

A gift of \$50: What could it mean to you?

Your family doesn't know what to get you for Christmas, so you find yourself with \$50 in cash. Many of us are grateful for such a gift, but don't be too quick to spend that money on the newest gadget. There are wise options for spending the money that will give you returns.

- **Weatherize.** If your energy bills are creeping up as winter sets in, think about investing that money in caulk or insulation to seal out any windy breezes. You'll be warmer and when the bill arrives, you'll be happier.
- **Cut credit card debt.** If you put \$50 toward a \$2,000 credit card balance, you'll cut your payback time by around four months if you usually pay a minimum of \$40 a month. Using the \$50 toward the debt can save you roughly \$103 in interest (calculated on 16 percent.)
- **Buy financial management software.** Use the \$50 to help you manage your money better by putting it toward some financial management software like Quicken. It'll help you keep better control of your checking account and help you identify other areas where you can save money.



- **Pass it on.** Buy something nice for your spouse, partner, friends, family or co-workers. Remember, there's more to life than money, and seeing someone else happy has its returns.



**Clay Electric will be closed December 23 & 26, 2011
for the Christmas Holidays.**

*The Board of Directors
and Employees of Clay
Electric Co-operative wish
you and your family a
Merry Christmas.*

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

September 26, 2011

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 Frank Czyzewski.

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held August 22, 2011.

Accepted 10 new members for service.

Canceled 11 members no longer receiving service.

Approved work orders in the amount of \$78,319.98.

Accepted the disbursement list for the month of August, 2011.

Discussed various medical insurance variations and Directed Gen. Mgr. Meng to present recommended option.

Approved the financial and maintenance reports for the month of August, 2011 as presented by Gen. Mgr. Meng.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan regarding the AIEC Executive Summary as no monthly meeting was held this month.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan as to the recent Region 5 meeting specifically CFC Election results, Resolutions Committee meeting, the Financial Climate, and new Fracturing technology.

Heard a report by Trustee Herman concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting, including information on financials and other various issues.

Collected, pursuant to Cooperative Policy, a completed Board of Trustees and Employees Business Ethics Conflict of Interest Certification.

Discussed Annual Meeting

review and comments.

Updated by Gen. Mgr. Meng on the status of FEMA funding.

Informed by Gen. Mgr. Meng that the Capital Credit Study is completed, Scheduled the date of presentation for November 28, 2011.

Approved the date of December 19, 2011 for the regular monthly meeting to be held at 5:00 P.M.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng information as to co-sponsoring a Farm energy presentation.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng as to the status of on-line bill presentation service.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng as to the status and cause of repairs to a digger truck.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. Meng concerning switch replacement, and substation fence repairs.

Disbursed the health newsletter "Embody Health"

Adjournment.



**Clay Electric
will be closed
Jan. 2, 2012 for
New Years Day.
Have a safe and
Happy New Year.**

Clay County Water Update

Clay County Water, Inc. continues to work on obtaining the necessary easements required for the Phase 3 project. Even if you do not intend to connect to the water, please be considerate of your neighbors that would like to connect. We will be bidding the project out in the very near future.

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.

Eight 2012 IEC Memorial Scholarships available

John Meng, Executive Vice President/General Manager of Clay Electric Cooperative, has announced that the Illinois electric cooperatives will again in 2012 award seven academic scholarships to high school seniors through a memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the “electric cooperative family.” In addition, an eighth scholarship – to assist with costs in attending an electric line-worker school – will also be offered.

The eight scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2012 through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

A new eighth annual scholarship, the “LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship,” was awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$1,250 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker’s school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. LaVern McEntire served as a

lineman for McDonough Power Electric Cooperative from 1949 until 1991. He and his wife, Nola, endowed the new scholarship to financially assist deserving individuals in becoming trained lineworkers. Sons and daughters of co-op members; relatives of co-op employees or directors; and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for the lineworker’s scholarship.

“We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships,” says General Manager Meng. “Clay Electric Cooperative and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker’s scholarship. It will benefit not only electric cooperative youth but also those fine men and women who have served their country through their military



Frank Czyzewski, President of the Board of Directors of Clay Electric Cooperative, presented a 2011 scholarship from the Association Of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, Earl Struck Memorial Scholarship program to Morgan Healy of North Clay High School. Check with your Guidance Counselor now to apply for the 2012 Scholarship.

service and may now be wanting to become a trained lineworker.”

For more information regarding the scholarships, contact your Guidance Office or Doug Hockman at Clay Electric Cooperative 618-662-2171. All necessary paperwork has been sent to area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at the cooperative’s website at www.ceci.coop.

Clay Electric Cooperative has had the success of 3 winners of scholarships, 3 years in a row. Those winning past scholarships are 2009 Kaylee McCollum North Clay H.S. 2010 Kate Henderson Flora H.S., and 2011 Morgan Healy North Clay H.S.



Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Office hours: 7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

So many reasons to decorate safely

For millions of people every year, the holiday season comes with traditions of festive lights and decorations, extraordinary foods and lavish parties. Unfortunately, time-honored traditions can easily end in tragedy if precautions are not taken. A few years ago, Shawn Miller was one of these people.

His mother, Maria Worth, found her son on the ground with wisps of smokes coming from his body. Miller was unconscious and badly burned. He had been hanging holiday lights in the trees that lined her yard. As he tossed the lights up into the trees, 7200 volts of electricity entered his body, traveling from the overhead power lines through his strand of lights.

“Power lines were the last thing on my mind that day,” says Miller. “I was just hanging Christmas lights at my Mom’s house like I do every year, only this time, I was decorating a new area, the trees that lined the front of the yard.”

Although Miller suffered 27 exit wounds, the loss of his left hand and a finger on his right hand, his survival was miraculous. He urges everyone to use caution this holiday season. Miller’s experience is the centerpiece of this year’s Safe Electricity’s Teach Learn Care TLC campaign, spreading awareness about the importance of electrical safety.

“Shawn Miller has a lot to teach us about electrical safety and we are grateful he is sharing his story through our Teach Learn Care TLC campaign,” says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. “We want people to learn from his tragic experience and care enough to share it with those they love.”

“I’m lucky to be alive,” Miller adds. “I want everyone to be careful, be aware of power lines.”

Miller and Safe Electricity urge everyone to follow these guidelines while decorating for the holiday season:

- Never throw holiday lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep ladders, equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from all power lines.
- Use only lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label.
- Before use, check each light string for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs. Replace damaged strings. Always unplug light strings while replacing bulbs.
- Outdoors, use only lights, cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use. Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with GFCIs. Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets are not equipped with them.
- Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords, or attach cords to utility poles.
- Don’t string together more than three standard-size sets of lights.
- Make sure extension cords are in good condition, are UL-approved and rated to carry the electrical load you will connect to them.
- Match plugs with outlets. Don’t force a 3-pronged plug into a 2-pronged outlet or extension cord.
- Do not overload outlets. Use surge protector strips if multiple outlets are needed.
- Keep electric cords away from high-traffic areas, and don’t run them through doorways, or hide them under rugs or carpets.
- Don’t let children or pets play with light strings or electrical decorations.
- Place fresh-cut trees away from heat sources, such as heat registers, fireplaces, radiators and televisions; and water frequently.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.

“After something life-changing happens, you become more interested and learn much more,” Miller said. “Had I known more before this happened, I might still have two hands and the job I loved. I have to find ways to move on with my life and help people learn from what has happened to me. Safe Electricity is helping me help others.”

