

# Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Norris Electric Cooperative

8543 N St Hwy 130  
Newton, IL 62448

**Phone:** 618-783-8765  
or **Toll-Free:**  
1-877-783-8765

**Report an Outage:**  
1-877-783-3221

**Office Hours:**  
Monday – Thursday  
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### Chairman

Gordon McClure .....Jasper

### Vice Chairman

Justin Parcel..... Clark

### Secretary/Treasurer

Ted Helmink ..... Cumberland

### Directors

Gary Buser.....Crawford

Dean Dietrich ..... Richland

Kurt Holscher .....Crawford

Gilbert Garbe ..... Effingham

Scott Weiss.....Lawrence

Dan Strine ..... Wabash

Dave Sheppard.....Jasper

Ron Viehman.....Lawrence

### General Manager

Tamara Phillips



## May is Electrical Safety Month

Electricity lights homes and businesses, provides warmth and keeps appliances and equipment running smoothly. During Electrical Safety Month, Norris Electric and Safe Electricity provide these electrical safety tips to avoid hazards both inside and outdoors.

### Staying safe on the road

Downed power lines can happen because of wind, storms, animals or an auto accident/collision.

1. If you see a downed power line, call 911 to report it and stay in your car. You cannot tell by looking or listening if the power line is deenergized. Wait in your vehicle until an electric utility crew member says it is safe.
2. Do not drive over a downed power line. Doing so could cause a domino effect and bring down other lines, poles and equipment.
3. The only time you should exit is if your vehicle or cab is on fire. If this is the case, make a solid jump from the car or cab without touching it, landing with both feet together. Then, hop away with your feet together as far as you can.

### Staying safe outside

When working outside, be aware of overhead and underground power lines.

1. Keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Keep any items you are carrying or using, such as long poles, ladders or other extended equipment, 10 feet away from power lines at all times. Carry them horizontally.

2. Make sure all outside outlets are ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected.
3. Before digging, call 811 or your state's underground locating service. Buried lines such as electric, gas, water, sewer and other lines bring services indoors. Besides the dangers of coming in contact with a gas or electric line, fines due to damage are the responsibility of the home or landowner. Privately owned lines and systems will not be marked by the free service.
4. When you see lightning, take shelter inside an enclosed building or a hard-topped vehicle for protection. Stay away from high places, and do not take shelter under an isolated tree. No place outside is safe. Stay away from items that conduct electricity, such as metal fences. If you are swimming or in a hot tub, get out. Water is an electrical conductor that is dangerous during a storm.

### Staying safe inside

With so many people working from home, the workplace and where you live can be one and the same. This means more devices are plugged into outlets or circuits that may not be able to handle the load.

1. Have a qualified electrician/licensed contractor check for hazards if you notice the following: dimming lights, a sizzling or buzzing sound, the smell of warm plastic, a switch plate that feels warm or looks scorched, sparks when plugging in

*Continued on 18b* ►

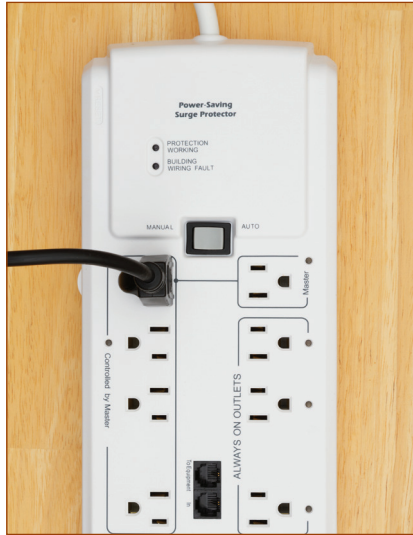
# Understanding power surges & blinks

**H**ave you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

## What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within our home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts – this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers. Norris Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact



a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

## What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2021 alone, critters were responsible for more than 140 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Norris Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling (618) 783-8765.

## ► *Electrical Safety Month* *continued from 18a*

- or unplugging items or circuits that trip often.
2. When working with electrical equipment inside the house or shop, be aware that electrical equipment can spark when flammable vapors, gases or dust are present.
3. Do not overstretch a cord or use frayed or damaged cords.
4. During storms, lightning can enter homes through corded phones, TVs, radios or computers. Lightning can also travel through plumbing, so do not take a bath, shower or wash dishes when you see lightning. If possible, unplug appliances and electronics before the storm, including cell phones charging via electricity. Surges caused by lightning can damage electronics and appliances.

Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for more information on electrical safety.

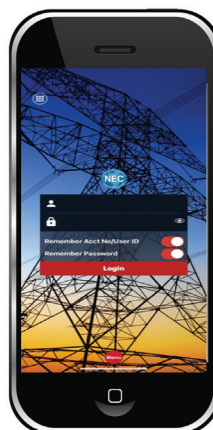
## Download the Norris Electric App Today!

Do you have an iPhone or Android smartphone? If so, Norris Electric Cooperative has a smartphone app for you. The app is named Norris Electric and is available for free for iPhone and Android smartphones.

