

# living with energy

IN IOWA

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF SOUTHERN IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.



JULY 2011

Now's the perfect time  
to plug outside  
**air leaks!**

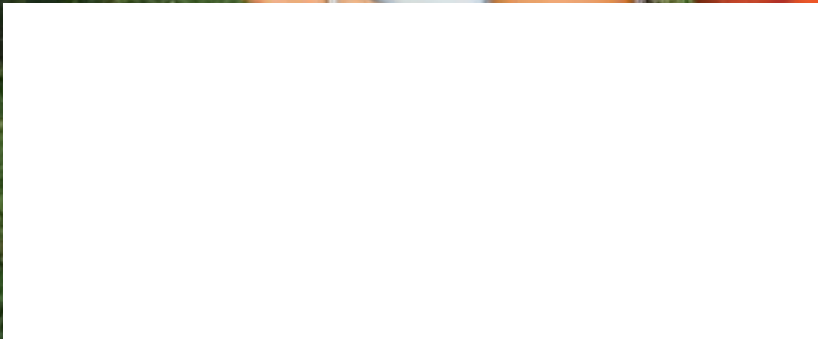
Win a wind-  
power science  
kit for kids

See Page 5

Try our  
favorite  
**leftover  
recipes**

Learn how a  
**wind turbine**  
system works

There's nothing  
baffling about  
**balancing room  
temperatures**



## Watt's Going On?

Visit SIEC's booth at the Davis County Fair July 20-24!



Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

*Our mission is to serve our members and community by safely providing reliable and environmentally responsible power and other services efficiently and at a competitive price to benefit members and improve the quality of life in the areas that we serve.*

**Office:** 22458 Highway 2, P.O. Box 70, Bloomfield, IA 52537-0070

**Phone:** 641-664-2277 or 800-607-2027

**Phone Payments:** 800-927-5341

**Report Outages:** 800-607-2027

**Call Before You Dig – Iowa One Call:** 800-292-8989

**Web Site:** [www.siec.coop](http://www.siec.coop)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

### Management

Mark Aeilts, Manager/CEO

Tami Weilbrenner, Finance and Admin. Manager/CFO

Jeremy Wilcox, Operations Manager/COO

### Board of Directors

Paul Wells, President

Dean Black

Trent Gregory, Vice President

Darrell Downing

Joy Evans, Treasurer

Donnie White

David Hopkins, Secretary

Dave Yahnke

Fred Zeitler

### What to Do in Case of Trouble

- ▶ Check for blown fuses or tripped breakers.
- ▶ Check with your neighbors. Ask if their electricity is off and whether they have reported the outage. If not, call Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc., and report the problem 24 hours a day: 641-664-2277 or 800-607-2027.

### Service Charges

ACH (Electronic Payment).....	No Charge
Bill Collection.....	\$30
Meter Tampering.....	\$150
Overtime Service Call.....	\$150
Convenience Charge (Online or Phone Payment).....	\$5
Disconnect.....	\$30
Posting.....	\$30
Returned Check.....	\$30
Reconnect.....	\$75
Trip Charge.....	\$30

## Local Perspective

# How SIEC is working to serve you better

BY MARK AEILTS

To increase the efficiency and reliability of our electric system, Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc., has begun a pilot project by installing four new remote disconnect meters. We're continually looking at cost-containment possibilities through the use of the other capabilities of our automated meter reading system (AMI).

In 2005, we completed the installation of our AMI system, and now we're taking additional steps to utilize this asset. In addition to reducing operational costs, the meters, which can receive and send information to computers at the co-op's headquarters, will help improve the reliability of our system. The new technology allows us to detect problems more quickly and to locate outages more precisely. In some cases, we will be able to fix the problem before members know their power has been out.

The meters, which provide hourly or daily information about power use, will help members understand how and when they are using electricity. Armed with this information, the

co-op's member service representatives will be in a better position to help members address billing inquiries.



This new technology can help us monitor the electric system almost in real time. We'll use this information to make the process of delivering power much more efficient, plus we'll be able to utilize the incremental data to evaluate trends of usage.

Plans are being prepared to make this information available to all members via our Web site. Then you'll be able to pull up your usage trends and estimate your total monthly bill.

You also can expect to experience fewer blinks, surges and spikes as a result of the upgrade to our metering; also playing a part are the replacement of failing underground cable and the doubling of the width of our tree clearance right-of-ways.

At Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, taking advantage of new technologies is one more way that we're looking out for our members. ⚡

Mark Aeilts is the manager/CEO of Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Consumer Protection

# Watch out for scam artists posing as arborists



After a storm, it's common for people claiming to be tree specialists to show up at your door offering their services to remove or repair trees. Here's how to get a quality job from a qualified specialist:

- Make sure the company is established in the community. Check for a listing in the phone book, usually under Tree Service, and a Web site.
- Look for an affiliation with a professional association of arborists. Certification from one of these

groups means the arborists have received training and maintain access to current technical information on tree care, repair and removal.

- Ask for current certificates of insurance showing full coverage for property damage, personal liability and workers' compensation.
- Make sure there's a clear understanding about who removes stumps, limbs and debris from your property. ⚡

Source: The National Arbor Day Foundation ([www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org))

## SIEC rolls out free (and valuable) new program for you in September

As a Touchstone Energy® cooperative, Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc., strives to serve our members according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. A new money-saving program that will be rolled out for you in September, the Co-op Connections Card, is one of the ways we live up to those values.

The card connects you with discounts on everything from hotel stays to prescription drugs. A wide variety of merchants throughout our community will be accepting the card: The Greenleaf Place Bed and Breakfast, Bloomfield's Cobblestone Inns and Suites, J's One Stop, The Flower Shop, Bloomfield Greenhouses and Making Memories Flowers and Gifts – just to name a few!

We hope local businesses participating in the Co-op Connections program benefit from increased traffic from SIEC members. SIEC already has begun visiting local businesses and the response has been very positive. A list of all the businesses in our area that have agreed to participate will be available on our Web site at [www.sie.coop](http://www.sie.coop) by following the Co-op Connections Card link.

The card also gives you access to

online savings at more than 95 national retailers such as BarnesandNoble.com, Hertz Car Rentals, Best Western hotels and ProFlowers.com. You can check the full list of great national discounts at [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

One of the most valuable features of the Co-op Connections Card is the pharmacy discount. While it's not insurance, the discount can mean savings of 10 to

60 percent on prescription drugs. The logo and information on the back of your card is recognized at more than 60,000 national, regional and local pharmacies.

Watch this magazine and our Web site as we add new businesses that

will be participating in the program. All you'll have to do is present your Co-op Connections Card at the register to receive your discount!

If you attend the annual meeting Sept. 8, 2011, you'll receive your Co-op Connections Card when you sign in at the registration table. If you're unable to make it to the annual meeting, your card will be mailed to you Sept. 12.

We're eager to answer any questions you have about the card and how to take advantage of the discounts it provides. To find out more details on the program, log onto [www.sie.coop](http://www.sie.coop). 🌿



**The Co-op Connections pharmacy discount has been widely used by members of Touchstone Energy cooperatives across the country, resulting in combined savings of nearly \$20 million on prescriptions. Want to find out more? Log onto [www.locateproviders.com](http://www.locateproviders.com) to search for pharmacies in our area that will honor the card. Use code 22203 as the Group Number in the Groups login section, and then enter your ZIP code.**

## When the kids say, "I'm bored," pull out this science kit



We're going to give a Wind Power science kit to one lucky electric co-op member this month. To register, go to the Editor's Choice Contest at the updated *Living with Energy in Iowa* Web site ([www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com)) and fill out the entry form by July 31, 2011. We'll pick the winner's name at random and publish it in an upcoming issue.

## Extend a helping hand: Give to RECare

Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc., always has extended a helping hand to people in need. That's why we've established RECare, a program of members helping members. You can help needy people weatherize their homes and pay their winter heating bills. If you're interested, please complete and return this form to our office.

**Any amount you give will be appreciated!**



### RE CARE CONSUMER AUTHORIZATION FORM

Yes, I want to contribute to RECare.

- I will make a one-time contribution to RECare.
- My check is enclosed.
- I will contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month for \_\_\_\_\_ months to RECare. I understand this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: **RECare**, Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 70, Bloomfield, IA 52537-0070.

## What's going on with compact fluorescent lightbulbs and mercury?

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs – CFLs – promote energy efficiency and save money by using less electricity. But what about the mercury inside a CFL – is it harmful? What do you do when a bulb breaks, and how do you safely clean up the mess? How do you dispose of a CFL when it burns out?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the answers.

### How do you clean up a broken CFL?

Most importantly, the benefits derived from CFLs greatly outweigh the risks of using them throughout your home. There is only a very small amount of



### Awareness Is Your Best Electrical Safety Tool.

# Get a handle on your reach.

Using a tool with a very long handle extends your reach in more ways than one. The long handle increases your chances of contacting an overhead electrical wire. Keep track of BOTH ends of your tool and keep yourself away from the danger of an electrical accident.



mercury in a CFL; in fact, on average each bulb contains 5 or fewer milligrams of mercury – an amount that would fit on the tip of a ballpoint pen. Compare that to 3,000 milligrams of mercury in an old-style thermostat and 500 milligrams of mercury in a glass fever thermometer. According to the EPA, the greatest risk from a CFL is getting cut from the glass shards if a bulb breaks.

Research indicates that there is no immediate health risk to you or your family if a bulb breaks and you clean it up properly.

- Sweep up – do not vacuum – the glass fragments and particles.
- Place the broken pieces in a plastic bag you can seal. Wipe the area with a damp paper towel to pick up any remaining stray shards or particles. Seal the paper towel in the plastic bag when you're finished.
- If weather permits, open the windows and ventilate the room.

### What should you do with a CFL when it burns out?

Like paint, batteries, thermostats and other hazardous items, CFLs should be disposed of properly. The EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and U.S. retailers to expand disposal options, but many hardware and discount stores already provide boxes for recycling the bulbs. You can search for disposal options online by entering your zip code at [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com), calling 877-EARTH-911 or visiting [www.lamprecycle.org](http://www.lamprecycle.org).

Also, check with your local waste management agency. If a disposal site is not available in your area, the EPA suggests placing the broken or burned-out bulb in a sealed plastic bag before putting it in the trash. Never send a CFL or other mercury-containing product to an incinerator.



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