


# Norris Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# News

## Area Banks Accepting Norris Electric Payments

Please remember when you take your payment to the bank it is mailed to us and not directly posted to your account until Norris Electric receives it. This could take several days due to the mail service. Please note these banks are not allowed to take payments if your payment is past due.

<b>Bridgeport</b>	Peoples State Bank
<b>Casey</b>	Regions Bank First Neighbor Bank
<b>Dieterich</b>	First National Bank
<b>Effingham</b>	Crossroads Bank First National Bank of Dieterich: Effingham Branch First National Bank of Dieterich: Lake Sara Branch
<b>Greenup</b>	First Neighbor Bank
<b>Hutsonville</b>	Farmers & Merchants Bank
<b>Lawrenceville</b>	First Financial Bank, NA Heritage State Bank Peoples State Bank
<b>Newton</b>	First Financial Bank, NA First National Bank of Dieterich: IGA Branch Peoples State Bank
<b>Oblong</b>	First Financial Bank, NA
<b>Olney</b>	First Financial Bank, NA
<b>Robinson</b>	First Financial Bank, NA
<b>St. Francisville</b>	Peoples State Bank
<b>Ste. Marie</b>	Ste. Marie State Bank
<b>Sigel</b>	Sigel Community Bank
<b>Sumner</b>	First Financial Bank, NA Peoples State Bank
<b>Teutopolis</b>	Teutopolis State Bank First National Bank of Dieterich: National Trail Banking Center
<b>Toledo</b>	First Neighbor Bank

## Welcome, Claude!

Norris Electric would like to welcome Claude Wilson as our information technology manager. Claude started employment



with Norris Electric on Jan. 2, 2018. Claude lives with his wife Sandra in rural Jasper County. Prior to Norris Electric, Claude was employed by Heartland Dental in Effingham, Ill.

Claude and Sandra enjoy camping, riding motorcycles and attending high school sports.

Norris Electric would like to wish Claude a long and fulfilling career at Norris Electric Cooperative.

## Coming this summer...



Are you tired of the little paper bills from Norris Electric that always get lost in the mail? Well hold on to your hats... we are restructuring our billing system and going to a full-page bill. In the upcoming months, we will be showing you what your new bill will look like and explaining how to read it.

P.S. If you want to go paperless, call the office and get set up on e-bills. Your monthly bill will be sent to your email, therefore eliminating all paper.

# Clearing for reliability

There are many ways that Norris Electric provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common – and crucial – ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing (or vegetation management).

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side and above of the primary conductors and no overhanging limbs on 3-phase feeders.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 20 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

