

# Brighten the Block: Ameren Illinois joins City of Alton volunteers to brighten a neighborhood

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**ALTON** - When storms ravaged the area near State and Ninth Streets in Alton earlier this season, the power was gone, and it looked pretty dark, however, Ameren Illinois noticed it was not very well-lit even with power restored.

To remedy this, volunteers from Ameren Illinois gave each resident in the area a door hanger offering the option to accept new energy-efficient LED light bulbs. If they checked "yes," and left the hanger on their doorknob, volunteers from Ameren Illinois and the City of Alton replaced their porch lights last evening. If they did not reply, volunteers knocked on each door and asked if they would like one, or left a bulb on the porch.

The new bulbs represent top-of-the-line technology, Ameren Illinois Community and Public Relations Coordinator Paula Nixon said. Ameren Illinois brought between 100-200 bulbs to replace, with the goal of getting at least 100 installed.

"These are LED bulbs, which are both brighter and more energy-efficient," Nixon said. "They will also last up to seven years without needing to be changed."

Funding for the bulbs came from Ameren Illinois's Ameren Cares initiative, which also gives free air conditioning units to households in need during the sweltering summer months. Because of programs like that, Alton Mayor Brant Walker, who donned a neon yellow vest to participate in the bulb replacements, said Ameren Illinois is a great corporation for Alton.

"Things like this and the air conditioner giveaway are just fantastic," Walker said. "What they did for us with the work at Riverview Park was also incredible. We couldn't ask for a better corporate sponsor here."

Walker was also joined by incoming First Ward Alderman Brian Campbell, who starts his term on May 10, as well as many members of the Alton Fire Department and Alton Police Department, including Alton Police Chief Jason "Jake" Simmons, who said making the area brighter may increase overall public safety.

"When Ameren came out after those storms, it was pretty dark, but it's never all that bright here," Simmons said. "Making the area brighter will increase visibility, and help keep the neighborhood overall safer for everyone."

Volunteers met at the former "Corner Market" parking lot, located on the corner of Ninth and State Streets Tuesday afternoon at 4 p.m.

"We are thrilled to work hand-in-hand with Alton leaders and volunteers on such an impactful project," said Ameren Illinois President Richard Mark in a release. "The safety of both our customers and our employees is of the utmost importance. Brighten the Block is one way we can work together to make our communities safer, while also highlighting the benefits of energy efficiency."

This event was one of eight throughout Ameren Illinois's entire coverage area, which includes most of the state.