CLAY ELECTRIC NEWS

CLAY ELECTRIC
CO-OPERATIVE, INC.
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FLORA, ILLINOIS

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Who will map your future?

## *You can find out on the Youth to Washington trip*

*Sierra Bonham, Congressman Shimkus and Ashley McKnight*

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? 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 more than 40 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 17, 2013 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.

This year marks the 54th 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 14-21, 2013, in addition to meeting with Congressmen 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.

Hopefully, at the conclusion of the tour, you will understand the only crystal ball in Washington is the one you help develop through your participation in government and public service. The future of the country depends on the youth of today getting involved.

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 websites, Clay Electric Cooperative at www.ceci.coop or the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) at www.aiec.coop for additional details.

# Hearts at risk

## *Blood pressure basics for American Heart Month*

Healthy hearts face risks from many different factors: high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and secondhand smoke, among others. But another common—and often misunderstood—risk factor is high blood pressure.

One in three Americans suffers from high blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). With February designated as American Heart Month, now's a great time to understand more about this condition.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio: 118/75 mm Hg. The top number, systolic, measures pressure in the arteries when a heart beats and the heart muscle contracts. The bottom number, diastolic, measures pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle rests between beats and refills with blood).

### *The AHA lists five stages of blood pressure:*

- **Normal:** Systolic less than 120 and diastolic less than 80
- **Prehypertension:** Systolic between 120-139 or diastolic between 80-89
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 1:** Systolic between 140-159 or diastolic between 90-99
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 2:** Systolic 160 and higher or diastolic 100 or higher
- **Hypertensive Crisis** (emergency care needed): Systolic 180 and higher or diastolic 110 or higher

### *How is high blood pressure diagnosed?*

Health care providers want an accurate picture of blood pressure to chart what happens over time. Starting at age 20, AHA recommends a blood pressure screening at least once every two years.

If a patient's blood pressure reading comes in higher than normal, a doctor may take several readings over time and/or have the patient monitor blood pressure levels at home before diagnosing high blood pressure.

A single high reading does not necessarily translate to high blood pressure. However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above (systolic 140 or above OR diastolic 90 or above) over time, a doctor will likely begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring blood pressure, a patient notes a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm HG or higher, the patient should wait a few minutes and try again. If the reading remains at or above that level, a patient should seek immediate emergency medical treatment for a hypertensive crisis.

### *Which number is more important, systolic (top) or diastolic (bottom)?*

Typically, more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most cases, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age because of increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

To learn more, visit www.heart.org.

*Measuring your blood pressure is quick and painless. A doctor or health professional wraps an inflatable cuff with a pressure gauge around your arm to squeeze the blood vessels. Then he or she listens to your pulse with a stethoscope while releasing air from the cuff and watching the gauge. The gauge measures blood pressure in millimeters of mercury, abbreviated as mmHg.*

# Minutes of Board of Trustees meeting

## *Regular meeting November 26, 2012*

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

**Approved** the minutes of the regular meeting held October 22, 2012. Accepted 15 new members for service.

**Canceled** 13 members no longer receiving service.

**Approved** work orders in the amount of $30,926.13.

**Discussed and Accepted** the disbursement list for the month of October, 2012.

**Heard** a report by Trustee Logan concerning the recent AIEC Board Meeting, Disbursed Executive Summary, and Reviewed ARES Referendums.

**Heard** a report by Trustee Herman concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting, including the financials, Intralink software, refinancing, and budgeting committee decisions. Trustee's Smith and Rudolphi also reported on other budget issues.

**Approved** the financial and maintenance reports, Reviewed Policy 900-1 (Line extension policy) and heard a report on replacement of underground conductor as presented by Gen. Mgr. Meng.

**Discussed** upcoming NRECA Annual Meeting plans.

**Heard** a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng concerning letters to Effingham County members about ARES referendum. Also informed of recent ARES committee meeting.

**Reviewed** a draft of the 2012CECI Cost of Service Study being prepared by the engineering staff at the AIEC.

**Heard** a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng concerning succession strategy for position of General Mgr. / Executive Vice President. Was presented with additional material to supplement job description.

**Informed** of upcoming Board meeting change to December 17 in consideration of Christmas Holidays.

**Heard and Approved** a report on the retirement of Capital Credits to the estates of three deceased members pursuant to Cooperative Policy.

**Heard** a report on the recent Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) whereby CECI was inspected to assess safety measures. CECI received a favorable rating.

**Heard** a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng regarding the preliminary work plan.

**Heard** a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng concerning the terms of a new Management Agreement with Clay County Water, Inc.

**Adjournment.**

# Clay County Water Update

Clay County Water, Inc. is nearing the end of the construction of the Phase 3 waterline project. Very few miles of line are left to build. Meters will be set once the lines have all been pressure tested, disinfected, and Clay County Water has obtained the necessary operating permit required by the Illinois EPA.

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, as fees will increase as the project proceeds.

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.

# Urge caution when using back-up generators

## *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 overemphasized," 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.*