



Hermetz selected as new general manager for Egyptian Electric Cooperative

The EECA board of directors held a special board meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 14 to select EECA's next general manager. Shane Hermetz, who has held the position of interim manager since former General Manager Jim Riddle retired in July, was hired as the new general manager.

"Shane has shown excellent capabilities during his time as the interim manager," says Ken Jarrett, president of EECA's board of directors. "We feel he knows our business, our system and day-to-day operations better than anyone, and therefore more than qualified for the permanent position as Egyptian Electric's general manager. It was not a decision taken lightly, but felt at the end of the day we made the best decision for the benefit of the cooperative."

Hermetz has served in a variety of roles at EECA since his arrival in 2004, most recently serving as the assistant manager. He is a 1993 graduate of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, and he is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Illinois. **23-07-0005**

He began his career in Springfield, Ill. at the municipal utility City Water, Light and Power as an entry level system engineer. He progressed to the position of superintendent of transmission and distribution engineering prior to being hired as the engineering manager with EECA. Hermetz and his wife Valoree have been married 21 years and have two children – now ages 19 and 17. His son is a sophomore at SIU-C



studying electrical engineering, and his daughter is preparing to graduate from Herrin High School in May 2018. "I am truly humbled for the trust that the board of directors has placed in me and extremely honored to be given the opportunity to serve as the next general manager of EECA," Hermetz says.

Classroom Empowerment Grant Winners

Congratulations to our EIGHT 2017/2018 Touchstone Energy Classroom Grant winners and their students! Also, thank you to our 21 applicants from all over our service territory. The top eight below were chosen by an independent panel of judges, each being awarded \$500 for their school year project! Hooray for our teachers!

1. **Leveled Readers for All Readers** - 3rd/4th Grade Special Education Teacher, James Lockhart of Unity Point Elementary School in Carbondale
2. **Reading for Success** - Jordan Suits of Carruthers Elementary School in Murphysboro
3. **Coffee Crew Cart** - Cognitively Impaired Teacher, Christine Thompson of Red Bud Elementary School
4. **The Daily Grind** - Special Education Teacher, Kayla Bower of Carterville High School
5. **Listening Project** - K/1st Grade Special Education Teacher, Kelsey Rohrer of General John A. Logan Elementary in Murphysboro
6. **3-D Printer in the Classroom** - Michele Christman of Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School in Evansville
7. **Chick Research Project** - First Grade Teacher, Cathy Lay of Tri-C Elementary School in Carterville
8. **Science Cart** - Eleanor Gillespie of Trinity Christian School in Carbondale



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Cooperative Association
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Shane Hermetz
General Manager

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- Off-site kiosks located at 2301 N Reed Station Road in Carbondale and 1306 N Market Street in Sparta

Cost of Service Study

Egyptian Electric Cooperative (EECA) is currently in the process of conducting a current Cost of Service Study Analysis (COSA). This study is an important tool used in setting utility rates, as it fairly and equitably breaks down the costs of providing service to each rate class. Different kinds of users require different load characteristics and configurations of lines, transformers and substations. Each configuration bears very different costs, which are allocated appropriately to each rate class. The COSA findings offer useful guidelines to assist the board in reasonably and responsibly allocating costs to each class of members in a way that avoids any class paying more, or less, than their fair share.

It has been five years since Egyptian Electric under took a rate change. From the rate change in 2012, EECA has made right of way clearing, pole changes and line upgrades a major priority to make sure members are provided with more safe and reliable power. Updating trucks and equipment has become a focus as well as keeping up-to-date with technology, as it plays a major role in the way EECA runs its business model to date. The EECA board of directors' continued responsibility is to satisfy its mission statement of "improving the quality of life of our members at a reasonable cost," and to do this, it is necessary to revisit and revise EECA's current rate structure.

