

Clay Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Become a Co-op Voter

When was the last time you voted?

As member-owned electric cooperatives, voting is already in our DNA. It's how we maintain an electric utility which is responsive to the consumers it serves. But voting also plays a crucial part in our representative democracy. Federal, state and local elections offer an opportunity to exercise a civic responsibility -- to select the best leaders for our communities.

Yet in places all over America, even those served by electric cooperatives, citizens aren't exercising that right.

In the 2012 national elections, voter turnout dropped overall, but the decline in rural counties was 18 percent—twice that of the nation as a whole.

And when voters miss the chance to vote, they also lose the opportunity to communicate their concern to our leaders about the issues that matter to us, where we work, live, and raise families.

Reliable electricity, access to rural broadband and the quality of our healthcare system are just a few issues we all care about. Still, they only become priorities if enough people show elected officials that they are paying attention. Registering to vote and voting are the most effective ways to send this message.

When we go to the polls with the cooperative principle of "Concern for Community" in mind, we instantly improve our political system. It's a



system designed to produce a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." People like you and me.

I'd like you to join me in a new initiative to get every eligible person registered to vote—you, me, our family and friends—and take the pledge to BECOME A CO-OP VOTER.

Clay Electric has joined America's electric cooperatives in launching a campaign to help get out the vote and insert issues important to co-ops into the public discussion. Called "Co-ops Vote," this effort will help boost voter turnout in areas served by cooperatives across the country to ensure that our voices are heard loud and clear every day, and especially on Election Day.

Here's what you can do to help. Visit the Co-ops Vote web site, WWW.VOTE.COOP, and take the pledge to BECOME A CO-OP VOTER to support your community

and electric cooperative when casting your vote in 2016. The web site will give you information on your elected officials and candidates, the voter registration process, election dates and locations, and background about eight key co-op issues we want our elected leaders to understand: rural broadband access, hiring and honoring veterans, low-income energy assistance, cybersecurity, water regulation, rural health care access, affordable and reliable energy, and renewable energy.

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan program developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. With 42 million members across the nation, electric co-ops are a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact.

If you have any questions, please visit WWW.VOTE.COOP or contact us directly at Clay Electric Cooperative 800-582-9012. I hope to see you at the polls!



Ed VanHoose
Manager

Solid co-op jobs for veterans

As an estimated 14,400 electric co-op jobs will be opening up over the next five years co-op leaders are being encouraged to fill those openings with veterans. Electric cooperatives have joined with the U.S. Department of Energy's Veteran Hiring Initiative and others advocating and assisting with hiring veterans to fill co-op job vacancies to match those jobs with veterans.

Serve our Co-ops; Serve our Country is a nationwide electric cooperative initiative to honor and hire veterans, military service members and their spouses. The program is focusing on educating and training electric co-ops to implement nationally recognized leading practices in attracting, hiring, onboarding and retaining veterans. Co-ops from 47 states are forming a national coalition with the shared goal of employing veterans. The second focus area of this program is to care for the veteran communities that live in suburban and rural areas. Co-ops are engaging with local initiatives to

enhance veterans' integration within their communities and promote available resources to veterans.

"We want to expand our co-op pipeline with great talent to fill the many jobs that will be opening up," says Michelle Rostom, Veteran Initiative Program Director for the National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. "NRECA and its co-op partners will follow nationally recognized best practices and guidelines for hiring and retaining skilled veterans. In addition to the diverse technical talents and trainability our veterans bring to co-ops, there are many parallels between military culture and electric cooperative culture, including mission, teamwork, and commitment to community," she says.

Kim Leftwich is a retired Lt. Colonel of the United States Air Force and has significant experience in the utility industry. He took the helm of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative last year and is excited for the chance

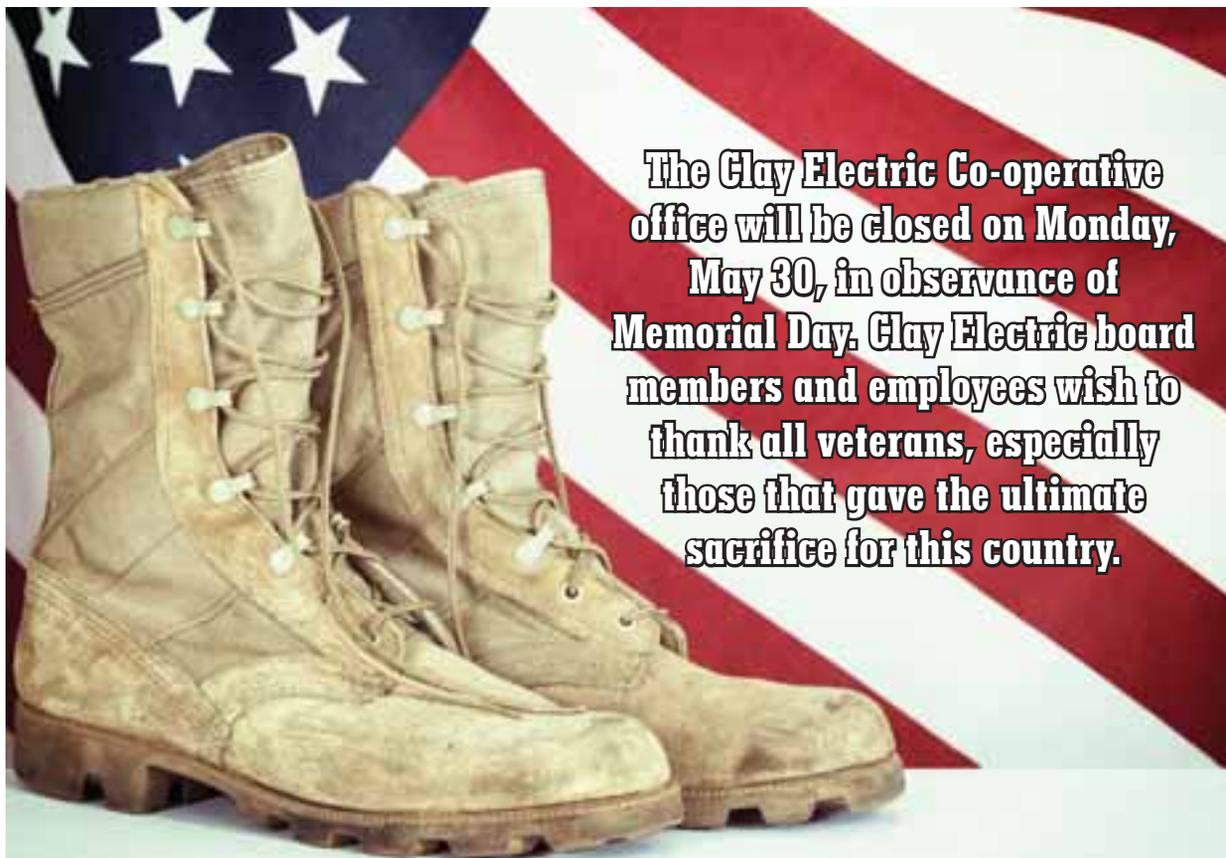
to "open the door" for veterans seeking new careers. He volunteered to serve on an executive advisory committee for the new initiative to hire veterans, and is also leading the effort here in Illinois.

Electric co-ops, he says, offer "solid jobs with great pay and great benefits and great opportunity to advance," all job requirements that are top of mind to those just leaving the military, he says.

The military drawdowns are increasing with around 200,000 service members transitioning out of the military each year. Leftwich says many of those veterans are from and want to return to rural areas. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of the Nation's 21.2 million veterans, nearly 40 percent are from rural America. "We believe the principles and culture of electric cooperatives serving rural America match the service character of those who have served our country," says Leftwich.



Kim Leftwich, President and CEO of Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative recruited an excellent squad of volunteers to help kick start a new electric co-op program to hire veterans in Illinois. The first meeting was held at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives headquarters in Springfield, Ill. on January 21. The team included (1-r) Kay Wickenhauser, Director of Human Resources for Com Belt Energy; Shelia Cutright, Veterans Employment Representative with the Illinois Department of Employment Security; Ed VanHoose, President/CEO of Clay Electric Cooperative; Michelle Rostom, Veteran Initiative Program Director for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Kim Leftwich, President and CEO of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative; Eric Asmussen, Regional Veterans' Employment Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service; Mary Zitek, Safety and Education Services Coordinator for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives; Denne Smith, Manager of Human Resources for Wabash Valley Power and Saida Elkiram, Veteran Hiring Representative with NRECA. Team members not pictured are Stan Zielinski, Area Illinois Chair for the Employer Support of The Guard and Reserve; John Freitag, Vice President of Operations for the AIEC and John Lowrey, Vice President of Communications for the AIEC. For more information go to www.servevets.coop.



