

INSIDE

18B

Board petitions available

18C

Colvin earns National Board Certification

Budget billing

18D

Free wood chips

Reliability requires investment

Planning for a bright future



Angela Griffin
CEO/Marketing
agriffin@enerstar.com

As your local not-for-profit electric cooperative, EnerStar's mission is straightforward: provide reliable power while supporting the communities we serve. But behind every flipped switch is a complex system

that requires constant attention, planning and responsible investment. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident – it is the result of careful maintenance, strategic upgrades and long-term

planning. Much of the electric system serving our community was built decades ago. While it has served us well, every component – from poles and wires to transformers and substations – has a limited lifespan. Routine maintenance can extend that life, but eventually, equipment must be repaired or replaced to meet modern safety and performance standards. Making these upgrades before problems occur helps reduce outages, speeds restoration efforts during disruptions, and strengthens the system for future needs.

That is why one of the cooperative's major initiatives this year is updating our 10-year work plan. This plan serves

as a long-term roadmap for maintaining and improving our electric system. In simple terms, a work plan identifies what needs attention, when it should be addressed, and how to do so in the most cost-effective way possible.

By planning ahead, we can prioritize projects based on safety, reliability and value – rather than reacting to emergencies after failures occur. This approach allows us to coordinate

“ ... a work plan identifies what needs attention, when it should be addressed, and how to do so in the most cost-effective way possible.”

work efficiently, minimize service interruptions, and spread costs over time. Most importantly, it ensures we are good stewards of our members' money

by maximizing the return on every dollar invested.

The need for thoughtful planning is greater than ever before. While individual appliances are more energy efficient, homes and businesses are using more electricity than ever. We have more stuff plugged in, placing additional demands on the electric grid. Our system must be ready to support this growth while maintaining the reliability our members expect.

At the same time, new technologies are improving how we operate. Tools such as smart meters, automated switching and advanced monitoring

Continued on page 18D



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

11597 Illinois Highway 1
Paris, IL 61944
800-635-4145
Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Petitions available for June 2026 Board Elections

EnerStar Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members is set for June 6, 2026, and cooperative members have the opportunity to run in the upcoming board of directors election. Members who are eligible candidates and can commit the time and energy to the member-owned cooperative may want to consider this opportunity.

The role of director is a significant commitment – of time, energy and education – more than most members realize. Thankfully, there are members who are willing to serve in this important capacity. Decisions made can affect the membership into the next generation.

For the 2026 election, EnerStar has three director seats, which are three year terms in Districts A1, B5, and C9.

Members interested in running for the board should contact the cooperative office to verify eligibility and receive a petition packet. The packet includes all the necessary information one would need to learn more about the cooperative and the role of the director.

Board petitions require the signatures of 15 EnerStar members who live in the candidate's voting district. All members signing petitions must have an original membership card on file and must be currently receiving electricity from the cooperative. Candidates will also need to check with cooperative



personnel to make certain they reside within the correct Representative District.

Petition packets will be available beginning **February 23, 2026.**

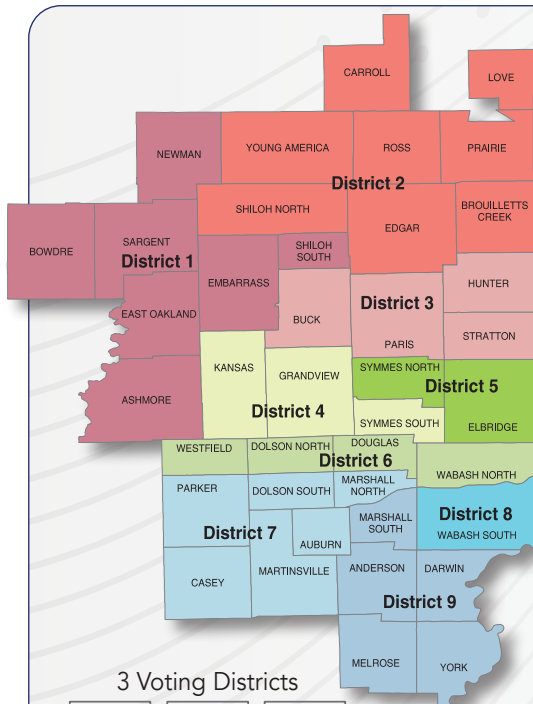
Completed petitions may be turned in to the cooperative office from

March 23, 2026 to April 7, 2026.

Candidates should also provide a short biographical sketch, 250 words or less, and a digital photo to be published with the Annual Meeting Notice.

Candidates should also make plans to attend the 2026 Annual Meeting of Members on **Saturday, June 6, 2026.**

The tentative mailing date of the official notice of the meeting will be late April.



