

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

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1-877-783-8765

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1-877-783-3221

Office Hours:
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7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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Justin Parcel..... Clark

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Ted Helmink Cumberland

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Brandon Graves Richland
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Dave Sheppard.....Jasper
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General Manager
Tamara Phillips



Reliable power for today — and tomorrow

Ring in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. It's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at Norris Electric Cooperative is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering — and empowering — our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So, how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across the Norris Electric territory. You may not realize it, but Norris Electric Cooperative doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Vistra, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of solar, natural, gas and wind and coal-fired generation.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Norris Electric Cooperative is

using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Norris Electric Cooperative save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. Drone inspections of lines and vegetation have allowed us to reduce labor and equipment costs while bolstering reliability. Through the use of small drones, we can accurately monitor the health and growth of trees and identify potential problems. As technological advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Illinois and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because, for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Norris Electric Cooperative will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve — for today and tomorrow.

Guard against utility service scams, other forms of fraud and identity theft



It is the world we live in today — the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else. (Or else their service will be shut off, they threaten.) This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold.

However, utilities typically send initial disconnection notices in writing.

Utility scams: How they get you

Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card, or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do

not provide any information (including your utility account number) or agree to immediate payment; instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Utility bills that double the amount due may be a utility scam. Utilities are closely regulated and may not have the right to raise prices substantially. Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

Protect personal info

When supplying your utility (or any business or person) with sensitive information, such as a social security number, proof of address or death certificate, do not email the information. Additionally, do not give out sensitive information to anyone who calls you. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.

At your door

The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled "Let 'Em In," features the artist's welcoming plea, "Someone's knockin' at the door; Someone's ringin' the bell ... Do me a favor; Open the door and let 'em in," but that is not always great advice these days.

Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer's cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house without a preapproved appointment.

Scams in general

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

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Caller ID can fib

Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds; do an internet search for the fraud watch network to learn more.

Scams are everywhere

Non-utility-related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons where cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password bot scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked

screens. It is called the “chip in the middle attack,” in which scammers get ahold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/servicer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal your identity.

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers.

Attention high school seniors



Norris Electric Cooperative will award four \$1,000 scholarships to the sons or daughters of Norris Electric members who are currently receiving service from the cooperative at the time the scholarship application is submitted.

Requirements for application:

1. Must be a high school senior
2. Must begin college within a year of notification
3. Must be a full-time (12 hours) student

Scholarship awarded based on:

1. Grade point average
2. College entrance test scores
3. Work & volunteer experience
4. School & community activities
5. Knowledge of electric cooperatives
6. Biographical essay

Deadline for application submission is Feb. 1, 2024.

For more information contact your high school guidance department or visit the cooperative website at norriselectric.com/scholarships to download an application.



Severin receives Public Service Award



At the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting in August, State Representative Dave Severin, R-116th District, received the 2023 Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award. The award was made in recognition of Rep. Severin's dedicated public service to all citizens of the state of Illinois and for outstanding contributions to the rural electrification program. Severin's district includes Norris Electric's service territory. Norris Electric's Board Director Brandon Graves, Director Dan Strine, Director Dave Sheppard, Board Secretary-Treasurer Ted Helmink, Manager Tamara Phillips, Director Ava Lemmon, Director Ron Viehman, Board President Gordon McClure and Director Gilbert Garbe presented the award.

Make life easier with a gift of energy

With the holidays quickly approaching, why not make gift giving easier with Norris Electric's Gift of Energy program? While most people wouldn't normally look to their electric cooperative for gift ideas, Norris Electric Cooperative is offering just that. Through our Gift of Energy program, anyone can make a payment on a cooperative member's account by filling out the form below or stopping by the office.

The Gift of Energy program provides our members with the opportunity to make life a little easier for someone they care about.



Gift of Energy Program

Gift amount: \$ _____ From: _____

Member name(s): _____ Phone: _____

FOR ANY CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

Member address: _____

Member phone: _____ Keep anonymous

**SUBMIT CHECK TO
NORRIS ELECTRIC COOP**

8543 N State Hwy 130, Newton IL 62448
1-877-783-8765







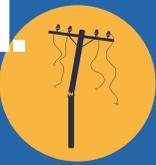
SAFELY RESTORING POWER

after a storm

When the power is out, crews are doing all they can to safely and efficiently restore it so that you can get back to life as usual.

Depending on the extent of storm damage, restoration can be a complex process. There are many steps in the assessment and restoration process:

1.



Clearing downed power lines

2.



Restoring power to public health and safety facilities

3.



Repairing transmission lines

4.



Checking power stations and transformers

5.



Repairing distribution lines

6.



Getting power restored to homes and businesses

Regardless of the extent of an outage, safety always comes first. 