The Clay Electric Co-operative office will be closed on Monday, May 30, in observance of Memorial Day. Clay Electric board members and employees wish to thank all veterans, especially those that gave the ultimate sacrifice for this country.

Electric co-ops and a culture of safety

There is a children's book titled *Safety 1st, Safety Always*. As you can imagine, it encompasses many of the traditional safety lessons parents should teach their children. We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect ourselves and those we care about. In the spirit of May being National Electrical Safety Month, let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety at the co-op.

Up until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, which was the fact that the number of "lost time" accidents was increasing. Lost time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work; these accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the ultimate tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which

insures the vast majority of electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a "Culture of Safety." It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

Through the use of strategy labs across the country, Federated brought together Cooperative CEOs and general managers, operations supervisors, safety directors and linemen to better understand how each group viewed safety. In doing so, differences in perceptions regarding safety within cooperatives were identified, allowing for much needed conversations and evaluations of how to raise awareness and improve local safety cultures. The "Speak Up, Listen Up" program is designed to empower anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to Speak Up and encourages everyone to Listen Up to their concerns. The results have been dramatic, with more than a 30 percent

decline in the number of accidents over the past nine years.

As a member, you too have a role. If you see any potential dangerous situations or practices, you should report them as soon as possible to Clay Electric 662-2171, or 1-800-582-9012.

The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member-owner, at the center of our efforts.

We look forward to being your safe electricity provider and energy advisor long into the future.

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Regular meeting February 22, 2016

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 Ed VanHoose, and Cooperative Attorney Melanie Pearce. The invocation was given by Bill Croy.

Approved the agenda as presented and amended by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose.

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held January 25, 2016.

Accepted 5 new members for service.

Canceled 18 members no longer receiving service.

Reviewed and **Approved** work orders in the amount of \$19,285.44 for the month of January 2016.

Accepted the disbursement list for January, 2016.

Appointed Ed VanHoose as Voting Delegate for Cooperative Response Center (CRC).

Reviewed and **Discussed** recently held NRECA Annual Meeting.

Reviewed report from NRECA on recent stay by the US Supreme Court of the Clean Power Plan.

Reviewed agenda for upcoming 2016 NRECA Legislative Conference, **Approved** attendance of Directors Logan and Herman and Gen. Mgr. VanHoose.

Heard a report by Trustee Herman concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting specifically financial information, Generation and Energy Resources Reports, and environmental issues.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan, as to the recent AIEC Meeting, specifically financials, appointment of new AIEC General Counsel, and changes to the Illinois Country Living magazine cover.

Heard a report by Trustee Pierson on recent NRECA Board Training on "Strategic Planning".

Informed by Trustee Gould of recent Purchasing Committee meeting to finalize previously approved budgeted replacement of pickup truck for Members Services Director.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the following:
a. Reviewed Form 7/Operations Report.
b. Reviewed cash flow report.
c. Reviewed SIPC power bill.
d. Reviewed power factor.
e. Reviewed power cost adder.

Approved entering into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Approved entering into Open Session.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to recent safety meeting with outside personnel regarding tree safety.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to newly formed NRECA Veteran's Initiative.

Discussed and Approved the 2016 Member Pledge for Veteran's Initiative to encourage the hiring of Veteran's in Cooperative's across the United States as presented.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose regarding the following; Cyber Security issues in the Ukraine where a power grid was shut down for a period of 6 hours. The "hacking" was accomplished via spear Phishing of a utility employee. Mr. VanHoose then explained the definition of "Spear Phishing" in general.

Reviewed Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide as provided by FEMA.

Reviewed report from NRECA on national litigation effort ADA complaints on cooperative websites. Mr. VanHoose informed that no such complaints had been received by CECI to date.

Reviewed Wabash Valley Service Co. Dividends of \$250.

Reviewed CRC dividends of \$500.

Reviewed report from CFC regarding Integrity Fund balances. Thereafter **Approved** Managers report as presented.

Reviewed Thank You note from McLean Implement for recent compact utility tractor purchase.

Approved the retirement of Capital Credits to the estate of one deceased Member, pursuant to Cooperative Policy, with one abstention.

Reviewed 1 Liability Insurance Certificate.

Adjournment.

Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov