owners, and we are glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For EnerStar, our mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited

to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including EnerStar, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people -- the local communities we're proud to serve.

Seven Cooperative Principles



Open and Voluntary Membership

Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.



Democratic Member Control

Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.



Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At EnerStar, this happens through paying your energy bills.



Autonomy and Independence

Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.



Education, Training and Information

Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful.



Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.



Concern for Community

All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

