

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



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Tree trimming improves reliability for all members

One of the things I love best about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and a habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At Corn Belt Energy we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights of way (ROW).

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW areas. However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a “right of way” is and how it may impact you. A right of way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights of way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance or operation. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, Corn Belt Energy must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable



power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching

power lines in our members’ yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.



Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keeps lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and the technology to maximize the efficiency of our operation. This includes our vegetation management plan. Corn Belt Energy operates an aggressive vegetation management program. Our line crews look for foliage growing under lines, overhanging branches, leaning or other types of trees that could pull down a power line if they fall, and trees that could grow into

lines. It's a job that's never done. By the time crews finish trimming along our 5,059 miles of distribution lines, vegetation has started to grow back at the starting point.

We need your help in working to keep a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of power flowing to your home or business. Let us know if you notice trees or branches that might pose a risk to our power lines.

Even more important, before planting trees in your yard, think about how tall they may grow and how wide their branches may spread. As a rule of thumb, 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance should be available on each side of our utility poles to give power lines plenty of space. Choose tree varieties with care and plant with power lines in mind.

Affordability

As you know, Corn Belt Energy is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

Find energy efficient rebates and incentives that may apply to your home, business, farm or school. The Corn Belt Energy rebate programs include: HVAC, pool pumps, heat pump water heaters, air source heat pumps, geothermal, electric vehicle circuit installation as well as commercial and industrial rebates.

Learn more about the rebates offered by contacting Corn Belt Energy at www.cornbeltenergy.com or by calling us at 800-879-0339.

Don't fall victim to utility scams



Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Remember, Corn Belt Energy will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.

We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Corn Belt Energy will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle. Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to

our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent an electric cooperative or other utility unless you have specifically signed up to receive these messages. These are just a couple examples of trending scams, so it's important to watch for any red flags.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- Take your time. Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.
- Be suspicious. Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.
- Confirm before you act. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Corn Belt Energy or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call your local electric cooperative or utility directly. You can reach us at 800-879-0339 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Corn Belt Energy so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.



Justin Stuva
Director of Member Services

How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?
12 years

What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?
I oversee the Member Services Team. We handle billing, moves, general inquiries and are the first team most interact with when they call or email us.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
I enjoy answering member inquiries regardless of the topic and providing a high level of customer service in all circumstances. Every day brings new challenges and that keeps my job interesting.

If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?
Continually challenge yourself to try new things and do not remain complacent. Forcing yourself to get out of your comfort zone is a healthy exercise to continually practice.

Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?
As an EMT and Corn Belt Employee, it is critical to slow down and move over when you see workers on the side of the road. It will save lives.

What are your hobbies and outside interests?
I love spending time with my wife and three kids. My free time is spent in the outdoors; hunting, trapping, fishing and camping. I'm also an amateur YouTuber that focuses on the outdoors.

Who or what inspires you?
I am a third generation electric cooperative employee and take great pride knowing I'm carrying on the legacy. I'm inspired to follow in my father's foot steps.

If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?
#officebydayoutdoorsbynight

Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?
I am proud to work for Corn Belt Energy and look forward to continuing to serve our members in the future.



Surge protection for your entire home

Storms often bring an increased threat of power surges which could damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

Many people think a blink in power is a surge, but these are generally caused by something such as a tree contacting a line. When a blink occurs, Corn Belt Energy's protective devices work, causing an interruption to protect the wires and other components.

What is a power surge? A power surge is defined as sudden, short-lived increase in voltage. Power surges can enter the home in a variety of ways including power lines, telephone lines, cable/satellite connections and any other metallic system that connects to your home.

Corn Belt Energy can help protect your home from the threat of power surges which could damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

Internal Surges

80% of temporary power surges come from inside the home; protect your equipment with surge protector devices like power strips. Make sure to look for the UL 1449 label, which guarantees it meets tested and approved standards. Surge protectors carry a "joule" and/or a "surge-current" rating; the higher the rating of these two categories, the higher the quality of internal surge-stopping components. Corn Belt carries several surge strips and outlet receptacles that may fit your needs.

External Surges

Whole-house protection is recommended for more severe surges, including lightning strikes. Corn Belt can install a surge protector on your exterior electric meter for \$6.95/month (200 amp meter) and a \$25 installation fee. 400 amp meter protection is available for \$8.95/month with a \$25 installation fee.

Inside your home, a panel-mounted circuit panel or service entrance suppression device (TVSS) forms a second layer of defense by greatly reducing harmful surges entering your home. A qualified electrician can ensure proper installation.

For more information, please visit our website at www.cornbeltenergy.com or call us at 800-879-0339.

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