

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for co-op members of Corn Belt Energy

August 2013

New and Improved Online Accounts

New SmartHub technology displays hourly usage data

Starting August 1, you'll notice a more powerful, efficient, and streamlined experience when you log in to your online Corn Belt account. Utilizing SmartHub technology, co-op members can now track their electric usage down to the hour and view average temperature data to see how the weather impacts cooling and heating usage.

As always, members can view their account history along with current and past statements, and you still have the ability to pay your bill electronically. Free SmartHub mobile apps are also available for Apple and Android devices, making it even easier to keep track of your electric usage, 24/7. You can even report outages through your updated online account!



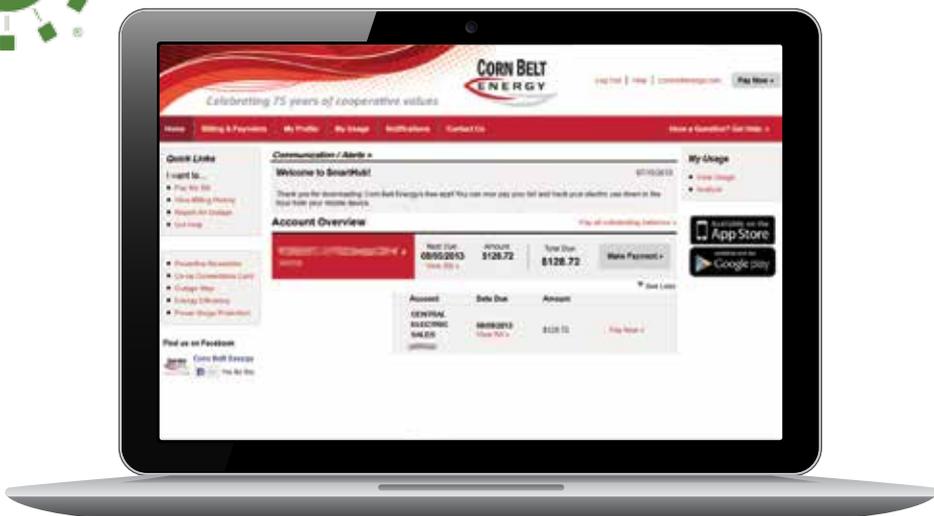
Check out our short, easy-to-follow SmartHub video tutorial at www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy to get started and learn more about these great features:

- View hourly, daily and monthly usage data
- Compare usage between hours, days, months or years
- Set usage thresholds and alerts
- Receive bill reminders
- Report outages
- Pay your bill quickly
- View Corn Belt's social media feeds

To download the free mobile apps for Apple or Android devices, search for "smarthub" in your app store.



To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Log-in" at www.cornbeltenergy.com and log in with your same email address and password.



SET IT AND FORGET IT

Use a programmable thermostat to save on cooling costs

Did you know that properly using a programmable thermostat in your home is one of the easiest ways you can save energy and money?

The average household spends more than \$2,000 a year on energy bills — nearly half of which goes to heating and cooling. Homeowners can save about \$180 a year by properly setting their programmable thermostats and maintaining those settings.

Programmable thermostat makes it easy for you to save by offering pre-programmed settings to regulate your home's temperature in both summer and winter — when you're asleep or away. These pre-programmed settings are intended to deliver savings without sacrificing comfort. Depending on your family's schedule,

you can see significant savings by sticking with those settings or adjust them as appropriate for your family. The key is to reduce heating and cooling your home when you don't need as much.

Once you find the right thermostat, make sure to install it on an interior wall away from vents and any other sources of heat or drafts.

The EPA recommends these temperature guidelines: In the summer, set the temperature to go up by 7 degrees when you're away and 4 degrees when you're sleeping. In the winter, set the temperature to drop by 8 degrees when you're

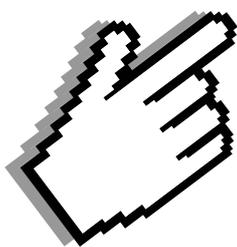
away and when you're sleeping.

Properly using a programmable thermostat at home is one of the easiest things you can do to lower your energy costs. Learn more online at: energy.gov/energysaver/articles/thermostats



Connect with your Co-op!

Keep in touch with your electric cooperative throughout the year for safety information, energy efficiency tips, outage updates and more! If you have a Quick Response Code app on your smartphone, simply scan these QR codes to connect with us online.



Find us on Facebook
[/CornBeltEnergy](https://www.facebook.com/CornBeltEnergy)



Follow us on Twitter
[@CornBeltEnergy](https://twitter.com/CornBeltEnergy)



Watch us on YouTube
[/CornBeltEnergy](https://www.youtube.com/CornBeltEnergy)

Outage Map

Visit www.cornbeltenergy.com from your computer or mobile device to view a live outage map of Corn Belt's service territory. To protect the privacy of our co-op members, outages are displayed by county or zip code only.

Pay by Text

Corn Belt co-op members can now opt to pay their bills via text! To register your cell phone and payment information, go to <http://bit.ly/153RS5H> to get started. Questions? Call us during business hours at 1-800-879-0339 and we'll walk you through the process!

Documentary

We're celebrating 75 years as your electric cooperative, and we invite you to learn more about our early days by checking out our 22-minute documentary at www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy. Find out how farmers banded together to bring electricity to their farms and communities.