Over the years in an environment of increasing costs, Egyptian Electric has been committed to keeping rates as low as possible while providing

members with the safe and reliable electric service they expect and need. Few consumers per mile of line (7.5 average) coupled with various terrain throughout our service territory causes EECA's costs incurred per mile of line to be higher compared to investor owned utilities at 35 average consumers per mile of line. However, there is a balance to maintain to keep your bill as low as possible, and yet maintain a system that will provide you with the electricity you need when you need it, now and into the future. **48-09-0402**

In early 2018, EECA is looking to set member's basic charge (the current service availability charge) closer to the true cost of having a ready electric delivery system, as well as the energy rate, or kilowatt hour (kWh) charge. Historically, utilities, including EECA, have recovered their fixed costs – predominantly made up of equipment, system and right-of-way maintenances, and member services – by including them in the kWh charge. Cooperative members have the certainty that rates increase when the true cost of delivering electricity to your home or business increases – never to generate profits for corporate shareholders.

EECA's board of directors will be meeting to discuss different possibilities with a new rate design. What worked five years ago will not work for today's business model and the rising wholesale costs. Setting rates fairly and reasonable takes time, but we will continue to keep you updated in the progress. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Brooke Guthman.

MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three map location numbers hidden throughout our Egyptian Electric News section. If you find your location number, that corresponds to the one on your bill, call our office and identify yourself and the page that it is on and you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.

Youth Tour

What do 1,500 high school students, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives have in common? The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, of course! Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperatives. It all takes place in June when hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C. for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and a full week of sightseeing. While in D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss the issues that are important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. In January, we will begin the application process to select local students to attend Youth Tour 2018. If you are a high school sophomore, junior or senior interested in traveling to Washington, D.C. to experience the trip of a lifetime, please contact us for more information. Perhaps you know of an exceptional student who would be a great candidate for the program. If you do, please share this article with them. **49-07-2013**

Eight students will be chosen to attend the all-expense paid bus trip in April to meet their elected senators and representatives at the State Capitol alongside their counterparts from other Illinois high schools and communities. From these students, at least two will be invited to attend the week-long trip to Washington, D.C.

Emma Kerkhover, a 2017 Youth Tour participant said, "Youth to Washington is one of the best trips I have ever been on. I was given



the chance to see so many different things! My personal favorites were the trips to the Gettysburg Battlefields, the U.S. Marine Corps Sunset Parade, and to the Capitol where I met Congressman Bost. It's truly a once in a lifetime experience. I'm glad I didn't miss this opportunity!"

Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset of what it takes to be a leader. As a result, they put these skills to use right here in our community.



Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour opportunity with a promising student. For more information about Egyptian Electric's Youth Tour program, call Brooke at 800-606-1505, email bguthman@eeca.coop or visit www.eeca.coop.



Office Closures

Monday, January 1
for New Year's
and **Monday January 15**
for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Beware of common high bill offender

"If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is." That saying rings especially true when it comes to claims about energy-saving devices, particularly those that indicate they can dramatically cut your heating and cooling costs. Ads, such as "Amish style" fireplaces, are made to appear as "miracle devices" that can slash your heating bill significantly. In actuality, the appliance is no more than a space heater, hidden inside a false fireplace with a wooden mantle.

But whether it can cut your heating bill depends on several factors. Space heaters only warm a small area. You may save some money if you turn down the thermostat (sometimes to as low as 50-degrees Fahrenheit), sit in a room with people near the space heater, and then close off that room from the rest of the house. But space heaters cannot come close to replacing energy efficient central heating or weatherization improvements. So, while it's technically possible to cut your heating bill by using space heaters, for most people, it's an impractical substitution.

Therefore, a common high bill culprit is the electric heater. More times than not, it's a heater that has been used in a larger area than its

recommended for and continuously runs until the member receives their bill. If you were to use a compact 9" 1,500-watt space heater for 24 hours a day, 30 days a month, it would cost approximately \$115! With that said, you can imagine what your bill would look like with an inefficient, all-electric furnace that runs your entire home? So, before a bill rant, consider investigating on why there were so many kWhs used during the

billing period, opposed to just looking at how much the bill costs.

Bottom line, there's no substitute for good old-fashioned energy efficiency measures like weather stripping around doors, caulking around windows, adding insulation to your attic, plugging leaks in ductwork, and regularly cleaning or replacing furnace filters. Be sure that if you do use a space heater, that it is done with safety and precaution.



Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

- DO:** Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.
- DO:** Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.
- DO:** Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.
- DO:** Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.
- DO:** Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.
- DON'T:** Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.
- DON'T:** Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.
- DON'T:** Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.
- DON'T:** Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.
- DON'T:** Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.