

## INSIDE

### 18B

Employee update

### 18C

Board petitions available

### 18D

Budget billing

Meter tampering

## \$500,000 in capital credits will be retired

This month, EnerStar – your not-for-profit electric cooperative – will return \$500,000 in capital credits to our member-owners. The refund each member receives depends on the amount of electricity they purchased during the year being retired. This year’s refunds were earned in 1991, 1992 and part of 1993.

### How and when: Getting your refund

- If you currently have an active account and received electricity during the years being retired, your refund will apply to your March billing statement as a credit.
- If the credit is less than \$10, it will remain on file and be applied to the next capital credit refund.
- Reminder! If you ever move out of our service territory, it is very important that you provide EnerStar with a forwarding address to ensure you receive your capital credit refund.

### Capital credits – Know about the co-op difference

EnerStar is a locally owned, not-for-profit cooperative. Unlike investor-owned utilities that generate profits for shareholders, we operate solely for the benefit of our members. After revenues are collected and all expenses are paid, we return our margins (our version of profits) to the member-owners.

As a member-owner, you earn capital credits every time you pay your electric bill. The amount allocated to each member is based on their electricity usage for that year. We keep a record of your capital credits, which represent your equity – or ownership – in the cooperative. Eventually, these credits are returned to members through a process called a capital credit retirement.

Electric cooperatives reinvest capital credits into their operational funds

*Continued on page 18B*



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

11597 Illinois Highway 1  
Paris, IL 61944  
800-635-4145  
Monday through Friday  
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### Capital Credits: Reaping the Benefits of Being a Co-op Member



As a member-owner, you earn capital credits every time you pay your electric bill. These credits represent your equity, or ownership, in the cooperative.



Electric co-ops reinvest capital credits into their operations to build and maintain electrical infrastructure.



After revenues are collected and all expenses are paid, we return our margins (our version of profits) to the member-owners.



Every year, the board evaluates the co-op’s financial condition to determine whether capital credits will be retired.



The amount allocated to each member is based on your electricity usage for that year.



Members who received electricity during the years being retired will receive a bill credit.

## Capital Credits

Continued from page 18A

to build or maintain electrical infrastructure. This helps keep rates as low as possible and ensures high reliability. For this reason, capital credits are not refunded – or “retired” – immediately.

“A capital credits refund is one of the most unique benefits of being a co-op member,” said EnerStar CEO Angela Griffin. “Our board of directors – who are also co-op members – and our employees are dedicated to managing our financial and physical resources responsibly. We strive to be good stewards of our members’ assets. Thanks to strong financial management, we are able to return capital credits.”

Throughout EnerStar’s history, the co-op has returned over \$8.6 million in capital credits to our member-owners. We appreciate your support and are proud to share these financial benefits with our membership. To learn more about EnerStar’s patronage capital program, visit [www.enerstar.com/capital-credits](http://www.enerstar.com/capital-credits).

# CARTER HAYS



## 4<sup>th</sup> Step Lineman Apprentice

**Congratulations to Carter Hays on recently advancing to 4<sup>th</sup> step Lineman Apprentice!**

## International Women’s Day!

March 8

Enerstar celebrates the women who emPOWER our electric co-op! Thanks for all that you do, ladies!



Bottom, Angela Griffin and Julie Wineinger; seated, Niki Hall, Britta Baker and Kayla Natalie. Top, Kira Taylor and Kim Stewart.

Sign up for



Whether you use the web portal at [www.enerstar.com](http://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.



# 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.**

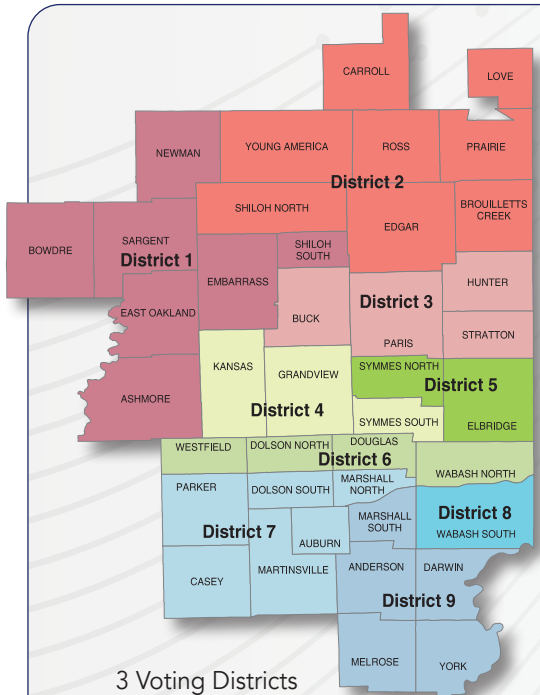
Completed petitions may be turned in to the cooperative office from

**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



*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 for Budget Billing, contact Member Services at 1-800-635-4145 or [memberservices@enerstar.com](mailto:memberservices@enerstar.com). You can also sign up through the SmartHub app!

## Meter Tampering

*For safety, never try to tamper with  
or pull an electric meter.*

Electric cooperative meter tampering is a dangerous and illegal act. It involves interfering with a utility meter, often to steal electricity.

### The consequences are severe:

- Immediate power disconnection
- Hefty fines
- Legal prosecution (misdemeanor or felony)
- Severe safety risks like electrocution, fire and explosions
- Costs ultimately shared by all honest members

Only utility crews should ever touch meters. Improper access can cause arc flashes and serious injury or death. All members are encouraged to report instances of tampering – any information will be kept confidential.

