



## Member satisfaction and 2021 rates

Egyptian Electric Cooperative recently conducted its results from our member satisfaction surveys conducted by Inside Solutions. More than 2,600 surveys were sent out by email to randomly selected member-consumers across our service territory. Of the 2,649 surveys sent, nearly 20 percent, or 507, of those were completed. Near the end of 2020, we received our overall results, including our 2020 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score of 87 on a scale from zero to 100.\* Egyptian Electric Cooperative scored 14 points higher than the Cooperative Utility score of 73, as well as 15 points higher than both investor-owned utilities and municipal utilities scores of 72, compared to the ACSI-measured utilities in the 2020 ACSI Utility Sector Report. In our member satisfaction survey, we also were scored in comparison to thirteen participating electric cooperatives in the state of Illinois. Although some questions were specific to our cooperative, the bulk of survey questions were asked of all cooperative members.

In the member satisfaction section of the survey, we scored 91 percent in overall performance satisfaction, up from the 2018 survey of 87 percent, and exceeding the statewide average of 90 percent for 2020.

All performance metrics for EECA improved or remained the same from our previous survey. Metrics included electric service (reliability, rates), member services (day-to-day ease of business, employee relations), and culture (supporting

renewables). Above average ratings were recorded for service reliability and restoring power quickly. Rates and value were rated below that average. High ratings were reported for friendly and knowledgeable employees, ease of doing business

*Egyptian Electric Cooperative scored 14 points higher than the Cooperative Utility score of 73*

and communications. Lower ratings were given for energy efficiency assistance. Cooperative culture metrics of trustworthiness, management, commitment to communities, reputation all met or exceeded average metrics. Lower performance ratings were given for perceived support of renewable energy but even so, these ratings improved, or were unchanged, from two years ago.

Communications from the cooperative are 66 percent in favor of email communications. This preference was also the highest in the state. Seventy-nine percent of the membership have read, or regularly read, the Illinois Country Living magazine. **42-27-0020**

Other noteworthy and unique demographic information to highlight, when comparing to other cooperatives in the state, we have the:

- Highest percentage of members having service for less than one year
- Second lowest percentage of members with 30-plus years of service

- Highest percentage of members negatively affected by COVID-19
- Highest percentage of members that registered as professionals
- Highest percentage of unemployed membership

Scores and percentages aside, one of the most intriguing components of the membership survey results are always the written comments. Approximately one-third of the selected members who participated in the survey took the time to provide this additional feedback.

Most comments provided positive feedback. Some called out employees as going above and beyond to help with or discuss issues, complimenting us on their low frequency of power outages, restoring power quickly, and enjoying the fact they can call our office and speak with a live representative. We appreciate every single one of those comments; they highlight the cooperative difference!

Some comments were neither positive nor negative, but instead were questions. To those of you who had specific questions, we plan to reach out and address those with each of you.

Most of the constructive comments were related to the fixed nature of the co-op's monthly service availability charge, our general rate structure, and costs. Adequate margins are required to comply with our borrowing covenants. Please know that as a not-for-profit cooperative, we are required to return all operating margins to the members who

*Continued on 20B ▶*



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### Board of Directors

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- Use SmartHub portal, online or mobile app
- By phone, using credit card or checking account
- Off-site kiosks located at 2301 N Reed Station Pkwy in Carbondale and 1306 N Market in Sparta

### "Member satisfaction" continued from 20A

contributed to those margins over time in the form of capital credits. Capital credits represent your investment in the co-op system. Every year, we report the allocations earned by each member on your billing statement.

With that said, we would like to take this opportunity to mention that our board of directors approved our rates for 2021 at our January board meeting (they can now be found on our website), and will be effective for March 2021 usage, April billing. Although current rates look different on the new bill as of Jan. 1, they still calculate to the same numbers. The new rates will reflect decreased rates across the board of approximately 2 percent. Additionally, in 2020, there was a 1.5 percent decrease in rates; the largest decrease being reflected in October 2020 in the Power Cost Adjustment calculation. Therefore, since January 2020 and through 2021, there will be an approximate overall decrease in rates of 3.5 percent. These savings are directly reflective of our decreased energy charges from our wholesale provider, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). In

2020, it was announced SIPC would retire its Unit 4, one of its coal-fired units. It was expected to go offline in the fall, and ultimately went offline in September 2020, giving us the ability to implement these savings.

### 32-04-0007

We are pleased to share the news of these rate decreases, given the challenges our members are facing during this time of COVID and in response to the membership satisfaction survey feedback. Again, our sincere appreciation to the members who participated in the survey and provided comments. Your experiences and feedback are key factors that validate the important decisions made within our business. We will continue to work hard to serve you better. Until next time, we thank you!

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*\*The ACSI is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Touchstone Energy cooperatives have participated in the ACSI Monitor Program since 2011 and has traditionally been in the highest rated cooperative energy utility group. You can learn more about the ACSI by visiting [theacsi.org](http://theacsi.org).*

## Follow us

Instagram @egyptianelectriccoop  
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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.

## Reliability & ROW clearance

Service reliability statistics are analyzed in many forms. In 2020, Egyptian Electric Cooperative (EECA) had one of its best years on record looking at two analytics; System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) and System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI). Last year, on average, an EECA member experienced a single outage, with a duration just over an hour and a half. Both of these numbers are the best on record compared with historical data. These numbers also trend very well both at state and national levels.

When analyzing outage data, we can see a direct correlation between maintenance and power outages. Since 2010 when the current right-of-way (ROW) program was implemented, the outage data has moved in a more positive direction.