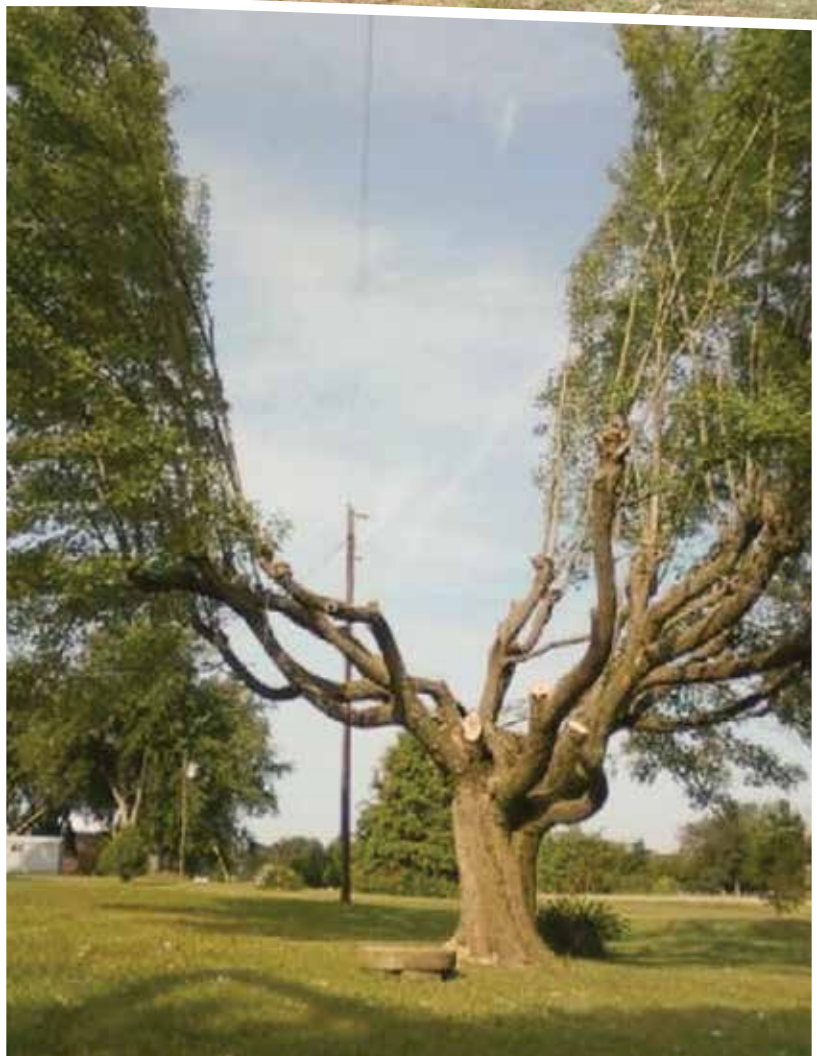
If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used to support the growth of low growing plant species that will outcompete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 69,000 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power due to fallen trees.

Norris Electric Cooperative is conducting tree trimming work in three counties this year. Those counties are: north side of Richland County, east side of Effingham County and the east side of Jasper County. This will either be done by

a Norris Electric crew or a contracted crew. We will be trimming any trees that could interfere with our electric lines. This free service is necessary to ensure delivery of safe and reliable electricity to your home.



# Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit [www.ArborDay.org](http://www.ArborDay.org).

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

## LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine

## MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

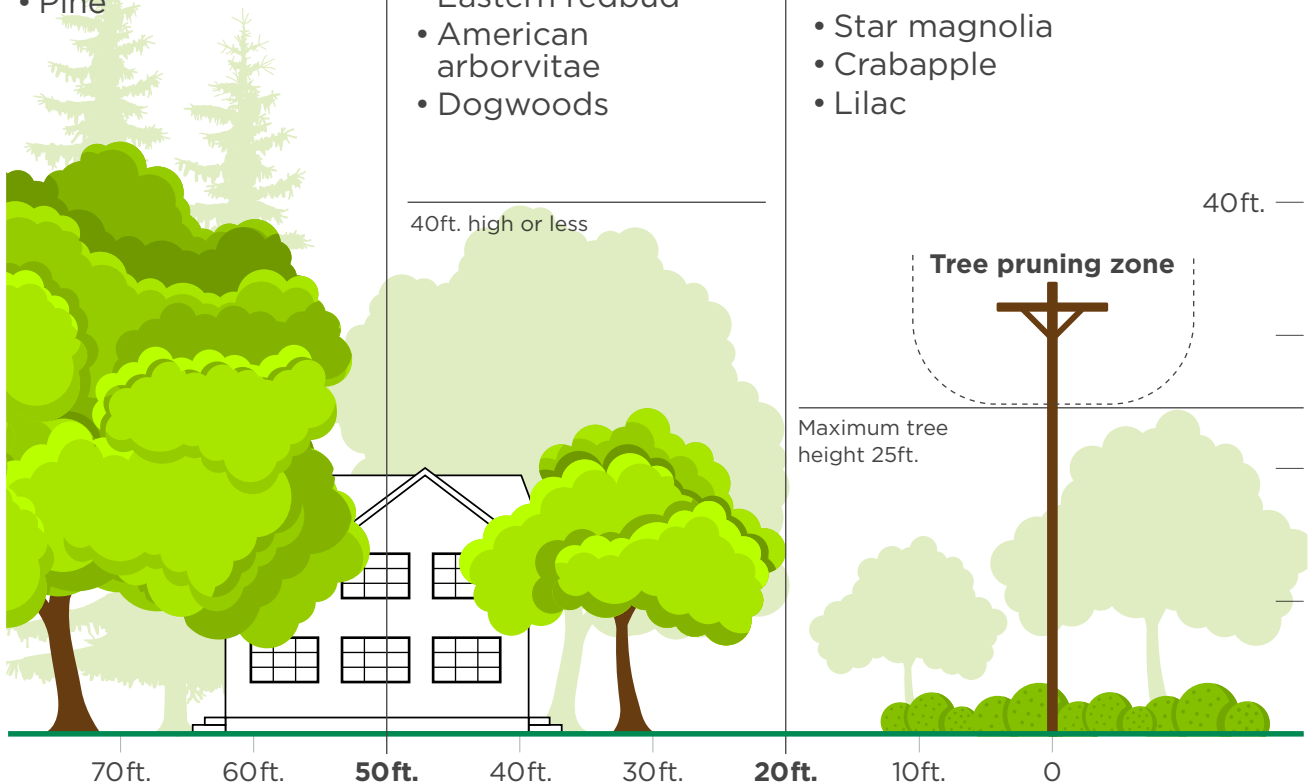
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