2026 elections

Representative Board District Descriptions 3-year terms

✓ Voting District A1

District 1 - Currently served by Jeff Zimmerman, Oakland

The Townships of Newman, Bowdre, and Sargent in Douglas County, Illinois; the Townships of East Oakland and Ashmore in Coles County, Illinois; the Township of Embarrass in Edgar County, Illinois; and all that portion of the Township of Shiloh lying south of the 1800th Road in Edgar County, Illinois

✓ Voting District B5

District 5 - Currently served by Thad Martin, Paris

The Township of Elbridge in Edgar County, Illinois; all that portion of the Township of Symmes lying north of the 400th Road and west of Illinois Highway 1 in Edgar County, Illinois; and all that portion of the Township of Symmes lying north of the 300th Road and east of Illinois Highway 1 in Edgar County, Illinois

✓ Voting District C9

District 9 - Currently served by Dan Gard, West Union

The Townships of Anderson, Darwin, Melrose, and York in Clark County, Illinois; and all that portion of the Township of Marshall lying south of Interstate Highway 70 in Clark County, Illinois

3 Voting Districts

A	B	C
1	4	7
2	5	8
3	6	9

Colvin earns next level National Board Certification

Energize. Educate. Equip.

The electric utility industry is undergoing a significant transformation, placing added pressure on electric cooperatives. Consequently, the role of co-op member-owners serving on the board of directors has become even more crucial. Their decisions have lasting impacts on the cooperative.



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) plays a vital role in meeting this educational need. Representing more than 900 member-owned electric cooperatives serving 42 million people across 47 states, this national service organization offers educational opportunities for both co-op employees and board members.

Director education is offered in three parts, progressing from fundamental to advanced coursework. Topics focus on director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, strategic planning and financial decision-making.

Directors who have completed the foundational courses to earn the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) status include Jeff Murphy of Marshall, Dan Gard of West Union, Granville Colvin of Paris, and Jeff Zimmerman of Oakland.

Last year, we announced that, through additional training, Kevin Julian of Metcalf earned the Director Gold certificate and Granville Colvin of Paris earned the Board Leadership Certificate.

Colvin Gains Gold

We are pleased to announce that Colvin has now achieved Director Gold status. To maintain this distinction, Colvin will attend additional training every two years.

“Educational development is a crucial cooperative principle and a cornerstone of effective self-governance. A director who understands the complexities of the ever-evolving electric utility industry can better serve our co-op membership,” stated Angela Griffin, CEO of EnerStar. “We appreciate the time and effort these directors have devoted to improving our cooperative.”

A big thank you to our co-op directors for your strategic guidance, and congratulations, Granville!



Now is a great time to sign up for budget billing

Members wanting to eliminate the fluctuations of their monthly electric bills are encouraged to sign up for EnerStar’s Budget Billing program!

Accounts with at least 12 months of consumption history and with account balances paid in full are eligible.

- Monthly budget bills are reevaluated in April, August and December based on the account’s consumption history. If necessary, the monthly amount will be adjusted accordingly.
- There is no “catch up” month. When reevaluating the account, any under-collected amounts and overpaid amounts are “rolled over” into the next 12 months.
- Monthly budget bills must be paid before the disconnect date. If payment is not received, the account will be removed from the budget plan.
- If an account is removed from budget billing for any reason, any balance on the account is due immediately.

If you are interested in signing up Budget Billing, contact the Member Services at 1-800-635-4145 or memberservices@enerstar.com. You can also sign up through the SmartHub app!

Considering a career as a lineworker?

Apply today for a \$3,000 scholarship!

The \$3,000 LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker’s Scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker’s school conducted by the AIEC in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, IL. Apply online by April 30, 2026.



Reliability

Continued from page 18A

systems help us detect problems faster, restore power more quickly, and plan maintenance more effectively. These technologies are no longer optional; they are essential to managing a modern electric system efficiently and responsibly.

Every investment we make is carefully evaluated with one goal

in mind: providing safe, reliable and affordable power while being the best possible stewards of the cooperative our members own. A stronger electric system supports economic growth, enhances safety and improves quality of service for the entire community.

Our commitment to reliability goes beyond infrastructure. It

reflects our responsibility to the people we serve and the trust our members place in us. By planning wisely and investing thoughtfully today, EnerStar is building a stronger, more resilient electric system – one that will serve our community well for decades to come.

Sign up for



Whether you use the web portal at www.enerstar.com or the SmartHub mobile app, you can easily manage your account in one place. Pay your bill, track energy use, report outages, and more.

Thank you to the many members already using SmartHub—if you haven't signed up yet, we encourage you to do so today!

Scan this QR code to download SmartHub on your mobile device.



Need any wood chips? We've got them!

EnerStar Electric Cooperative is responsible for maintaining about 1,500 miles of overhead power lines. Trees that grow near these lines sometimes need to be pruned or trimmed to avoid power outages and ensure the safety and reliability of the electricity supply.

After pruning, the branches and limbs are often put through a wood-chipper as part of the clean-up process. The good news is these chips are available to our cooperative members.

A few things to know about the wood chips:

- The chips are of multiple tree species, may contain twigs, and have an irregular shape and color.
- EnerStar will deliver for free when in your area.
- Only full loads are available, averaging about 10 to 12 yards per load.

If you want to be added to our list of members requesting wood chips, visit our website at www.enerstar.com/wood-chips or call our Engineering & Operations Department at 1-800-635-4145.