With the app, members can check their balance, make a payment, view payment/bill history, report an outage, view the outage map, view usage graphs which tracks usage consumption and set alerts and reminders for due date, high energy usage and payment confirmation.

The app can be found by visiting the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and searching "Norris Electric."

If you have any trouble downloading or signing up for the app, give us a call at 1-877-783-8765 and we can walk you through it.





Gilbert Garbe,  
Effingham  
County



Ted Helmink,  
Cumberland County,  
Secretary/Treasurer



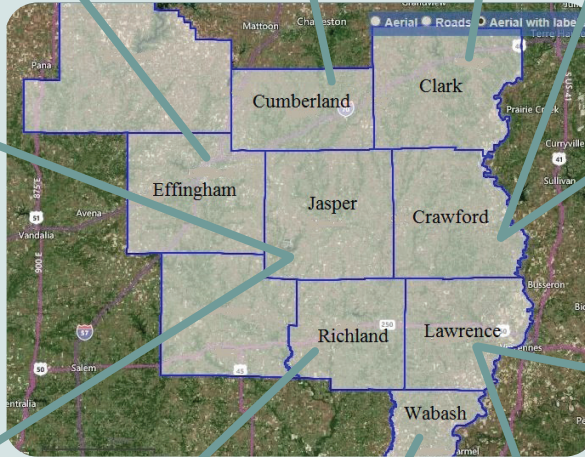
Justin Parcel,  
Clark County,  
Vice-President



Gary Buser,  
Crawford  
County



Gordon  
McClure,  
Jasper County,  
President



Kurt Holscher,  
Crawford  
County



Dave Sheppard,  
Jasper County



Scott Weiss,  
Lawrence  
County



Dean Dietrich,  
Richland County



Dan Strine,  
Wabash County



Ron Viehman,  
Lawrence County

# Meet your elected Norris Electric Directors

**A** Board of Directors is the representative body of the members of the cooperative. It represents the legitimate cooperative owners and acts on their behalf. The owners elect the Board and place in its hands the administration of the assets and responsibilities of the cooperative. The Board of Directors has five principal functions:

1. **Legal:** Ensure the legal right of the cooperative to exist.
2. **Trusteeship:** Act in the best interest of the members.
3. **Planning:** Develop programs and carry out plans based on ideals that reflect the thinking of its members, with realistic goals adjusted to the purposes of the cooperative.
4. **Resources:** Assure the availability of basic resources, including personnel, loan funds, wholesale power and revenue, according to the cooperative's size and needs.

5. **Control:** Monitor operations to assure compliance with Board policy, budgets, member relations, loan covenants, contractual compliance and long-range planning.

In addition to the above responsibilities, directors also have certain duties and rights. Director duties include loyalty, obedience and due care. Loyalty requires a director to be loyal first to the cooperative entity. Obedience requires a director to perform his or her duties in accordance with applicable laws, bylaws, contracts and policies. Due care requires a director to perform his or her duties as a member of the Board, or any committee of the Board upon which he or she serves, in good faith, in a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the cooperative, and with the care that an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would use under similar circumstances.

## Help us reduce your costs



Are you paying your electric or internet bill by credit card or debit card? Did you know that every time a credit or debit card is used, Norris Electric pays a fee? It is true. Norris Electric pays a percentage of the total amount charged to your card. In order to keep Members' costs low, we encourage you to review other payment options.

- Mail your check to the office
- Set up recurring bank draft from your checking or savings account
- Make a payment at one of the convenient local banks
- Set up electronic payment from your bank to be transferred to Norris Electric
- Pay by e-check from our automated phone system
- Pay online with e-check at [www.norriselectric.com](http://www.norriselectric.com)
- Download the Norris App on your smartphone and pay by autopay or e-check
- Make check or cash payment in our office

Please contact the office to make changes that will reduce costs for everyone.

## Make sure your phone number and email are up-to-date

Over the years, many members have done away with landline telephones. Due to this, the co-op is sometimes unable to reach members without a current phone number in our system.

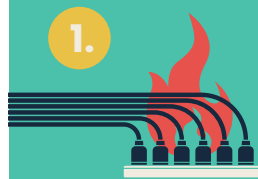
We ask that if you have changed your primary phone number or would like to add a cell phone number to your account, please notify us.

By updating your phone number, it helps automate payment in our IVR and outage system. It automatically recognizes the account associated with the phone number, making the process smooth.

It is important we have a current number and email address in our system so that we are able to reach you in the case of an emergency. Please give us a call at 877-783-8765 to update your information.

# ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these **SEVEN** basic tips:



### 1. DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.



### 2. DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.



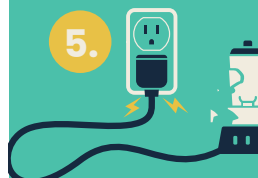
### 3. HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.



### 4. BE CAREFUL AROUND H<sub>2</sub>O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.



### 5. EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.



### 6. TEST YOUR GFCIs

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.



### 7. MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.

Safe  
Electricity.org®