



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# Clinton County Connection

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Published by Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. • [cceci@cceci.com](mailto:cceci@cceci.com) • [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com)



Mike Johnson

## Lobbying on behalf of issues that affect you – the Member!

During the first week of May over 2,500 electric cooperative leaders from across the country “assaulted the Hill”, to use the approving words of Illinois Congressman John Shimkus, in an effort to lobby Congress on current and potential legislation that may have a dramatic impact on our members. Board Chairman Cary Dickinson and I participated in that “Assault Team” representing CCEC.

The lobbying effort was coordinated by both our national organization, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and our statewide association, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). While we addressed a variety of important issues, we concentrated on four: (1) United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan Program, (2) Climate Change Legislation, (3) Energy Efficiency Financing and (4) a general discussion of what electric cooperatives are.

The Administration’s FY2011 proposed budget request cuts the RUS Electric Loan Program funding by \$2.5 billion, a reduction from \$6.5 billion to \$4.0 billion. Even though CCEC currently does not borrow funds from the RUS Electric Loan Program, we feel this will be detrimental to other electric cooperatives; therefore, we cannot support this proposed funding reduction. Our wholesale energy provider, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), does borrow funds from the RUS Electric Loan Program. If SIPC’s ability to get low interest debt is impaired, then SIPC would be forced to

get funds elsewhere at a higher interest rate. Those increased costs would be funneled back to our members in the form of higher purchased power costs.

Another puzzling aspect of the Administration’s FY2011 proposed budget is the funding restrictions. Notwithstanding the current national emphasis on limiting carbon emissions, the proposed budget would prevent RUS lending for construction of peaking and intermediate natural gas plants. Natural gas generation produces approximately one-half of the carbon emissions as compared to a similarly sized coal fired plant. The proposed budget also includes a restriction that would prevent RUS lending for environmental upgrades to existing power plants, even though the investment in environmental upgrades will reduce the amount of carbon emissions.

To me, both of these restrictions seem more than a tad illogical, or counterproductive. We asked our elected officials to oppose these restrictions as well as restore RUS funding to the current funding level of \$6.5 billion.

Although I have lived in Illinois for a little less than a year now, it is my personal opinion that CCEC service territory is very fortunate to be represented by two outstanding Congressmen. Representative Jerry Costello and Representative John Shimkus continue to prove to be champions of the electric cooperatives and their member owners. Both of these Congressmen voted in opposition to the U.S. House of Representatives HR 2454 that passed in June of

*Continued on 16b*



Pictured left to right, Illinois Senator Roland Burris, CCEC Board Chairman Cary Dickinson, CCEC President/COO Mike Johnson

*Continued from 16a*

2009. As I mentioned in my letter last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had begun to take actions toward regulating greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. During our “assault” we voiced our concern that Congress, not the EPA, should develop, formulate and implement any carbon emission policy. We asked our federal legislators to co-sponsor legislation that would either delay or handcuff the EPA’s implementation of such regulations or disapprove the “endangerment” finding EPA is using as the basis for those regulations.

Next, we requested our elected officials to co-sponsor legislation that would create the Rural Energy Savings Program Act (RESPA). This Act would provide electric cooperative consumers with low-cost financing for energy efficiency improvements to their homes and businesses. The theory is: New generation assets are

extremely costly to construct, therefore, any increases in energy efficiency would be a “least cost” option. Under this proposed legislation, RUS would be able to issue \$4.9 billion in 10-year zero interest loans to individual electric cooperatives, which in turn would be used to fund very low cost loans to consumers and businesses. The consumer loans would be typically used for sealing, insulation, geothermal, high-efficiency HVAC systems and other improvements that will produce significant energy savings for the consumer. Individual electric cooperatives may choose to participate in this program. Management and the Board of Trustees of CCEC will evaluate this legislation should it pass.

Lastly, we had conversations with our federal legislators to better educate them about the “cooperative business model,” and to emphasize that our goal is not to achieve a profit, but rather to provide safe, reliable and reasonably

priced electricity for our members. Our business model is focused on our members and those communities in which we serve. I once heard the phrase, and I believe it is true “politics gave birth to the REA program and politics will be the death of the REA program”, that is why we continue to go to Washington DC to ensure our elected officials understand the value of Cooperatives and the REA program.

Please continue to be engaged in the political process by logging on to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) which will guide you in contacting your elected officials on these important energy issues. Don’t forget about our Open House on Sat., July 17. Once again thank you for taking the time to read this article, and as always if you have any questions, concerns or comments please call me at 526-7282 or email me at [johnson@cceci.com](mailto:johnson@cceci.com).



*Illinois Representative Jerry Costello with Cooperative Leaders from Southern Illinois*



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**In observance of  
Independence Day, the  
office will be CLOSED on  
Monday, July 5, 2010.**



# An Energy Efficiency Program for Electric Cooperative Members

## What's the HomE program about?

HomE (pronounced home E) is our program to help our members become energy efficient. By making our energy efficiency knowledge available to our members and by providing rebates for improvements, our members can save energy while improving their home performance.

Through our statewide organization, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), the Illinois Electric Cooperatives will be distributing \$1.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for energy efficiency improvements to their homes. The program will run until the funding is exhausted.

## Who's eligible?

All residential members of our electric cooperative are eligible to participate in the program. The home must be served by the cooperative, be the member's primary residence and the homeowner must not qualify for the IHWAP.

## How does the program work?

Start by contacting the cooperative to arrange an energy assessment by one of our energy experts. We'll take your name and contact number in the order we are contacted. Please contact Sue Laux via telephone at 618-526-

7282, or by e-mail at [laux@cceci.com](mailto:laux@cceci.com) to have your name added to our list.

As we near your turn, we'll contact you to schedule an assessment. Assessments will be scheduled 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. An adult member of the home must be present. There is a \$25 fee for the assessment that will be billed to the member.

We will provide you with a report of recommendations on how you might best improve your home's energy efficiency, performance and comfort.

## What do I need to do?

Based on the recommendations we make, you could be eligible for a rebate up to \$1,500 per residence per member.

Once you have your recommendations, you decide what is best for you. You will then submit a proposal form and estimate to us. We will return a signed copy to you, indicating that funds have been set aside for you. You will then have 60 days to complete your project.

Once you have made your purchase or completed your project, you will send us a completion form with copies of the paid receipts. We will then issue a check to you.



## Employee spotlight - Sue Laux

This month we are spotlighting Administrative Assistant, Sue Laux.

Sue joined Clinton County Electric Cooperative in 1979 and has worked in a variety of capacities during the last 30 years. Sue started in the Engineering Department then moved into Member Services to her present position in the "front office." Sue is probably best known for her work with the cooperative newsletter, Clinton County Connections.

Sue and her husband of 46 years, Rookie, reside in Breese and are the proud parents of four children: Robyn (David) Snearley of Newton; Terry Wainscott of Breese; Christopher (Bobbie) Laux of Bel-



Sue Laux

leville; and Katie (Tavis) Lovell of Edgewood, Ky. They also have five grandchildren: Marcus (Crystal) Snearley, serving in the US Navy and stationed at Great Lakes, Ill.; Nicole and Zak Snearley; Cody Wainscott; and Austin Laux.

Commenting on her work at CCEC, Sue said, "Our jobs here include such a wide variety of

things that there's rarely a dull moment in the 8 to 5 day. Just when you think you can sit back and take a deep breath, a storm goes through or somebody hits a pole and the phones start ringing – there's people out of power. It certainly makes the days go by fast."