



# IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

AUGUST 2023

Residential Customers 1.800.755.5000

• Business Customers 1.800.232.2477

• Call JULIE Before You Dig at 811

## POLE RECYCLING MAKES A BIG IMPACT

It takes approximately 1.3 million single poles and nearly 9,500 multi-pole structures for Ameren Illinois to deliver reliable power to electric customers across our 43,700-square-mile service territory. A typical utility pole stands 40 feet tall and weighs roughly 1,000 pounds. In the past, when a pole was damaged or decommissioned, it ended up in a landfill and created a sizeable footprint.

To reduce landfill waste, Ameren Illinois launched a utility pole recycling program for retired or broken power poles in 2022. In that first year, we diverted nearly 750 tons of wood waste from local landfills.

Ameren Illinois works with Blackwood Solutions, a recycling company that specializes in repurposing or recycling old or broken power poles for fencing, landscaping or building materials.

Considering the program's success in 2022, Ameren Illinois extended its agreement with Blackwood Solutions in 2023 to include recycling wooden pallets.



## A/C DONATIONS HELP ILLINOIS RESIDENTS BEAT SUMMER HEAT

To help our most vulnerable customers stay cool and safe this summer, Ameren Illinois donated 500 ENERGY STAR®-rated window air conditioners to community action agencies across the state.

The agencies will distribute the units to their local client families and individuals who meet Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) guidelines, including veterans and those with disabilities. Units were donated to local community action agencies in West Frankfort, Danville, Decatur, Edwardsville, Peoria, Belleville, and Quincy.

The high-efficiency ENERGY STAR-rated units will help these customers stay cool at less cost.

Since 2013, Ameren Illinois has donated more than 3,000 energy-efficient air conditioners to residents across its service territory.

*Energy assistance programs are available to assist Ameren Illinois customers. Please visit [AmerenIllinois.com/EnergyAssistance](https://AmerenIllinois.com/EnergyAssistance) for more details.*



## DID YOU KNOW?

The average lifespan of a utility pole is 40 years. Ameren Illinois installs about 12,000 poles per year.



# HERE COMES THE SUN... (AND THE SAVINGS)

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, solar energy is the fastest growing and most affordable source of new electricity in America.

A sunny day is always a welcome sight. And when the sun rises in the small Southern Illinois town of Red Bud, homeowner Jeff Peterson has even more reason to celebrate.

A nurse anesthetist by trade, Peterson leverages the latest solar technologies to lower his energy bill and lessen his impact on the planet.

*"Ameren Illinois was a leader in solar energy from the start. The way they have helped me has been phenomenal."*

— Jeff Peterson  
Ameren Illinois Customer & Solar Energy Producer

Peterson first ventured into the world of renewable energy nearly a decade ago when he installed a solar-powered generation system at his home. In spring 2023, he upgraded to a smarter solar system.

Taking advantage of financial incentives, Peterson installed a ground-mounted solar array in the field next to his home. His sophisticated system also features a smart inverter, in-home battery storage, natural gas-powered back-up generator, and a home energy management system that brings it all together.

Ameren Illinois has been Peterson's ally every step of the way, offering guidance on rules and regulations and financial incentives.

Along with environmental benefits, solar energy has allowed Peterson to **greatly reduce his power bills — without sacrificing comfort or changing his energy usage habits.**

Whether you are inspired by Peterson's sophisticated system or simply want a few solar panels on your roof, Ameren Illinois is here to help customers produce their own clean energy. With government and utility incentives available, there's never been a better time to do so.

**Learn how you can produce your own renewable energy:**

- [AmerenIllinois.com/Renewables](https://AmerenIllinois.com/Renewables)
- [IllinoisShines.com](https://IllinoisShines.com)
- [Illinois.gov/Renewables](https://Illinois.gov/Renewables)
- [IllinoisSFA.com](https://IllinoisSFA.com)

## LINE WORKER RANDI BLASER FEATURED IN T&D WORLD

Our very own Randi Blaser was the featured line worker in the May 2023 issue of Transmission & Distribution World magazine.

In the U.S., women represent about 5 percent of line workers, but it was a natural career choice for Blaser, whose parents both worked in the trade.

As a journeyman lineman based in Ameren Illinois' Belleville Operating Center, Blaser's main responsibilities are to safely work on overhead and underground utilities and train the next generation of line workers. She continued to climb poles and work in a bucket truck up until the 5-month mark of her pregnancy — with twins!

