

Clay News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

7784 Old Hwy. 50 ■ P.O. Box 517 ■ Flora, Illinois 62839 ■ www.ceci.coop ■ 618/662-2171 ■ 800/582-9012

From the Manager

Hello from your cooperative! If you are one of the lucky ones, you haven't had to deal with an outage recently. Unfortunately, for quite a few others though, that isn't the case. The combination of suicidal squirrels, falling tree limbs and storms has caused quite a few people an inconvenience lately. Still others have found themselves out of power simply due to their breaker tripping at the meter.

I wanted to take a moment to let you know what you can do to avoid being charged when your breaker trips. Surprisingly enough, quite a few people don't even know they have a breaker at their meter. And even more people don't realize that breaker is theirs.

When you call in to report an outage, one of the first things our after-hours phone support will ask is whether you have checked your breakers. Of course, that means you should check your panel in your house, but it also means you should check the breaker outside on the pole, located just under the meter. If you say you have checked your breakers, but haven't checked that one, then it's possible there isn't anything wrong with the service to your home. Instead, you simply needed to push that outside breaker back to the on position.

Don't be fooled though!

Sometimes breakers will look like they haven't tripped. In fact, you need to feel with your hand to see if they have or not. Many times, our crews get there only to find out the breaker is tripped and you, the member, didn't realize it. Unfortunately, by that time it's too late and you have already incurred a trip charge. So, I want to encourage everyone to take a moment and



check out the location of the main breaker so you can know where it is before you need to check it during storm conditions.

Another question people frequently ask is about the "facilities charge" portion of your Clay Electric bill. In fact, we don't break out our billing at the current time, but we are looking to do so in the future. So, for right now you will just see a single billed amount which includes all charges lumped together. In reality, there are quite a few components that make up your bill. These include charges for things like:

- Wholesale power cost
- Facilities (materials, tree trimming, line maintenance, billing systems, insurance, etc.)
- Environmental charges
- Federal and state taxes we must pay above the ones you are responsible for
- Wholesale power cost adders (mostly for rising fuel prices)

Your board and I take very seriously any increase to your bill, and sometimes it may become necessary to enact a rate increase. So, if that were to happen, rest assured we will do our very best to communicate exactly what is happening and why. As a part of that communication effort, we may also offer a different style of bill, with the charges all broken out.

Your cooperative exists solely for the purpose of serving you, our member-owners. If there is ever anything we can do for you, please don't hesitate to ask.



Ed VanHoose
Manager

*Our office will
be closed for
Independence
Day on Friday,
July 3*

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Regular meeting April 27, 2015

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, Operations Manager Luke Johnson, and Cooperative Attorney Melanie Pearce. Visitors present were; Earl Ridlen, III, and Ben Duke of London Witte Group L.L.C., and Aaron Stallings from Cooperative Finance Corporation, (CFC). The invocation was given by Frank Czyzewski.

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

Heard the Auditors Report as reported by Mr. Ridlen following the report,

Approved entering into Executive Session, at which time Gen. Mgr. VanHoose left the room. Thereafter **Approved** closing of Executive Session and returned to Open Session. Mr. Ridlen and Mr. Duke then left the meeting.

Heard a report by Trustee Gould as to the meeting of the Purchasing

Committee. **Approved** recommendation of the Purchasing Committee to remove from the budget a purchase of a bucket truck and add to the budget the purchase of a digger truck.

Heard a report by Operations Manager Luke Johnson as to the replacement of digger truck # 5 with reference to three estimates presented to the board. **Discussed** options and thereafter, **Approved** a TEREX Digger Derrick truck. Aaron Stallings of CFC entered the room and presented a report of CFC as to CECI Financial overview, available products and services, and other information. Thereafter Mr. Stallings left the meeting.

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held March 30, 2015.

Accepted 10 new members for service.

Canceled 5 members no longer receiving service.

Approved work orders in the amount of \$22,195.05 for the month of March 2015.

Accepted the disbursement list for the month of March 2015.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan concerning the AIEC Financial Highlights as there was no AIEC regular monthly meeting held in April.

Heard a report by Trustee Herman

concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting.

Informed by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose regarding Notice of National Cooperative Services Corporation (NCSC).

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the following; Reviewed Form 7/Operations Report with attention to line loss. Reviewed SIPC Power Bill.

Heard a report as to recent safety meetings and the sharing with and discussion with employees regarding "The Seven Cooperative Principals". Reviewed LIHEAP Agreement, a Supplemental Energy Assistance Program.

Informed of CECI receipt of payment by CFC for semi-annual interest on CFC held investments. **Heard** a report as to CFC Manager-Director election format per email from Duane Noland of AIEC.


Reviewed bylaws regarding Nominating Petition Process for Trustee Elections.

Opened sealed bids for an unused utility trailer, **Approved** the sale of the trailer to the high bid of Randall Bayles in the amount of \$1,500.00

Thereafter **Approved** Managers report.

Adjournment.

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Office hours:
7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.
www.ceci.coop
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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



By cleaning your air conditioner's air ducts, you can lower your energy consumption by between 5 and 15 percent.

Source: energy.gov

The power of American independence

Celebrating July 4th and declaring our energy independence

Fireworks and flags. Cookouts and cold drinks. The Fourth of July is a festive day on which we celebrate our nation's independence with family and friends. Typically, this is not a day of quiet reflection. While we spend a lot of energy having fun, if we give any thought about our forebearers and their determined efforts to bring about our nation's independence, it's fleeting.

