

Impacts from illegal activity are far-reaching

Copper theft has reached an epidemic level that is not only affecting the United States, but is international and creating immense global havoc. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the theft of copper costs the national economy around \$1 billion per year. The increase in copper theft has disrupted the flow of electricity, created electrical hazards, slowed down construction projects and knocked out irrigation networks across the United States.

Additionally, when thieves cut locks or chain link fencing surrounding an electric substation they leave a highly dangerous area exposed for inquisitive children and animals.

Stealing material from an electric substation or utility pole can cause not only serious injuries and death, but extensive outages, fires and explosions – consequences that impact innocent people. The minimum damage that can occur is an outage, which may affect thousands of individuals.

Hemmer stated that deaths and damages related to copper theft are completely unnecessary and could happen anywhere.

People must be aware of this kind of theft and that tampering with electric power facilities can result in extremely dangerous situations. Always alert your utility provider when you see or suspect suspicious activity.

Safe Electricity offers these tips to help safeguard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft:

- Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.
- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire, etc. contact your electric utility immediately.
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than utility personnel or contractors, call the police.
- Install motion-sensor lights on the outside of your house and business to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.
- If you work in construction, do not leave any wires unattended or leave loose wire at the job site, especially overnight. Consider hiring a night security guard.

- Help spread the word about the deadly consequences that can result from trying to steal copper.

Copper theft is not harmless. Dealing with any metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, especially when it is done without permission or training. Copper theft places the thief and others in danger. People who think stealing electric wire is a quick way to earn some easy money should think again. The value of metal is not worth losing a life.



Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

October 25, 2010

Trustees present were: Frank Czyzewski, Bill Croy, Neil Gould, Frank Herman, Kevin Logan, Bob Pierson, Richard Rudolphi, Danny Schnepfer and Greg Smith. Also present were Executive Vice President/General Manager John Meng, and Cooperative Attorney Melanie Pearce. The invocation was given by Trustee Croy.

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held September 27, 2010.

Accepted 13 new members for service.

Canceled 25 members no longer receiving service.

Approved work orders in the amount of \$82,278.53.

Accepted the disbursement list for the month of September 2010.

Approved the financial and maintenance reports for the month of September 2010 as presented by Gen. Mgr. Meng.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan concerning the recent AIEC monthly Board meeting, including

financial information, cap and trade initiatives, upcoming Director training courses, Energy Saving initiative grants, Linemen's Rodeo Awards and the Annual Audit.

Heard reports by Trustee's Herman and Smith concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting, the "SIPC Joint Committee - Financial Snapshot September 2010," and functioning status of Unit 4 machinery at SIPC.

Informed of upcoming NRECA Annual Meeting date and location.

Discussed credit card services contract and Authorized Gen. Mgr. Meng to pursue such services through SEDC.

Reviewed report of a 1991 Cooperative Digger Unit and discussed the recommendations of the Committee to replace said unit.

Approved the purchase of the chassis from Effingham Truck Sales and an ALTEC DM 45 Digger Unit.

Approved the change of

date and time of the December Regular Board Meeting to Monday, December 20, 5:00 P.M.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng on recent safety meetings, field audits, and annual rubber glove training.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng regarding NRECA dues, "CECI Rate of Return % TIER", "Equity Level", and "Line Loss" from May 2008 through September 2010.

Reminded of November Regular Monthly Meeting due to time change would be at 6P.M.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng regarding the retirement of Capital Credits to the estates of two deceased members pursuant to Cooperative Policy.

Disbursed Touchstone Energy Extra, Fall 2010 edition.

Disbursed 2010-2011 IEC Continuing Education Training flyer.

Adjournment.

Clay County water update

Clay County Water (CCW) has completed the construction of the original area of Phase 2. Contractors are in the process of disinfecting the water lines and sampling and testing. As soon as all water samples have cleared, we will submit our operating permit to the Illinois EPA for approval. When we hear back from the EPA approving our operating permit we will send out a letter letting everyone know that it is now safe to hook on and begin using the water.

Clay County Water, Inc. also received word from USDA Rural Development, that the funds have been obligated for the Phase 3 project. The Phase 3 project includes about 50 miles of water line located in Southeast Xenia, South Stanford, South Harter, South Clay City Townships and a few other short line extensions in the area.

We are now finalizing the map of where exactly the line will go. If you have not been contacted, or would like to sign up for water service to your location, please call. Do not put this off any longer.

Doug Hockman 662-6666, Sue Pettit 662-4305
Bob Pierson 662-7471, Kye Hemphill 662-4590
Bill Seelman 662-8479, Dwight Edgington 678-2782
Kevin Henry 618-838-6123, or Hank Hilmes 662-2388

Professional installation an important safety step

During long-term power outages many rely on portable generators for emergency power. The growing popularity of portable electric generators has resulted in millions being placed in homes and small businesses across the nation. But it's estimated only a small percentage are hooked up correctly. Safe Electricity urges consumers to understand the proper safety steps that must be taken.

If installed and operated correctly, use of standby or portable electric generators poses little danger, but improper installation or use could be dangerous to you and threaten the lives of your family, friends, neighbors and electric utility crews trying to restore service.

"Consult and discuss your purchase options with a reliable vendor, your electric supplier and contractors," advises Jay Solomon, University of Illinois Extension Engineering Educator. "A qualified vendor or electric professional will know existing safety codes and the utility's safety requirements, and can help you select the best equipment for your needs and situation."

Properly connecting the generator into the system is a critical step for safe and effective use. A licensed professional should install a permanent, standby electric generator and can help with proper equipment for safely using a portable generator.

Have a qualified electrician install a transfer switch. The transfer switch breaks the path of electricity between the power lines and your main electrical panel. This is the best way to protect you, your neighbors and repair crews from 'back feed.' Back feed occurs when an improperly connected generator begins feeding electricity "back" through the power lines. This can seriously injure anyone near lines, especially crews working to restore power.

"Safety for the operators and users of a generating system in the home and utility crews cannot be over-emphasized," says Solomon. "A qualified electrician should be consulted to ensure proper installation and electrical grounding requirements, circuit overload protections and local codes are met."

Some homeowners choose smaller, portable generators to power essential electrical equipment during outages. Safe Electricity offers these tips for the safe operation and use of portable generators:

- **Read and follow all manufacturer-operating instructions to properly ground the generator.** Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- **Maintain adequate ventilation.** Generators emit carbon monoxide. Never operate a generator in your home, garage, or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry, outside location.
- **Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring.** This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed also can damage the generator and home electrical equipment.
- **Turn off generator and allow cooling before refueling.** Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electrical spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location.
- **Protect your appliances.** Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating

the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit.

- **Use proper extension cords.** Use only safety-tested, shop-type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- **Shut down generator properly.** Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- **Remember maintenance between uses.** It's important to drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

Safe Electricity suggests that these safety guidelines and basic operating instructions be posted in the home and with the generator.



Youth to Washington trip may provide answers for your future

OK. So you aren't really into politics. As a junior in high school, you're thinking about college and where you're going to come up with more than \$100,000 to pay for higher education. You're also trying to decide what you want to work at the rest of your life to make that college experience pay off.

Oddly enough, the very people who may have answers to those questions are wearing the title of state legislator or seated in chambers of the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.

Before you know it, you will be voting in your first election and the weight of the country's decisions will partially belong to you. Will you support a Congressman who wants to pass Cap & Trade? Will you be in favor of farm subsidies? As you approach what was once "draft-age," do you think we should send more troops to Iraq and Afghanistan or should the military be strengthening our borders? Oh, and when you get the opportunity to meet your Congressman, in addition to these questions will you ask: What has Congress done to make higher education more affordable and will I be able to find a job when I graduate?

Electric and telephone cooperatives in 44 states believe that



young people deserve a first-class opportunity to educate themselves in the government process. Each year, the cooperatives across the nation sponsor more than 1,500 high school students to make the trek to Washington to get that personal initiation, and they have a lot of fun in the process.

It all begins in Springfield on April 6, 2011 during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day where nearly 300 students will visit the State Capitol and spend much of the morning meeting with legislators. You will tour the Supreme Court and spend the afternoon touring local sites.

To be considered for this trip, see your guidance counselor for details as participation rules vary from co-op to co-op.

This year marks the 52nd trip to the nation's capital and promises to be as exciting as ever. Students learn the principles required to keep cooperative members working together for the cooperative's success by establishing their own "chip and pop" cooperative while on the bus trip.

While in Washington during the week of June 10-17, in addition to meeting with Congressman from Illinois, students are treated to tours of historic sites, given the opportunity to make life-long friends and receive information to help determine career paths.

The future of the country depends on the youth of today getting involved.

You must be a Junior in High School, and the child of a Clay Electric Cooperative member to be eligible.

To learn about this opportunity, contact your Guidance Counselor or Doug Hockman at Clay Electric Cooperative 618-662-2171. You may also check out the Youth Tour through the Association Of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) at www.aiec.coop for additional details.



Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Office hours: 7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.