*Ameren Illinois is proud to have Blaser on our team.*

## Power by the Hour

With Power Smart Pricing, an hourly pricing program from Ameren Illinois, Peterson can buy energy at the lowest possible price and store it for later use; then sell excess solar energy to Ameren Illinois at the highest price.

# AMEREN ILLINOIS CONTINUES MODERNIZATION OF NATURAL GAS SYSTEM IN DECATUR



Ameren Illinois customers in Decatur and surrounding Macon County communities will benefit from an \$18 million investment the company is making to modernize its natural gas energy delivery infrastructure.

In early June, Ameren Illinois contract crews began work to upgrade an 8-mile stretch of natural gas transmission pipeline on Decatur's east side.

- East Faries Parkway, near Archer Daniels Midland Company, to 27th Street – crews are upgrading 2 miles of 1950s-era pipeline with modern 12-inch steel pipeline.
- 27th Street to North MacArthur Road – crews will reduce the downstream pressure of an additional 6-mile stretch of 10-inch pipeline from 27th Street to North MacArthur Road, as well as add a new regulator station.

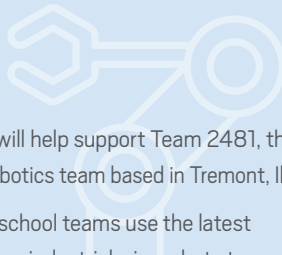
Once all work is completed and in-service by late October, it will strengthen the integrity and reliability of the company's natural gas system and support economic development in the area.

## Seven Years of Progress

*Under Ameren Illinois' natural gas modernization program, the company has replaced more than 400 miles of mechanically coupled steel pipeline, 150 miles of high-pressure steel pipes, and more than 70 natural gas regulator stations over the last seven years.*

*Along with implementation of new technology to monitor and adjust pipeline pressurization, these projects have delivered increased safety and reliability, supported downstate growth, and created hundreds of jobs in central and southern Illinois.*

## ROOTING FOR THE ROBOTEERS

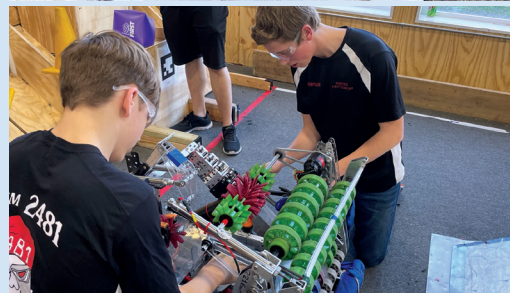


A \$2,500 grant from Ameren Illinois will help support Team 2481, the Roboteers, a world champion FIRST robotics team based in Tremont, Illinois.

In FIRST robotics competitions, high school teams use the latest technology to design, build and program industrial-size robots to compete in a unique game challenge each year.

Of over 3,000 teams internationally, the Roboteers have ranked in the top 2% for the last 9 years – and took home the World Champion title in 2016.

The Roboteers team provides Central Illinois students the opportunity to grow and develop skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. Among Roboteers alumni, 86% have gone on to enter STEM-related jobs.





# ELECTRICAL SAFETY: DORM ROOM DO'S & DON'TS

Sending a child off to college? Here are some steps parents and guardians can take to make sure the dorm room or apartment of a student is up-to-snuff when it comes to electrical safety:

- Do not overload extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- Use power strips with over-current protectors.
- If an outlet gets too hot to touch, unplug everything from the outlet and notify the landlord or dorm officials immediately.
- Only use extension cords temporarily.
- Do not staple extension cords.
- Never remove a grounding pin.
- Look for the UL Mark on any electrical product you use.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet.
- Make sure the appliance cords aren't frayed or cracked. If they are, get them repaired by a professional.
- Have a UL-Listed fire extinguisher in the dorm room or apartment and know how to use it.

Parents and college students should also ask about campus fire prevention measures, such as smoke alarms, fire sprinkler systems, fire prevention training and drills.



Find more electrical safety tips at  
**SafeElectricity.org.**



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

On May 30, as the school year ended, more than 700 students from Mark Denman Elementary School in Danville learned about careers in energy. Members of our Danville electric and natural gas crews shared what it's like to work in the industry, answered questions from the curious kids, and maybe even inspired a few future Ameren Illinois workers.