



Southeastern Indiana REMC: Electric Service Provider, Community Partner

Company: Southeastern Indiana REMC (Rural Electric Membership Corporation)
Address: 712 S. Buckeye Street, Osgood

Telephone: (812) 689-4111

Web site: www.seiremc.com

Founded: 1939

Management: Robert H. Mackey, general manager

Number of employees: 65. Additional construction and tree trimming work done by contract crews

Service/product:

Supplies electric power to members-owners in portions of seven counties – Dearborn, Franklin, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland. Also offers Internet service, long distance telephone service, surge protection devices and information/incentives on efficient electricity usage.

Size:

Ranks among the largest cooperatives in Indiana with approximately 25,000 member-owners and more than 3,000 miles of primary distribution electric lines.

History:

Frank Ratts, original manager of the Southeastern Indiana REMC, was instrumental in organizing Indiana cooperatives into a state organization and was a leader in developing Hoosier Energy, the power supplier for Southeastern Indiana REMC and other southern Indiana cooperatives.

The \$4 membership fee in 1939 brought electric conveniences that most urban residents were already experiencing. Members who did not have the money for the fee would help the crews dig holes for the electric poles or string wire in exchange.

Work challenges:

Weather. Tornadoes and other severe weather incidents have crews working around the clock to restore electricity service. In addition, there is the hilly terrain and abundance of trees in the service area.

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Mackey, general manager since 1991 and only the fourth in the organization's 65-year history, says approximately \$6.5 million a year is spent on new lines, pole replacement and routine maintenance. "A lot of lines cannot be reached from the road. Our linemen typically have to climb more poles than anybody in the state."

New initiative:

Planning to implement automated meter reading throughout the service area within the next four years. Ten cooperatives within Hoosier Energy are studying the process and working with vendors to select the best system. Southeastern Indiana REMC currently utilizes more than 50 neighborhood meter readers.

Filling a need:

Several years ago, members cited the lack of competitive long distance service in the area. Working with a provider, Southeastern Indiana REMC was able to fill the void. Mackey says several people have told him "this is the best thing we've ever done." The cooperative is currently considering offering local phone service.

Building communities:

Marianne Wiggers, marketing and economic development specialist, works with local and regional chamber, economic development and planning organizations on business development opportunities. A number of employees are active on boards and in public service in their local communities.