



# Clinton County Connection

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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Mike Johnson

*We have the difficult job of balancing the landowners' affections for their trees and their property rights against our obligations to maintain a safe and reliable electric distribution system.*

## **"Vegetation management – a balancing act"**

Our E-Business Solution has been up and running for about a month now, and for the most part it has been fairly successful. Please take the time to visit [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com); look for the E-Business Solution button in the upper left corner. We have implemented this safe and secure product so you can have access to your account information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Over the past few months I have been discussing with you our 2010 initiatives, (1) "Enhance our Member Communications" and (2) "Infrastructure Improvements". I have gone into great detail on what your cooperative will be doing to ensure the success of those initiatives, and have "graded" our performance for the first six months. Some of our Infrastructure Improvement plans and programs are still being developed and fine-tuned as the year goes on. One of those I would like to discuss with you is our "Vegetation Management Program".

Our Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is still a work in progress, but we know that it will have two main components: (1) a tree-trimming program and (2) a brush control program. The goal of our VMP is to increase our service reliability, in order to provide you with fewer blinks or power outages.

The basic premise is that Clinton County Electric Cooperative has the obligation and the commitment to its members to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power. We also have the duty to provide a safe working environment for our employees. A well-designed VMP is key to fulfilling those obligations.

Let's first discuss our tree-trimming program. In the past we would trim trees that were either touching our electric distribution lines or were soon to cause a problem.


Generally this would provide us with a one or possibly two-year solution. This method is not the most economical solution for our members. Therefore, we are in the process of implementing a "4 year" cut cycle solution. We truly understand the landowner's affections for their large beautiful trees. We have the difficult job of balancing the landowners' affections for their trees and their property rights against our obligations to maintain a safe and reliable electric distribution system.

This is how our "4 year" cut cycle will work: In 2009 our contract pole testing firm, Osrose Utilities Solutions (OUS), tested approximately 4,200 poles out of the Beckmeyer and Boulder substations. In 2010 we will begin our "4-year" cut cycle solution on the feeders in and out of those two substations. You will be able to go to our web site [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com) to determine if your property is associated with either one of those two substations. The basic plan is to test poles within a designated substation one year and then trim corresponding trees the following year. The contractor will attempt, when possible, to inform the landowner on what will be done on their property before any trimming takes place. These trees will be trimmed again four years later in 2014.

In 2010 the contract pole testing firm will be testing poles out of the Old State, Ferrin and Bartelso substations, which means those areas will have their trees trimmed under the "4-year" cut cycle in 2011 and again in 2015.

The other component of our VMP is the brush control program. We know this can be even more controversial than the tree-trimming program at times. To be honest and blunt, the brush control program is designed to kill, and not retard, growth of native brush

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# LITE FOR A BITE

In our continuing efforts to provide our members and communities with superior services, CCEC will be sponsoring a Lite for a Bite program beginning this month. Exchange 2 or more canned or other non-perishable food items into our office in exchange for a CFL Light bulb! A maximum of 4 bulbs will be given to each membership, while supplies last (1500 available). The food collected will be distributed through several food banks throughout the CCEC service area. Please help us help others!



With bright smiles and equally bright futures, they think they know it all. Don't let an electrical contact stop them short of their potential. Teach your kids about electric safety both inside and outside the home, and maybe they'll realize you're pretty smart after all.

For more information about electric safety, call your local Touchstone Energy® electric cooperative or visit the Energy Education Council online at [energyedcouncil.org](http://energyedcouncil.org) or call them at 217-546-6815.



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# Attention Teachers and Administrators!

**Have an educational project you'd like funded?**

**\$6,000 available through Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants**

Enter **Touchstone Energy's Classroom Empowerment Grant Competition** and your submission could win a \$500 grant for classroom and education enhancement projects!

Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants totaling \$6,000 are being funded by Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) for the 2010-2011 school year. For more information about the grant program, or to get an application, please contact your school superintendent or Ahren Langhauser at [Langhauser@cceci.com](mailto:Langhauser@cceci.com).

Grant applications will need to include the following information:

1. A description of the project and what it will accomplish
2. The estimated cost of the project
3. An explanation of why outside funds are necessary to complete the project



4. Whether funding options have been pursued, and if so, how
5. When project will be completed
6. The number of people affected by the project
7. If the project's goals are measurable, and how
8. How the project ties in Touchstone Energy's four core values of Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and Commitment to Community

Photos and supporting data are optional. Grant applications must be received at CCEC by Nov. 5, 2010. Entries will be evaluated by an impartial panel of judges. Awards will be announced on Dec. 10, 2010.

#### **Last years' winners:**

\$500 - New Baden Elementary Fourth Grade Classes

Submitting Teacher(s): Miss Hundelt, Mrs. Oelrich, and Mrs. Isenhower

\$500 - Carlyle Junior High School Special Education/Literature Classes

Submitting teacher: Ms. Joiner



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## CCEC continues infrastructure improvements

As mentioned in previous Illinois Country Living Magazine articles, CCEC will be beginning to inventory its entire electrical distribution system using GPS. The GIS (Geographical Information System) that will be formed using this information will include computerized mapping of the electric system, connectivity diagrams and an improved system model to assist with planning power line

improvements and other construction projects. This project is expected to run from September, 2010 through March, 2011 and will be performed by Global Mapping Solutions.

Also, the second phase of our pole inspection program will begin in September as well. Osmose, Inc. will be inspecting roughly 5,500 poles on our Old State (area north of Breese), Ferrin and Bartelso substations. This

project should be completed before the end of 2010.

For both of these projects, you may see some people going pole-to-pole by truck or ATV. Please do not be alarmed when they pass through your area. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns about the crews, or their locations.

("Vegetation" continued from page 16a)

under our electrical lines. If left untended, the brush can grow into the power lines causing outages and blinks. The main problem with brush growth is that it hinders safe access to power lines for routine maintenance and outage restoration.

When planting trees or bushes in the future, please "look up and around" to make sure you have at least 25 feet between where you would

expect the tree or bush to grow and the nearest electrical line. Using this practice in the future will help eliminate the natural conflicts between vegetation and safe, reliable electric service.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article, and as always if you have any questions, concerns or comments please email me at johnson@cceci.com.

## Spotlight On Cathy Markus

This month we are spotlighting employee Cathy Markus, the Cooperative's Bookkeeper/EDP Operator.

Born and raised on a dairy farm northwest of Germantown, she is a 1965 graduate of Mater Dei High School.

Cathy started her employment with Clinton County Electric Cooperative in 1973 and has worn many "hats" at the Cooperative throughout the years. Just a few of her work-related activities include billing, capital credits, payroll and material. In looking back, Cathy reflects that when she first started at the Cooperative the members self billed, reading their own meter & figuring their own bill. In 1975 the



Cathy Markus

Cooperative converted to its own computer system and thus dramatically changed how the Cooperative operated its business. Since then, the Cooperative's computer system has gone through several conversions and upgrades, some more challenging than others.

Cathy states, "Just when you have the system figured out, we have a change to make it better, faster and more interesting!"

Cathy and her husband Jerry reside in Aviston. In her spare time, Cathy enjoys listening to country music, shopping, riding motorcycle with her husband and quilting.

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR



### CCECI Area Meetings

District #1-Carlyle VFW	Wednesday, October 27, 2010	Registration begins at 6:30 p.m.
District #2-Breese K OF C	Wednesday, October 27, 2010	Registration begins at 12:30 p.m.
District #3-Albers Legion	Thursday, October 28, 2010	Registration begins at 6:30 p.m.

*Please come & meet the employees and directors of your cooperative.*