

# Member Contact



Boone Electric Cooperative's Monthly Newsletter

October 2011

## Technology Changes Increase Member Options

*New computer information system increases bill pay options, decreases outage response time.*

Several changes are coming to Boone Electric Cooperative this fall that will increase efficiency within the cooperative and streamline some activities for you, the member.

Boone Electric implemented a new customer information system this month. The new system includes a number of features, including new business and member information software and an integrated voice response (IVR) system.

A key feature to the new software system is a redesigned utility bill. The redesigned bill includes member information in an easy-to-read format. In addition, you will notice the power usage graph which compares the energy you used over the past 24 months. This information can help you identify months of higher usage so that you can alter use patterns.

Soon the cooperative will unveil an integrated voice response (IVR) system. Initially, the IVR will answer only after-hours calls, assisting with outage restoration. Callers will be offered choices, such as to report an outage or pay a bill.

The new system is beneficial to members in two important ways:

### Outage Restoration Management

BEC's new IVR system will help our dispatchers more quickly locate outages. The current system relies on employee-answered phone calls to pinpoint an outage. This takes time for two reasons: first, employees can take calls only so quickly; and secondly, it takes a volume of calls to "find" the root of the problem.

The new automated system will take up to 48 calls each minute. This means the outage system can pinpoint the cause of the outage quicker. In addition, cooperative dispatchers can concentrate their efforts on organizing line crews to work the outage.

Having an accurate phone number associated with your account(s) will also help speed up the process. Please update your phone number by calling the Cooperative or sending an e-mail to [comments@booneelectric.com](mailto:comments@booneelectric.com). Please include your preferred contact number, the name on your account or the member/equity number.

### 24-Hour bill pay options

The new IVR system will allow you to pay your electric bill over the phone. Currently, members can pay their bill to a customer service representative during business hours. The new system allows the option to pay by credit card or bank draft over a secure phone line. The bill pay portion of IVR is set to begin later this year.

With each of these changes Boone Electric continues to keep member satisfaction and efficiency the priority. Please be patient with Boone Electric employees as these new systems are implemented. If you have any questions or concerns about the new systems, please call the Cooperative at (573) 449-4181.

## Make Your Capital Credit Choice

If you were a Boone Electric member prior to December 31, 2010, now is the time for you to choose how you would like to receive your capital credit retirement. Fill out the insert included with this month's bill and return it with your next payment. The cooperative will return capital credits in December.

### Energy Tip of the Month



When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models. Most major appliances -- such as refrigerators, dishwashers and clothes dryers -- are required to have these labels.

Source:  
U.S. Department of Energy

### Office Closings:

Boone Electric Cooperative will be closed:

**Friday, November 11** -- in recognition of Veteran's Day.

**Thursday, November 24**  
**Friday, November 25** -- to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday

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## Billing Change

*Boone Electric has implemented a new software system, and with it, a new bill design. Look for the "How-to-Read" guide included with this mailing. If you have any questions about the new bill, please call the Cooperative at (573) 449-4181.*

### Board of Directors:

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## A Matter of Principles

You might be surprised to learn the number of co-ops around you. Co-ops have been formed to sell everything from produce to electricity, offer financial and banking services, provide housing and healthcare, and much more.

One in every four Americans, more than 120 million in all, is a member of some type of cooperative. Boone Electric Cooperative is one of more than 900 electric cooperatives serving 42 million homes and businesses in 47 states.



All cooperative businesses, no matter the type, adhere to these seven guiding principles:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership -- Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services.
2. Democratic Member Control -- Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.
3. Members' Economic Participation -- Members contribute equitable to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.
4. Autonomy and Independence -- Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.
5. Education, Training and Information -- Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative.
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives -- Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
7. Concern for Community -- While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

## Slaying Energy Vampires

Did you know that you are sharing your home with "energy vampires" -- electronic and electrical devices that continue to suck electricity even when turned off? On average, these items are responsible for an estimated 10 percent of the electricity you use every month.

Drive a stake through the heart of those vampires, saving energy and money with the following tips:

One way to identify energy vampires is to look for the devices with remote controls -- TVs, DVRs and audio equipment, for example. Then target gaming consoles, computers, monitors and printers, as well as chargers for cell phones, iPods, small DVD players and laptops. Chargers draw energy even when they aren't charging anything.

An easy way to seal the coffin on energy vampires is to plug components of your computer or home entertainment system into a power strip. With a single flip of a switch, you can fully cut power to them.

In addition, don't forget to unplug any appliances -- such as coffee makers and toaster ovens -- with digital clocks when you aren't using them. Pulling plugs and using power strips can trim significant dollars from your electric bill each year.

For other tips on how to save energy and money, visit [www.togetherwesave.com](http://www.togetherwesave.com) or call the energy experts at Boone Electric Cooperative at (573) 449-4181.