



Egyptian Electric News

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APRIL 2018

Lineworker Appreciation Day April 9, 2018



Remember to #ThankALineworker

The power behind your power

By Anne Prince

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While Egyptian Electric Cooperative does our best to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – cooperative lineworkers.

One of the most dangerous jobs

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers often must climb 30 or more feet in the air, carrying heavy equipment to restore power, and usually at unideal times. Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., lineworkers must perform detailed tasks while next to high voltage

power lines, above ground and underground. To help keep them safe, lineworkers wear specialized protective clothing and equipment when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds additional weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today has evolved far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They are also information experts that can pinpoint outages from miles away to restore power quickly. Line crews use their laptops and cell phones to map outages, take pictures of the work they have done and troubleshoot problems. In our community, Egyptian Electric's lineworkers are responsible for

keeping up approximately 15,000 meters, 2,000 miles of lines across six counties, to bring power to your home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools that lineworkers use have changed over the years, namely the use of technology, the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineworker is not a glamorous profession. At its essence, it is physically unsafe, requiring them to work near dangerous lines in the worst of conditions, at any times of the day or night. During hurricanes, wildfires or storms across the country, crews often work around the clock to restore power. While April is known for spring showers, there is also a day set aside to "thank a lineworker." **43-35-0023**

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 9, so during the month of April, if you see a lineworker, consider pausing to say "thank you" to the power behind your power.



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Annual Meeting relocation

Annual Meeting is fast approaching. We have conducted our Annual Meeting at the Steeleville American Legion since we originally established ourselves in the early 1950s. Early last summer, the American Legion approached us asking if we would consider moving our date from a Thursday due to the new and popular Queen of Heart night. At that point, our publications had already been made, therefore unable to change from our Thursday, July 20, 2017 set date.

At our Sept. 26, 2017 board meeting, it was voted and unanimously approved by our board of directors to set the 2018 Annual Meeting at the Steeleville American Legion for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday July 17, 2018. Moving the day of the week from a Thursday to the previous Tuesday. As the time has gotten closer, and continued controversy that has been published in the news between the Village of Steeleville and the Legion, it became evident that we should strongly reconsider relocating the 2018 Annual Meeting of the members to a different site.

Differences between city leaders and the Steeleville American Legion have brought to light safety

and occupancy issues that not only pertain to them, but unavoidably to us as well, such as parking, occupancy numbers, and outside food and beverages. Maximum occupancy has now clearly been identified in all inside areas. Between the two halls we typically rent, the small hall maximum occupancy of 300 is posted and the large hall maximum occupancy of 400, for a total of 700. At our 2015 Annual Meeting, we had 640 visitors in attendance. In 2016, we set our record of having 915 registered guests, and in 2017, we had 710. With these numbers hoovering and exceeding the posted maximum occupancies, we have outgrown the spaces there. **54-15-0020**

Given the nature and the purpose of our meetings, having a location where we would be forced to turn members away or force them to remain outside mid-July is not in our best interest. Although these issues may be viewed as a discrepancy between the city and the Legion, given the legal issues at hand, it is not in our best interest to attempt or assume to be an exception to these rules. Therefore, we will be in search of a new location for the 2018 Annual Meeting of the members.

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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.

High electric bills

It happens every winter...unpredicted and sustained cold weather ratchets up energy use and high electric bills start arriving. Egyptian Electric can't control the weather, but we can help you control your bill with Budget Billing or Prepay Billing, and help you monitor your usage.

Budget Billing plan allows equal monthly payments for a specified length of time to members or locations with 12 months of valid

billing history. You will pay the same amount each month, therefore, no big surprises or inconveniences within your bill.

Prepay Billing is when you pay for electricity how and when you choose. Purchasing electricity before you use it allows you to control your budget and pay how much you want, when you want. Instead of a monthly statement, your usage and balance are calculated daily. Track

your usage by email, text or online and make payments by phone or online.

We also recommend tracking your usage to help identify why your bill is high. For example, one member identified a new portable electric heater and another a livestock tank heater. Members can view daily temperatures along with energy, kilowatt-hours (kWhs), used. Access to this knowledge will help you to understand your electric consumption and how to better control use.

To check your usage at any time, log on to www.eeca.coop, and login to SmartHub our home page. Once you log in, click on the "My Usage" tab and you can view your graphs. These are just a few options to help with controlling high electric bills. Please visit our website at www.eeca.coop for energy efficient tips and more useful tools or call our office at 800-606-1505 and speak with a customer service representative.



Safety Training with Gerry Kinney

Gerry Kinney visited Egyptian Electric Cooperative for a training session with EECA linemen. Gerry was a lineman at Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative for eight years. In July 2015, the lives of Gerry and his wife Denice changed when he came in contact with a 7,200-volt power line while working in a bucket truck. He suffered severe electrical burns that cost him both hands and forearms. After several months of hospitalization and intense rehabilitation, he is now doing well with two unique prosthetic arms and hands. Despite many set-backs, it is amazing to see what Gerry CAN do. His outlook on life is positive, and he is thankful to be able to tell his story to encourage and inspire others.



L-R Linemen Cody Lee, Brian Alexander, Board Vice-President Steve Prest, Maintenance Lineman Andy Ahner, Gerry Kinney, AIEC's Manager of Safety and Loss Control Jim Miles, and EECA Lineman Matt McElroy.

Power strip vs. surge protection

Power Strips

As the abundance of electronics impacts our daily lives, we realize there simply are not enough outlets in our homes. This is particularly true for older homes. As a result, we end up with many “outlet expanders,” more commonly known as power strips. Power strips are generic and accomplish a simple function. They are inexpensive, and the quality can be on par with the price. Make sure you know the amperage rating of the outlet into which you are connecting the strip and other equipment. A residential circuit can overload if you are not careful.

When purchasing a power strip:

- Look for power strips with a built-in circuit breaker. If you connect too many electronics and devices, the strip will kick out the circuit breaker rather than causing the breaker in your electric panel to trip.
- Pay attention to the orientation of the outlets. The typical design is along the length of the strip, facing the bottom or end of the strip. Experts recommend power strips with the outlets perpendicular to the length of the strip.
- Get a smart strip. These are becoming more common and less expensive. With smart strips, one outlet serves as a master, receiving power all the time. The other outlets do not receive power until the master device is turned on, ideal for home entertainment setups. Smart strips help save electricity by eliminating “phantom” energy sources, such as rarely used appliances, in turn lowering electric expenses.

If you are connecting expensive electronics, you should consider a surge protection device, the power strip’s more talented cousin.

Surge Protection

What is a power surge? Many people may think a blink in power is a surge, but a power surge is defined as a sudden, short-lived boost in voltage. Storms often bring an increased threat of unavoidable power surges along with dozens of other possible points of failure, from problems outside of the home, or inside, which could damage valuable electronics and appliances.

Lightning, a familiar culprit, but a least common cause, can cause extreme power surges, that will almost always overpower any surge protector. The best protection in these cases is to unplug valuable devices. Power surges can enter in a variety of ways including power lines, telephone lines, cable/satellite connections and any other metallic system that connects to your home. Eighty percent of temporary power surges come from inside the home; due to the operation of high-power electrical devices, so protect your equipment with surge protector devices. Make sure to look for the UL 1449 label, which guarantees it meets tested and approved standards. **49-36-0015**

Like power strips, there are some key factors to consider when buying a surge protector.

- Go for a significant “joule” and/or a “surge-current” rating; this is a measure of how much energy it can withstand. The higher the rating of these two categories, the higher the quality of internal surge-stopping components.
- Cable and internet connection protection. You may want to consider this

for your entertainment and computing needs as surges can enter via any wired connection. Be sure the protector is designed to handle a digital television. Otherwise, it can cause pixilation if it’s only designed for analog signals.

- Indicator light that shows if protection has burned out.
- Power conditioning feature (for PCs, this is a nice-to-have feature but not a necessity).
- The same outlet orientation and smart capability, as mentioned above.

Here, price is even more important to consider because a cheap surge protector can be worse than nothing at all for two reasons. One, they use cheap, small surge fighting components. Two, these components can fail, and the strip still will provide power, all without any indication that its protective side is gone.

Power strips and surge protectors are worth the investment when you follow these simple suggestions. Whole-house protection is recommended as well for more severe surges. Inside your home, a panel-mounted circuit panel or service entrance suppression device, transient voltage surge suppressor (TVSS) forms another layer of defense, by greatly reducing harmful surges entering the home. A qualified electrician can ensure proper installation.

