



IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

DECEMBER 2024

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Call JULIE Before You Dig at 811



Celebrate & Save

Follow these simple energy-saving tips to enjoy a festive holiday season while using less energy:

- Lower the thermostat before holiday gatherings since additional warm bodies can raise the temperature in your home.
- Put lights and decorations on a timer to automatically turn them on at dusk and off at bedtime.
- Deck your halls and trees with long-lasting LED lights. They're brighter, cooler and use just a fraction of the energy of conventional bulbs.
- Going away for the holidays? Use a smart thermostat to automatically adjust your home's temperature while you're traveling or away from home for an extended period of time.



HASSLE-FREE ENERGY ASSESSMENTS FOR A CARBON-FREE SCHOOL

Attention, school administrators! As part of our Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessments (PSCFA) program, Ameren Illinois offers free guidance to help public schools in our service territory reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.

Assessments include an inspection of the building envelope and mechanical insulation at each school building and district facility. A final report will include:

- ★ Solar energy potential of school properties
- ★ Estimated costs of switching to electric space heating, water heating and transportation
- ★ Energy efficiency project incentives and third-party funding sources
- ★ Additional opportunities to save energy and reduce costs

As part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, the hassle-free PSCFA process allows administrators to make a significant impact on their school's future without disrupting day-to-day operations.

Visit AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/PSCFA to take the first step toward clean energy and a more sustainable school.



AMEREN ILLINOIS UNVEILS SECOND SOLAR ENERGY CENTER IN EAST ST. LOUIS



In November, Ameren Illinois was proud to unveil our second solar energy facility in East St. Louis. Featuring more than 2,500 solar panels, the \$8.8 million East St. Louis Energy Center will harness energy from the sun and feed the energy onto the Ameren Illinois grid.

Capable of generating 1.375 megawatts, the new solar energy center will produce enough clean energy to power 300 homes. The site will also feature 500 KW of battery storage to allow for better management of the energy output.

Area contractors used local labor to construct the facility, creating approximately 30 jobs during the construction phase of the project.

The opening of the East St. Louis Energy Center supports long-term environmental stewardship and the state of Illinois' renewable energy goals. The project also provides an economic boost to the region by repurposing the land for beneficial use and bringing local tax revenue to the area.

New Substation Will Bolster Local Grid in Marion

In January, Ameren Illinois will begin construction on a new distribution substation in Marion that will enhance energy service reliability, flexibility and load capacity of the local grid.

The new Banterra Drive Substation will include two 34.5-kilovolt supplies and a 34.5/12-kilovolt transformer, which will add 22.4 megawatts of capacity to the immediate area. This additional electric capacity will support ongoing industrial growth, including the redevelopment of the former Illinois Centre Mall site and surrounding properties, which encompass the Marion STAR Bond District Project Area 1.. The substation is scalable, with room for a second 22.4-megawatt transformer, if needed in the future.

Work is expected to be complete by June 2025 and will help Ameren Illinois meet the needs of electric customers now and in the future.



Keep the Holidays Safe & Bright

During the hustle and bustle of the holidays, don't lose sight of safety. These simple steps for lighting will help ensure a safe and bright holiday season:

- * Use holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label.
- * Before decorating, check each light strand for broken sockets, frayed cords or faulty plugs.
- * Always turn off decorative holiday lights before going to bed or leaving home. A timer makes this easy.
- * Don't overload extension cords or outlets or string together more light strands than recommended by the manufacturer.
- * When outdoors, use only lights, cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use.
- * Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with GFCIs. Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them.
- * Take extra care not to throw strings of lights over tree branches that are near power lines and service connections.
- * Do not run cords through doorways or high-traffic areas or hide them under rugs or carpets.
- * Do not let children or pets play with light strands or electrical decorations.

Find more tips at [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



Ameren Illinois Employee Wins 2024 JULIE Award

For his tireless commitment to pipeline safety and damage prevention, Chris Schildroth, pictured above at left, was named the winner of JULIE's 2024 Gina Meehan-Taylor Damage Prevention Advocacy Award. JULIE selected Chris for the positive impact he has made through outreach, advocacy and education.

In his role as Public Awareness Specialist for Ameren Illinois, Chris travels to communities throughout our service territory to teach emergency first responders, contractors and public works groups how to respond to natural gas emergencies. He also conducts countless public awareness sessions about pipeline and underground damage prevention for members of the general public.

Congratulations, Chris!



JULIE established the advocacy award in memory of Gina Meehan-Taylor, a damage prevention professional with Ameren Illinois who was passionate about protecting underground utilities and keeping people safe.

Storage Field Upgrades Enhance Natural Gas Reliability During Winter Months

Our underground storage fields play a critical role in providing natural gas to meet customer heating needs. Ameren Illinois is upgrading our storage capabilities to ensure that we're prepared to meet demand throughout this winter and beyond.

- At the Glasford natural gas storage field, a new injection pipeline and take station allow Ameren Illinois to free-flow natural gas from the Panhandle Eastern Pipeline and eliminate the need to run natural gas compressors on the site.
- New dehydration systems at the Hillsboro, Freeburg and Shanghai natural gas storage fields remove moisture from the natural gas to meet pipeline quality specifications.
- At the Freeburg natural gas storage field, we began phase two of a multi-year horizontal well drilling project that will replace vertical wells and transmission pipelines installed in the mid-1960s. When completed in 2027, the new horizontal wells will align with state and federal pipeline regulations and reduce operating and maintenance costs.

Ameren Illinois purchases natural gas in the summer at lower market prices, stores it and then injects it into our distribution system as demand increases. Our storage facilities help us ensure that natural gas is readily available during peak demand days, which helps keep natural gas bills lower in the winter.

Improving Energy Efficiency at Decatur Churches



Promoting energy efficiency in churches was the aim of a pilot program launched by the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program. Through the program, 27 Decatur churches received free energy assessments evaluating the age and function of lighting, HVAC systems, insulation and other energy efficiency needs. Those churches received new LED fixtures that will lower energy costs and brighten the space.

Learn more about our energy efficiency incentives for churches at AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/Churches.



"Gas Rats" Claim 3rd Place at National Gas Rodeo

Every year, the National Gas Rodeo attracts the best natural gas workers from around the country. With events such as the meter set, service installation, pipe cut and hand dig, the competition showcases the skill and teamwork it takes to keep natural gas flowing safely. Congratulations to the "Gas Rats" from our Peoria Operating Center for taking third place in the four-person team competition!