



A Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Hi-Lites

Clearing for reliability

There are many ways that Coles Moultrie Electric provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common and crucial ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing (or vegetation management).

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 15 percent of power

interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used as a way to support the growth of low growing plant species that will outcompete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 69,000 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

By Meghaan Evans

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power due to fallen trees.

Remember to contact Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the right-of-way zone on your own.

Meghaan Evans 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.





A publication of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative

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P.O. Box 709 (104 Dewitt Ave., East)
Mattoon, Illinois 61938

Phone: 217/235-0341 or
Toll-Free: 1-888-661-CMEC (2632)
Office hours:
Monday-Friday
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Chairman

Jeffery D. Hudson..... Charleston

Vice Chairperson

Debbie Albin.....Mattoon

Secretary

John Bowers Lovington

Treasurer

Steve Shrader.....Westfield

Director

Scott Uphoff.....Mattoon
Philip Meyer..... Sullivan

President/CEO

M.L. Christman

To report an outage

- First check your fuses or circuit breakers and see if your neighbors have power.
- If the problem appears to be with the cooperative's lines, call the office at the toll free number (888-661-2632), give the name the service is listed under, and report any hazardous conditions.

Board Report

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative was held at the Cooperative office at 104 Dewitt Avenue, East, Mattoon, Illinois January 7, 2015, pursuant to notice duly given. The meeting was called to order by Jeff Hudson, Chairman. After calling the roll, the following directors were present: Scott Uphoff, Philip Meyer, Jeff Hudson, John Bowers, Steve Shrader, and Debbie Albin. Also present were M.L. Christman - President/CEO, Amy Borntrager - Chief Financial Officer, member Dean Robison and Bill Tapella - Corporate Counsel, Tapella & Eberspacher.

The agenda was approved in addition to the Consent Calendar as submitted including the 12/3/2014 Regular Board Meeting Minutes, the New Members and the October Safety & Training report.

Bill Tapella gave the legal report.

Debbie Albin was appointed as the AIEC director and Steve Shrader as the alternate.

Scott Uphoff was appointed as the voting delegate to the NRECA annual meeting and Jeff Hudson as the alternate.

Scott Uphoff was appointed as the voting delegate to the NRTC annual meeting and Jeff Hudson as the alternate, and further, for both directors respectively to serve as the voting delegate and alternate for any other meeting coincident with the NRECA annual meeting.

The motion to have CMEC Board policies indicate "reviewed" with the date of the board meeting in which they were reviewed, but not revised was carried.

Board Policy #13 to be shown as reviewed on January 7, 2015; Board Policy #14 as reviewed on January 7, 2015; Board Policy #15 as reviewed on January 7, 2015; Board Policy #16 as reviewed on January 7, 2015.

The 2015 Operating budget was accepted as presented.

Amy Borntrager gave the financial report.

Director Albin gave the AIEC report.

Director Uphoff gave the PPI report.

Chris Christman gave the President/CEO report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Your home works hard for you. Consider giving it an energy checkup. Hire a professional energy auditor to diagnose where your house could be losing energy and where you can start saving money. Auditors check for air leaks, inspect insulation, survey heating and cooling equipment and more. After making efficiency upgrades, you could save 5-30 percent on your energy bills.

Source: EnergySavers.gov

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Voluntary and Open Membership

When electric co-op members look at the seven co-op principles, many may question if they really live up to the first principle: Voluntary & Open Membership. It is a fair question. There is a two-part answer.

First, it is important to remember that when Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative was first being formed back in 1938, every potential member had the option to refuse service. While it may be hard to believe today, there are numerous stories from electric co-ops throughout the country where the farmer said, "No thanks. We are doing fine with kerosene." Of course over time they changed their minds and eventually became members of the co-op.

Due to the incredible cost of offering electric service, the vast majority of people and businesses only have one choice if they want to connect to "the grid" and receive electricity. While that may change in the future due to rooftop solar or other generation sources, the best option for most people for safe, reliable and affordable power is from your electric co-op.

Today, electric co-ops focus on the second part of the principle, "Open Membership." All residents and businesses in the service territory of Coles Moultrie Electric are welcome to receive power. Co-ops continually strive to ensure that your membership has value to you not just through the service of electricity but by being an active part of our community.

Co-ops offer and welcome your participation in the governance of the organization through a democratically elected board of directors. As a locally owned and controlled utility, co-ops are in a better position to understand the needs of its members and can be quicker to react to help ensure the membership receives the best service possible.

Members are welcome to suggest improvements to the co-op's operations and, unlike large investor owned utilities often with millions of customers, you can be assured your ideas will actually be read by a real person in real time.

All co-ops, whether it is your credit union, farm co-op, telephone co-op or any other of the 29,000 co-ops that exist

By Adam Schwartz

in the U.S. today, live by these seven co-op principles:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

By using all of these principles integrated together, Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative is able to serve your needs every day.

Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and a member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop.

Before you switch on the lights, we've already put up the poles, connected miles of wire and flipped more than a few switches of our own. All to make sure your life is always "on." Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

YOUR ELECTRICITY ISN'T SOMETHING WE TAKE LIGHTLY.



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TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Scholarships Now Available



Last year, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative (CMEC) provided financial assistance to six members or their dependents for their college education. The Board of Directors has agreed to provide six \$500 scholarships again this year.

To qualify, an applicant must be either a Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative member or under 21 years of age and a legal dependent of a Coles-Moultrie member. The applicant must be enrolled in either a 2- or 4-year degree program at an accredited institution in Illinois and cannot have previously received a Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative scholarship. CMEC employees, directors and any of their dependents are ineligible. Priority will be given to one applicant who is specializing in Electrical Engineering.

Applications must be received at Coles-Moultrie Electric's office (104 Dewitt Avenue East, P.O. Box 709, Mattoon, IL 61938) no later than April 30, 2015.

To obtain an application form, contact Kelsey Hawkins, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, P. O. Box 709, Mattoon, IL 61938 or e-mail at khawkins@cmec.coop or call 235-0341 or toll-free 888-661-2632.



*Don't forget to
move your clocks
forward on Sunday,
March 8th.*



Member Exchange

For Sale

- 6 person hot tub with insulated cover, purchased in Effingham. Teal and white interior, excellent condition, kept inside. \$700. Call 217-856-2100.
- Metal storage cabinet approximately 7 ft tall X 3 ft across X 2 ft deep. 1 large and 2 small drawers in bottom shelves. \$60 OBO. 217-853-7143.
- 3-Blue bench seats out of 1993 dodge 350 van, \$20 each. Call 217-565-1287 or email:sixstring58@hotmail.com.

Wanted

- Portable rotary grain cleaner. Call 217-232-2064.