Vegetation Maintenance is just one of the attributing forms of maintenance. There are also many others such as pole changes, line upgrades, and relocation that play an important roll when it comes to system reliability.

It is our duty as your electric service provider to keep our lines maintained, but it is also our responsibility to you, our members, to provide the safest and most reliable electricity possible. We refer to the strip of land

underneath and around power lines as ROW. Thinking of keeping our ROW clear in a more relative way helps keep it in perspective. Maintaining ROW could eliminate the possibility of losing power because of a limb or tree hanging or leaning over the electric line. In general, ROW maintenance is the number one factor preventing outage

occurrences and duration.

EECA maintains nearly 3,000 miles of line that serves over 15,000 members. It is a full-time job to maintain even the minimum clearance of 15-feet each side of the line. It is our goal to trim out and mow the ROW on a regular four-year rotation, making outages shorter and repairs less difficult. Over the last 15 years, our improved efforts in our right-of-way maintenance, have drastically reduced power outages across the board. Maintaining a cleared ROW

helps with pole inspections and better visibility of rotten or broken poles that could have otherwise gone undetected. Oil Field Tree Service is currently contracted with EECA to fulfill all our day-to-day tree trimming needs. Travis Deterding, our forestry manager, will be happy to answer questions you may have. Please keep in mind, if you have a tree with a limb near the line(s) that looks hazardous or you are considering trimming a tree that is in danger of falling on the lines, we ask that you contact us before doing any work. If there is any chance a limb or tree could strike a power line in the removal process, we would ask you to allow our crews to remove the limb or tree in question.

This year EECA will be doing Vegetation Maintenance (trimming, tree removal, mowing/spraying of hazardous trees and brush) on all circuits fed from our **Evansville, Bremen, St. Mary's (Kaskaskia Island), Finney, and Grassy substations**. EECA will be doing herbicide application on **Hastings, Carterville, East Carbondale, Baldwin, and Lenzburg substations**.

Visit our website ([eeca.coop](http://eeca.coop)) to learn more about our tree trimming procedures and our Stump Program. If your lines will be affected and your account is active with us, you should receive an automated phone call prior to tree work in your area.

### 2021 Vegetation Maintenance Substation Work

- Evansville
- Finney
- Bremen
- Grassy
- St. Mary's  
(Kaskaskia Island)

Maintaining rights of way improves service reliability for you - our members!

### Sara Stratton

Congratulations to Sara Stratton of Murphysboro as EECA's newest Member Service Representative! She enjoys the outdoors and exploring all that southern Illinois has to offer! Sara's hobbies include playing with her dog Maggie, building things, crafting and vacationing with her husband. She was previously employed at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale for the last 14 years and is very excited to join and grow with the Egyptian Electric Cooperative family! Welcome to EECA, Sara!



DAYLIGHT  
SAVING  
TIME

March 14

## Off-site kiosks

We have previously been communicating that our off-site kiosks will be retired on March 31, 2021, but we are in conversations to keep them in place until further notice.

**48-07-1538** Given the challenges our communities have been facing, many associated with COVID-19, we are hopeful in keeping them in place

at this time with a decision to be made in the future.

Off-site kiosk locations, at Wright Do-it Center in Sparta and at the MarketPlace Shell in Carbondale, are no longer accepting card (or e-check) payments effective January 1, 2021. Cash will continue to be accepted.

The kiosk at our office location will continue to operate as normal. The kiosk accepts cash (but no change given), E-checks, Visa, Mastercard and Discover cards. We also encourage you to sign up for auto payment using your card or checking account by enrolling online or 844-759-3977.

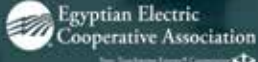
## Board vacancy

Due to the retirement of Larry Ebers of Steeleville, a vacancy on our Board of Directors is now available. If you are a consumer-member living in the EECA service territory and are interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity, please visit our website at [eeca.coop](http://eeca.coop). Resumes are due to our office, attention to the Board President, by March 31, 2021 for consideration.



Thank you, Larry, for your years of service as a board member!

### Convenient Ways to Pay During COVID-19

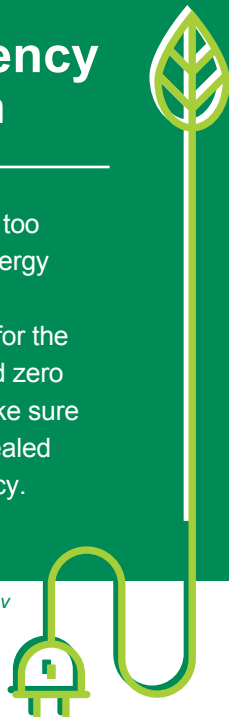
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Find one outside our office, or inside Wright Do-It Center in Sparta or the MarketPlace Shell, east of Carbondale
- Return to our Office**  
Visit our drive-thru during business hours, utilize our Payment Dropbox, or mail to: 1732 Finney Road, Murphysboro, IL 62966

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



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 OPERATION ROUND UP

### Operation Round Up, where together we make the difference!

[www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop)

Sign up to round up your bill > money goes into the Egyptian Electric Charitable Fund NFP account > 100% of the funds go back into the community!

# 10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.



Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.



Turn off lights when not in use.



Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.



Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.



Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.



Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.



Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.




Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.



Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

*For more information on how to save money on your bills by making your home more energy efficient and lowering your usage, visit [eeca.coop](http://eeca.coop).*

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