

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



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## New ways to use electricity

If you listen carefully, you can hear a quiet transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers.

Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders alike are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings.

Whether a traditional electric stove or an induction stove top, both are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. That's because conventional residential cooking tops typically use gas or resistance heating elements to transfer energy with efficiencies of approximately 32% and 75% respectively (according to ENERGY STAR®). Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also gaining in popularity. Fortune Business Insights attributes the growth and popularity of

robotic vacuums like Roomba to a larger market trend of smart home technology and automation (think Alexa directing a Roomba to vacuum).

More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools. For DIYers and those in the building trades, national brands such as Makita, Ryobi and Milwaukee offer electric versions of their most popular products like drills, saws, sanders and other tools. In addition to standard offerings, consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League notes that, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited—electric scooters, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and vehicles."

Today, the number of electric





products available is exploding.

“There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats,” says Dennis. “With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market.”

A case in point is the increased use of electric-powered tools and equipment, with more national brands offering a wider selection including lawn mowers, leaf

blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Electric equipment also requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. In addition, electric equipment is quieter so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can; something that wouldn't be possible with gas-powered equipment. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to the robotic vacuum

cleaners) will be seen dotting door spaces.

Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increases renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time. Quite a hat trick—improving efficiency, quality of life and helping the environment.

# Spring into green

   CHOOSE ELECTRIC LAWN & GARDEN EQUIPMENT PLUS GET A REBATE

**DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS LIMITED TIME OFFER! REBATES AVAILABLE MAY 1 - JUNE 30, 2022. VISIT [CORNBELTENERGY.COM/REBATES](http://CORNBELTENERGY.COM/REBATES) FOR MORE INFO AND COMPLETE PROGRAM DETAILS.**

## Restoring power safely and efficiently

We do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it: power outages occasionally happen.

For most Corn Belt Energy members, outages are rare and only last a minimal amount of time. But when severe weather impacts our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So when the power goes out, how do Corn Belt Energy crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a great number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. Corn Belt Energy keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see Corn Belt Energy crews and our tree contractors periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. The quickest way to report an outage is through our SmartHub app on your mobile device or account login button on [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com) to take you directly to SmartHub on a web browser. You can also call our outage reporting number at 309.662.5330.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Corn Belt Energy, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.



**Jess Dailey**  
Member Account Representative

*How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**Less than one year**

*What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**My role at Corn Belt Energy is to be the first point of contact with our members. To assist them with billing questions and to troubleshoot any issue they are having or to direct them to the person needed.**

*What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?*  
**I love interacting with our members and assisting them with their needs. I also enjoy the many levels to my job. There are always opportunities to learn something new.**

*If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?*  
**Don't be afraid to be afraid. Nobody knows until they learn. Every new day is an opportunity to grow so try not to take it for granted.**

*Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?*  
**If you are unsure when it comes to anything that involves electricity call a professional. Better safe!**

*What are your hobbies and outside interests?*  
**I enjoy spending time with my boyfriend Corey and our blended family. Anytime we can all be together is great. I love spending time with my grandson and anything outdoors. I'm also an avid reader and love a good book during my down time.**

*Who or what inspires you?*  
**I enjoy volunteering and anyone who is working on themselves to bring good to another human being inspires me. Selflessness is truly inspiring. And my mother, she was a very strong woman that faced many many challenges but stayed humble and didn't complain.**

*If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?*  
**#Keepitsimple**

*Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?*  
**I am very grateful to work with so many wonderful people at Corn Belt Energy.**



## Budget billing

Budget billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill. The program is designed to keep your electric bills consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan. It's the ideal way to accurately anticipate your monthly electric bill, which makes budgeting your expenses even easier.

With budget billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a "rolling average" of your electric usage

for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher. Our budget billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 6 months of service history.

Members can deactivate the budget billing program at any time by

contacting our billing department. If a member on budget billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

For more information on budget billing or other billing related questions, please contact us at 309-662-5330.

## Energy efficiency rebates

Find energy efficiency rebates and incentives that may apply to your home, business, farm or school. Rebates include lighting, HVAC,

geothermal, heat pump water heaters, pool pumps, commercial and industrial. Learn more about the rebates available to Corn Belt

Energy members by visiting [cornbeltenergy.com/rebates](http://cornbeltenergy.com/rebates) or by calling us at 309-662-5330.

**SAVE THE DATE: Mark your calendar for Corn Belt Energy's Annual Meeting!**

Friday, June 10, 2022 | Business meeting start time: 10:30 am | Corn Crib Stadium, 1000 W Raab Rd, Normal, IL 61761

*Further details have been mailed to all members in the 2022 Corn Belt Energy Annual Report and are available online at [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com).*

### CONTACT US

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