



Past due notifications and collection process are changing in October

Extra mailings and Disconnect Notice deliveries ending

RECC's new policies and procedures will go into effect in October for late payment notifications and disconnections for nonpayment of accounts. Separate notices will no longer be mailed or delivered, but telephone messages will be used to alert members when they have an overdue payment or impending disconnection date.

Another important change is that the number of days allowed after the Due Date to make a payment is reduced before service disconnection will be made.

New notification methods

Under the new procedure, members with an unpaid balance will receive a "courtesy call" two business days after the Due Date, or typically on the 28th of the month. If payment has not been received when the next month's billing statements are printed on or about the 6th of the month, a Past Due Notice will be included with the current bill.

A Past Due message will be shown prominently at the top of the billing statement, where the monthly usage graph normally appears. A Past Due Notification form will also be included with the bill.

If no payment is received for the Past Due amount by the 10th of the month (or up to the 15th depending

on where the weekends fall), a second courtesy call will go out to remind the member that the Disconnect date is coming up. If no payment is received, then disconnection of electric service occurs between the 15th and the 20th.

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First reminders October 28

Any accounts unpaid by October 28 (Due Date is October 26) will receive a courtesy phone call reminder from the cooperative office.

"Most bills going past the Due Date are just because of a forgotten mailing or temporary delay," says President/CEO David Stuva. "I think those people will appreciate a prompt reminder that we didn't

receive a payment for some reason. For those members who may be having a hard time paying their bill, it's a reminder that they should be aware of their electric use and make reductions if needed to stay within their budget."

Anyone paying their bill by the monthly Due Date will not see anything different in their statements or procedures, Stuva points out.

The overdue-payment reminders are another reason that Rural Electric tries to keep up-to-date phone numbers or other contact information for our members. Outage notifications or service problems are other instances where we may want to contact you. If you have not provided us with a phone number and/or e-mail address, please help us out with this important information.

New payment program

Another payment option offered by RECC is our Prepaid Electric Service, which helps consumers keep track of their use and avoid one large monthly bill. This program offers reminders by phone, text or e-mail when the prepaid balance is running low. The member can add a payment in any amount to their account to make sure their balance is not depleted. (Prepaid Electric is not available for seasonal accounts.)

RECC can help you save energy this winter!

RECC offers several energy-saving programs and services to help members make their homes more efficient and save on energy costs. Our online energy audit at TogetherWeSave.com lets you see the result of adding insulation or other home improvements, and the Illinois Touchstone Energy Home booklet shows a lot of ways you can build efficiency into a new home or addition.

If you need specific help, our Member Service department can provide bill analysis, basic inspections or a full energy audit with a blower door and infrared camera. Our fee for the full audit is just \$100, which can be rebated back if you make energy efficiency improvements!

We recommend high-efficiency heating systems, and provide rebates for electric heat pumps and geothermal systems along with electric water heaters:

- **Geothermal Rebate - \$250**
- **Heat Pump Rebate - \$250**
- **Water Heater Rebate - \$200**
(**\$250 for long-life water heaters**)

Our Dual Meter Rate for electric heating, water heating and air conditioning

is another incentive to install high-efficiency electric systems. A sub meter is installed to measure heating, cooling and water heating use, and that energy

is billed at a reduced rate of 7.5 cents per kWh.

Call us for more information, or check our website at www.recc.coop!



Need help paying your electric bill?

For members who qualify, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a one-time lump sum payment directly to the cooperative on your behalf. The payment is based on the number of people in the household and the combined 30-day gross monthly income. For instance, a single-occupant household could have a monthly income up to \$1,458, while a four-person household qualifies if total income is under \$2,981.

LIHEAP funding is channeled through local Community Action Offices in Illinois, and RECC's service area includes five county offices that would serve our membership. Contact information

is shown below for those offices. Some funding may also be available for efficiency or safety improvements in a qualifying home's heating system or weatherization.

Sangamon:

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

2833 South Grand Ave., East Suite C100
Springfield, IL 62703
(217) 535-3120

Macoupin:

Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.

223 S. Macoupin, PO Box 88
Gillespie, IL 62033
(217) 839-4431

Montgomery:

Montgomery County C.E.F.S.

