Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Working together to lower demand

Bob Kroeger,
President/COO

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, lighting and household appliances. Heating systems run longer and more frequently to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures. Combine that with the fact that most people use electricity at the same times of day — typically in the mornings and early evenings — and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) works closely with Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes and ensure you have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to make certain electricity is available whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our local system is part of a much larger regional and national electric grid.

During the winter months, when homes and businesses across the country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach — or occasionally exceed — available supply. This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity. In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages — often referred

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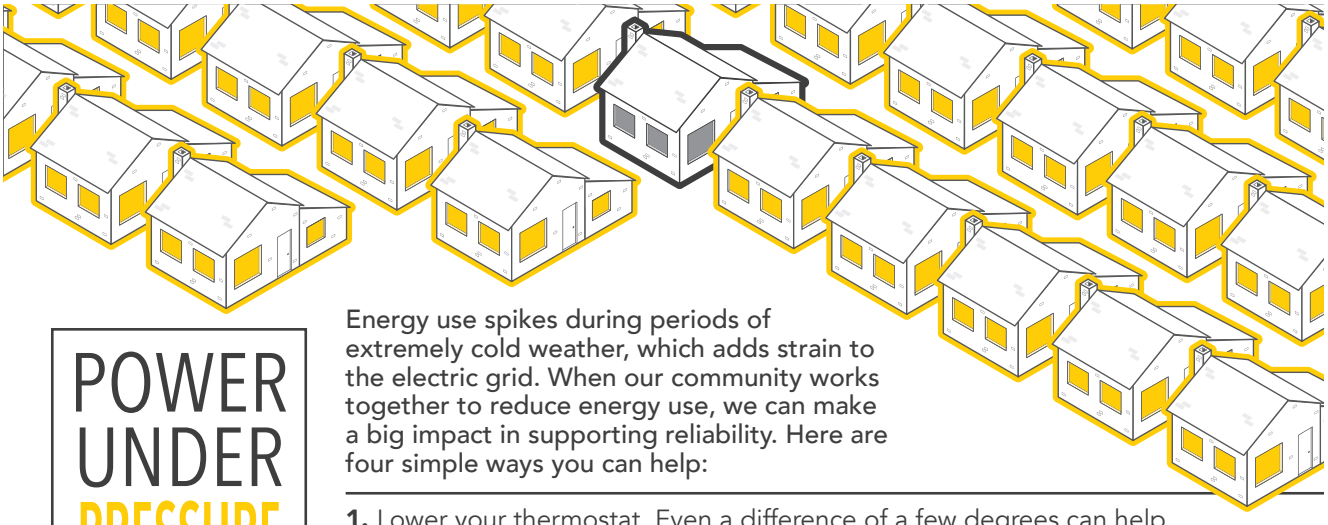


POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways you can help:

1. Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.
2. Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.

Applications are being accepted for 2026 Youth Day and Youth Tour

Clinton County Electric Cooperative will again sponsor up to 12 area sophomores, juniors or seniors to attend Youth Day in Springfield, to be held on March 25, 2026. This event is sponsored by the cooperative and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Two students will be selected to go to Washington, D.C., from June 15-22, 2026, for an all-expense-paid trip.

WHO MAY ENTER?

Youth Day in Springfield and Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are open to high school sophomores, juniors or seniors whose primary residence is served by Clinton County Electric Cooperative members. Children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees or employees may attend at their own expense.

YOUTH TO SPRINGFIELD

Up to 12 students will participate with more than 125 students from other Illinois electric cooperatives in Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield, set for March 25, 2026. The day's activities in Springfield will include touring the State Capitol complex, visiting with legislators, and a luncheon. Transportation to Youth Day in Springfield will be provided by CCEC.

WASHINGTON TOUR

Of the 12 students attending Youth Day in Springfield, two will have the opportunity to participate in the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour. The two local winners will join about 70 other students who are winners of similar contests sponsored by other state electric cooperatives. They will travel on air-conditioned buses, leaving on June 15 and returning June 22, 2026. On the trip, they will visit attractions such as the Gettysburg Civil War Battlefields, U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian National Museums, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Mall and many more!

Applications are available at www.cceci.com/youth-programs. Completed applications need to be returned to the cooperative office no later than Feb. 13, 2026. Feel free to contact Katy Singler at singler@cceci.com or 800-526-7282 with any additional questions.

"Working together" continued from 18B ▶

to as rolling blackouts — to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, CCEC will provide timely updates and information to members.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, CCEC and our G&T partner take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort — and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

You can help by taking simple actions during periods of high electricity use, especially on the coldest days of winter:

1. **Lower your thermostat slightly.** Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help.
2. **Delay using large appliances during peak hours,** which are usually between 6 a.m.-9 a.m. and 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Run dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during off-peak hours — typically midday or late evening.
3. **Adjust your water heater.** Setting it to 120 degrees F and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.
4. **Unplug unnecessary devices.** Power used for lighting and electronics adds up and accounts for a significant portion of home energy use. Disconnect unused items to reduce energy waste.

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill — you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community. Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on, and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season.

January Years of Service

Ralph Kuhl
27 Years

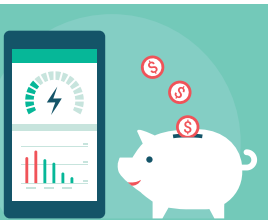
Craig Benhoff
18 Years

Jared Kampwerth
9 Years

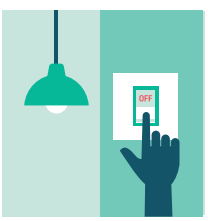
Thank you for your dedication!

CHANGE YOUR HABITS

To $ave Money on Your Energy Bill

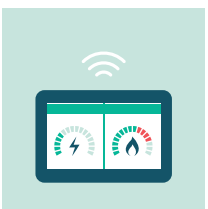


Whether you are looking for free or low-cost ways to save energy or need to make a major purchase that will help pay for itself over time due to energy savings, here are some ways to make a difference.



No-Cost

- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Program your programmable thermostat.
- Use sunlight for heat in the winter.
- Fully load dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers.
- Use window coverings to keep out cold or heat.
- Turn off electronics when not in use.



Low-Cost

- Use smart strips that turn off power to unused items.
- Make sure your HVAC system is serviced regularly and filters are changed as often as recommended.
- Purchase an insulating blanket made for hot water heaters.
- Find and fill air leaks in your home.
- Caulk between window/door frames and walls.
- Install a smart thermostat.

Major Purchases

- Upgrade to a high-efficiency HVAC system.
- Purchase energy-efficient appliances.
- Insulate attics, exterior walls, basements and crawl spaces.
- Purchase a clothes dryer with a moisture sensor.
- Purchase a water-saving dishwasher or washing machine.
- Replace old windows with energy-efficient versions.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org®

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.

Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:

- Snowbrush
- Shovel
- Windshield washer fluid
- Cat litter for traction

- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Drinking water
- Nonperishable foods

- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher

- Reflective triangles
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)

- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Compass
- Car charger for cell phone

SafeElectricity.org®

Source: NSC