An independent spirit is a part of our DNA

However, it is worth reflecting that this uniquely American spirit of independence remains part of our collective DNA more than 200 years after the independent nation of the United States was formed and the Declaration of Independence was crafted. And this sense of independence has served us well. For example, more than 70 years ago, an independent streak inspired groups of farmers across America's countryside to band together and improve their quality of life. Aside from President Franklin Roosevelt's promise of federal aid in the form of low-interest loans and engineering expertise, rural Americans had little help in bringing electricity to their homes. So, they did it themselves by pulling together and working cooperatively a shining example of American determination and ingenuity.

For the past 40-plus years, nearly every president since Richard Nixon, during the time of the Arab oil embargo, has talked about the goal of U.S. energy independence – reducing our reliance on imported oil and other forms of foreign energy. Today, while we still have a ways to go, we are closer to that goal than ever before. We are exporting

more gas and importing less foreign fuel than in recent memory. American ingenuity in the form of new technology and innovation is opening up more options and spurring greater efficiency across



all forms of energy. According to the Energy Information Agency, energy expenditures as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) are forecast at 6.2 percent in 2015, their lowest level since 2002, reflecting both lower oil prices and ongoing increases in energy efficiency.

The road to energy independence. Consumers have an important role to play in the road to energy independence. They don't have to wait for Democrats and Republicans to agree or environmentalists and fossil fuel advocates to reach consensus on a path to energy independence. Consumers can play a part in moving us toward national energy independence by taking action in simple, practical ways – insulating and caulking around windows, doors and electrical outlets; washing clothes in cold water instead of hot; replacing air filters; installing a programmable thermostat; and using more energy efficient appliances and home heating and cooling systems. Efficiency efforts can cut costs for individual households, but the

collective benefit to our country is even greater.

If we all work together to achieve increased energy efficiency and reduce our overall energy consumption, we can make

even more progress on our road toward energy independence. At Clay Electric Cooperative, we want to be a resource for you in this effort. We can provide energy-saving tips tailored for your unique household needs.

Electric co-ops provide renewable energy resources

In addition, Clay Electric, along with other electric co-ops across the country, have been actively engaged in promoting renewable energy resources like wind,

solar, hydropower and biomass (including landfill gas, livestock waste, timber byproducts and crop residue). Today, nearly 95 percent of the nation's 900-plus electric co-ops provide electricity produced by renewable sources, all playing a key role in powering rural America while fostering our nation's energy independence.

Recent advances in technology are transforming how we make and move electricity, and over time, these changes will greatly improve not only the efficiency but the reliability of electric power. So this Fourth of July, as you gaze up at the fireworks lighting up the night sky, reflect on the enduring spirit of independence that is integral to our American character.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Great changes in store for the 2015 Annual Meeting of Members of Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

We want to remind you again of the 2015 Annual Meeting, but, we would like to inform you that there are changes this year. We have scheduled the Annual Meeting of Members to be held at the brand new Activities Building on the campus of Oil Belt Christian Service Camp in Charley Brown Park. Same park as we have always had the meeting, but you just go northwest of the fairgrounds to the Oil Belt campus.

Although the Clay County Fairgrounds has always been a wonderful place to hold the Clay Electric Annual Meeting, it has

also taken several man hours and expense to prepare for the meeting. We were always at the mercy of good old Mother Nature when it came to the weather, be it a storm, rain, or like last year, so hot it was almost unbearable.

Oil Belt has built a beautiful new facility that they have offered to rent to us. These are a few of the improvements we will have over the Fairgrounds - ample parking near the facility, inside an air conditioned beautiful, clean facility, with clean restrooms and we may possibly have enough chairs and TABLES for all attendees to eat off of. I know you

will all miss those plates on your laps, trying to cut your pork chop, or trying to avoid knocking your drink over that you had to set on the floor while you held onto your plate, but believe me this change is for the better!

Because of scheduling issues with the church camp we will be moving the date to August 27th, 2015, instead of after Labor Day. We will still start the registration and meal at 5:15 P.M. and we will conduct the Business Meeting at 6:30 P.M. Hope to see you all at YOUR Annual Meeting.

Building a new grain bin or machine shed?

Please always look up before planning your next building project! Clay Electric Co-operative takes all construction projects very seriously when they get too close to power lines. One often overlooked safety consideration is the power line clearance required for bins and buildings. "One should always consider power lines, both overhead and underground, in the beginning planning process of new construction" says Clay Electric Operations Manager Luke Johnson. "Please call me if you have questions regarding clearances, load sizing of lines and transformers, or any other questions you may have."

An extremely dangerous situation for line crews, farm personnel, and the general public is created when proper clearance isn't given for any structure. Augers and farm machinery that could be moved into the lines while raising or lowering could be a fatal mistake. The National Electrical Safety Code sets minimum clearances for high voltage lines (over 600 volts) near grain bins. Vertical clearances depend on the height of the bin, and the

distance from the side of the bin, as shown below. This illustration refers to the loading side of a grain bin. An area where portable augers will not be present can be considered a Non-Loading Side. In addition, power lines must be at least 18 feet above the tops of new grain bins.

Please contact Luke Johnson at Clay Electric 662-2171 or 1-800-582-9012 before moving or building a new bin, or machine shed to ensure you meet National Electric Safety Code requirements.