Energy Efficient Rebates

Have you installed an air source heat pump or geothermal heating and cooling system in 2013? If so, you may qualify for a rebate through additional funding of the Illinois electric cooperatives' "homE lite" rebate program. Funds are limited, so please contact Justin Stuva at 309-664-9235 or justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com by September 1.

- Air source heat pumps (16 SEER): \$1,000 rebate
- Geothermal system: \$1,500 rebate

THE KING OF CAULK & TALK

Get valuable home efficiency advice from nationally renowned architect and home energy expert, Doug Rye. Tune in for an hour of energy saving ideas every Saturday from 9:00 to 10:00 AM in the Bloomington-Normal area.



"Home Remedies" Saturdays 9-10 AM

\$7.5 Million Returned to Co-op Members

Corn Belt announced in late June that \$7.5 million in capital credits is being returned to members this summer, the largest single capital credits retirement in our 75-year history. \$4.5 million is being returned to member-owners from 2010, 2011 and/or 2012, who will receive about 25% of their capital credits allocation from those years. \$3 million will be returned to those who were Corn Belt Energy members from 1971-1982 (*Champaign, DeWitt, Ford, Livingston, Logan, Macon, McLean, Piatt, Tazewell and Woodford counties*) and those who were Illinois Valley Electric members from 1961-1968 (*Bureau, Henry, Kendall, Knox, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam and Stark counties*). Over 48,000 checks were mailed to current and former co-op members in late June.

As a not-for profit electric cooperative, Corn Belt Energy is owned by the members who use our services. When you pay your electric bill each month, you are building equity in your cooperative, referred to as capital credits. At the Board's discretion and as the financial condition of the co-op allows, capital credits are periodically retired and returned to co-op members.

When Corn Belt Energy returns capital credits, funds go to the cooperative's first members (*first in*) and also to the co-op's newest members on the lines (*last in*). This way, our longest-served members and our newer members both experience the benefits of cooperative ownership.

Including this \$7.5 million retirement, more than \$20 million has been returned to co-op members in the form of capital credits. If you have any questions regarding your capital credits check, please contact us at 1-800-879-0339 during normal business hours or visit our website at

www.cornbeltenergy.com for answers to frequently asked questions. Please keep your mailing address current with us should you move outside of Corn Belt's service territory so we may return capital credits to you in the future.



Capital Credits Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if I received a check for a former resident? We send checks to the last known address of former co-op members. Do not open the check; please mark "Return to Sender" on the envelope and put it back in the mail.

If the check is in my spouse's name and he/she is deceased, can I sign it? No; you should return the check to Corn Belt and call us at 1-800-879-0339. We'll send you an estate packet to complete before the check will be reissued.

What happens to capital credits if the member is deceased with no living spouse? The heirs are eligible to receive a discounted estate retirement. Please call us at 1-800-879-0339.

Do I have to claim capital credits as income on my tax returns? If you deducted your electric bill as an expense on your tax return in the year(s) we are refunding, then your capital credits check may be taxable. Check with your tax advisor.

75 Years of Cooperative Values

Corn Belt Energy proudly celebrates 75 years of serving co-op member-owners in 2013, and we'll feature chapters of our history throughout the year. Previous chapters of our history appeared in earlier issues of Illinois Country Living.



Contact Us

1-800-879-0339

Call this number to report an outage and call from a phone associated with your account if possible.

LOCATION

1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com
www.cornbeltenergy.com



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CHAPTER 8: SO HERE WE STAND

As the cooperative grew because of the 1999 merger with Illinois Valley Electric and the suburban explosion of McLean County, Corn Belt needed to expand to a larger facility. In early 2002, employees packed up and moved to a new headquarters on Highway 150 near Downs, with plenty of room for office workers and adequate garage space for equipment and supplies, complete with an on-site pole yard.



In 2008, Corn Belt completed a multi-year installation of digital meters for all members for increased efficiency and information management. With the digital "smart meter" system, the co-op can quickly ping meters to see if service has been restored and members can track their hourly usage data and make informed choices.

In many respects, electric cooperatives have successfully completed their original mission to bring power to rural areas. Today, we face a new challenge: helping our member-owners use energy wisely. We now serve 35,000 households and businesses throughout 18 counties in Central Illinois, making us one of the largest energy co-ops in the state.

The cooperative is increasingly promoting energy efficiency to members, mostly through rebates and incentives to encourage efficiency upgrades to homes and businesses. Installing geothermal heating and cooling systems is an energy efficient improvement that takes advantage of the earth's constant temperature underground.

Corn Belt's third president and CEO, Jeff Reeves, will retire in 2013 after more than 40 years of service, ushering in a new chapter for the co-op. A nationwide search is currently underway for Corn Belt's next manager. Advancements in technology and access to real-time data will continue to empower co-op members as they increasingly rely on the benefits of electricity.

So here we stand 75 years later. A lot has changed over the decades, but our cooperative values have remained constant. Corn Belt Energy is a not-for-profit cooperative, which means we're owned by the people, like you, who receive electricity from us.

We're proud of our rural heritage as we power the lives of members who depend on electricity as a modern-day necessity. We support the communities we serve through local jobs, education programs for schools, civic support, and economic development initiatives. We stand up for your interests and priorities when legislation might threaten them. We're here to help you use energy wisely and to provide you with safe, reliable, affordable power.

That's the cooperative difference.