309 South State
Litchfield, IL 62056
(217) 324-2367

Christian:

C.E.F.S. Christian Co. Outreach

311 S. Main St.
Taylorville, IL 62568
(217) 824-4712

Morgan:

MCS Community Services

345 West State
Jacksonville, IL 62650
(217) 243-9404

RECC offering \$2,000 for school grants

Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

RECC is happy to announce the new Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants Program, awarding \$500 to four area teachers for education enhancement projects!

As your local Touchstone Energy electric cooperative, our focus is on our communities, and we have supported our local schools in many ways. Now we are proud to add Empowerment Grants to help fund innovative

projects that are not included in the schools' budgets.

Public and private schools in the general service area of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative can receive a grant of up to \$500 for grades K-8. Up to two grants may be given for different grade levels within the same school district.

Application forms are available on our website at www.recc.coop, and are due by November 2, 2015. Winners

will be announced on December 4, and the project must be completed by May 27, 2016. While electricity and energy are not required to be the central topics of any project, entries that do include energy education will be weighted more favorably.

For more information, please contact Dana Smith at dana.smith@recc.coop, or 217-438-6197.

Co-ops talk efficiency, safety at Farm Progress Show

Electric co-op exhibit in Varied Industries Tent

Efficiency for homes and businesses was a big topic at this year's Touchstone Energy Cooperative exhibit at the Farm Progress Show, held September 1-3 in Decatur. Displays on home insulation and air sealing showed how to save energy and money, while a new LED lighting display constructed by RECC showed the latest uses of LEDs for many lighting needs.

Many electric cooperatives are introducing LED security lights in their areas and different models helped light the co-op exhibit in the Varied Industries Tent. An assortment of LED bulbs was displayed, along with LED tubes that are even more efficient than fluorescent tubes. Plus, colorful LED strips can be fun and set a desired mood in a room!

Visitors were also challenged at the Energy Trivia wheel, with questions about electric cooperatives, heating and cooling, insulation, lighting and electrical safety.

In addition to the Varied Industries exhibit, Illinois Touchstone Energy Cooperatives also sponsored the Live Line Safety Demo, an electric safety demonstration featuring 7,200 volts exploding and sizzling in a nearby



RECC Member Service Electrician Jeff Lancaster talks about the advantages of LED lighting with a visitor at the Farm Progress Show on Sept. 1.

tent. With farmers working under and around power lines every day, it's vital to understand the potential hazards if workers or equipment comes in contact with an energized wire.

The Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon was featured each day at the show, tethering in the parking lots and

flying across the grounds to provide birds-eye views of the many activities. The colorful balloon has become an icon of the Touchstone Energy program and the cooperative business principles. The balloon program is run by ten Illinois cooperatives including RECC.



Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative

3973 W. State Route 104
P.O. Box 19 • Auburn, IL 62615
217/438-6197
e-mail: recc@recc.coop
www.recc.coop



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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



RECC linemen (from left) Travis Boylen, Ken Williamson and Walt Wallace check the conduit pipe being pulled into an excavation by Tom Dickey (background) of ACTS Trenching. They replaced sections of underground cable in the Tower Heights subdivision in Virden using directional boring instead of trenching.

Underground cable replacement in Virden

RECC crews installed 1,060 feet of new underground cable in the Tower Heights subdivision on the north side of Virden in August, replacing the original power lines installed in the 1970s.

Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby said there have been a few failures on the old underground wires in recent years, so new wires were buried to improve reliability and avoid costly repair work. The new wire was installed by directional boring, going well below the existing wires and pipes that are spread throughout the subdivision. The line comes up to the surface at each transformer location, located

along the back of the home lots.

The new cable is also enclosed in plastic conduit, which helps protect it from future dig-ins or animal damage. If the wire does fail in a section of the conduit, it can be pulled out and replaced without digging up the yards again, DeLaby pointed out.

Several homes are now served by the new underground cable, which was installed without tearing up members' yards or driving heavy equipment across the lots. DeLaby says this is part of RECC's ongoing effort to provide reliable electric service to our members, on both underground and overhead lines.