## SMALL TREES

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



**Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.**

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

# High electric bills

It happens every winter...sustained cold weather ratchets up energy use and high electric bills start arriving. Norris Electric can't control the weather, but we can help you control your bill with Budget Billing and Prepay Billing and tracking your usage.

Our **Budget Billing** plan allows equal monthly payments to members with 12 months of billing history. You will pay the same amount each month, therefore, no surprises in your bill. (Budget billing accounts are recalculated in May and November each year.)

**Prepay Billing** is when you pay for electricity how and when you choose. Purchasing electricity before you use it allows you to control your budget and pay how much you want, when you want. Instead of a monthly statement, your usage and balance are calculated daily. Track your usage by email, text or online and make payments by phone or online.

We also recommend **tracking your usage** to help identify why your bill is high. For example, one member identified a new portable electric heater and another a livestock tank heater. Not only can you look at your monthly use, but you can narrow it down to hourly use as well. Members can view daily temperatures along with kW hours used. Access to this knowledge will help you to understand your electric consumption and how to better control use. To check your usage, log on to [www.norriselectric.com](http://www.norriselectric.com). Under "My Account" select "Manage My Account." Once you log in, click on the "My Usage" tab and you can view your graphs.

These are just a few options to help with controlling high electric bills. Please visit our website at [www.norriselectric.com](http://www.norriselectric.com) for energy efficient tips and more useful tools, or call our office at 877-783-8765 and speak with a member service representative.

# Planned Outage Notification Call List

*If you depend on life support equipment, contact Norris Electric*

Norris Electric does its best to keep the power on 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. Yet despite our best efforts, outages do occur. For most members, this is an inconvenience, but for those who depend on electricity to power life support equipment, an outage can present a real challenge. In storm related incidents, Norris Electric cannot be responsible for health-related equipment. To protect yourself, be prepared by installing a generator or having some other form of backup plan.

While most outages are weather related, a few are planned in advance for maintenance and construction purposes. For instances of a planned outage, Norris maintains a Planned Outage Call List for those members with a verified medical necessity. These members receive notification in the event of a scheduled power outage.

If you or a relative depend on electrically powered life support equipment and would like to be put on the call list for medical reasons, it is necessary for the member to fill out a form and have your doctor sign off on it.

It is important to stress that by being placed on the planned outage call list, Norris is in no way guaranteeing uninterrupted power supply. Members must make personal arrangements for both unplanned and planned outages.

To be placed on the Planned Outage Call List for medical reasons, send an email to: [billing@norriselectric.com](mailto:billing@norriselectric.com) or call 877-783-8765, and we will mail you a form to be filled out by you and your doctor.

Please note it is the member's responsibility to keep all contact information updated with Norris Electric.



## YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

*Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!*

- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL

*Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.*

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES