

NEWS, NOTES & VIEWS 12/14



Merry Christmas
from everyone at Illinois Rural Electric!



Gary Westermeyer of Westermeyer Industries leads the CEO Students on a tour of his facility.

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities

In August, the Morgan-Scott CEO class began with area high school seniors getting a hands-on course in entrepreneurship. CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) enables high school students to build a network of working professionals in their area, to learn from experienced area business owners, and to build their own businesses from the ground up.

The class meets for 90 minutes each day where they discuss their own businesses, share ideas, and brainstorm on problem-solving. As for their meeting location, area businesses act as the classrooms and professionals of the business speak to the class to give career advice.

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Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 80, Two South Main Street
Winchester, Illinois 62694

www.e-co-op.com
1-800-468-4732

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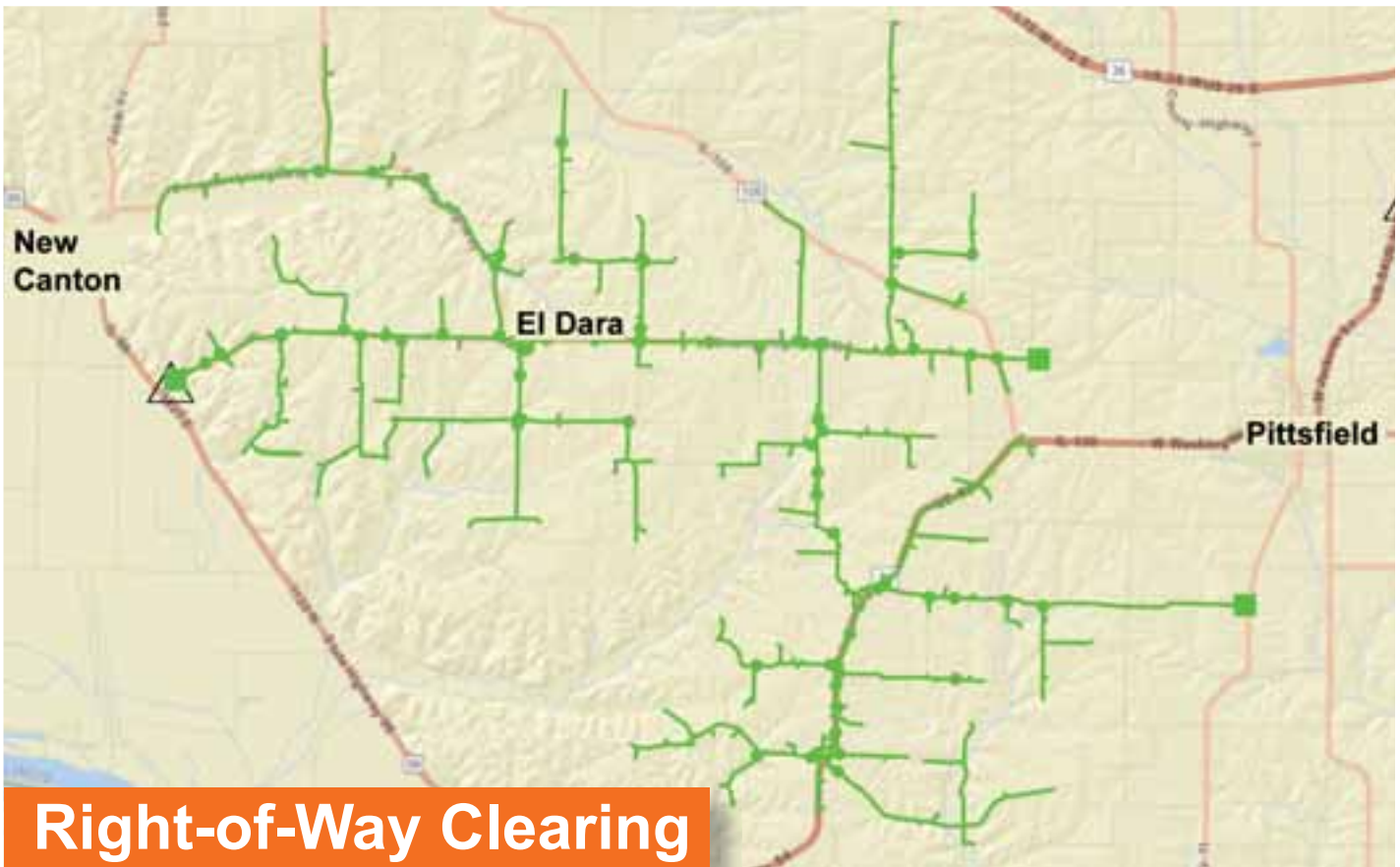
Many of the students have parents or grandparents who are members. Winchester High School senior Jacob Grubb, whose parents are co-op members, says, "I enjoy the accountability it puts on the students. It is great preparation for our future careers."

The co-op's involvement comes from a realization that the future vitality of the service territory is dependent on growth. Youth retention is a key element in the future of our service territory and this program helps create a long-term investment in our local communities and the young people who call it home.

Abby Lashmett, another student whose parent's are co-op members, says, "CEO has been one of the best experiences in my life. It has changed the way I view the world."

The co-op and Jacksonville Regional Economic Development partnered to bring the program to Morgan and Scott Counties. The co-op is in very early talks with schools and potential investors in Pike and Greene counties about establishing the program there in the future.

To learn more about the program, visit morganscottceo.com. Daily updates and photos can be found on Facebook at facebook.com/morganscottceo.



Our forestry crews will soon begin right-of-way clearing in the green highlighted areas shown above. These operations consist of tree pruning, brush clearing, and/or tree removal. We will follow up with spraying in the area the following year.

For more information on right-of-way clearing, visit our website at e-co-op.com and click on Tree Trimming under the Services tab. If you have any questions, concerns, or requests, please contact Roger Fletcher at (217) 742-3128 ext. 140.

Rates Will Increase in 2015

“The simple, straightforward reason for the increase is the fact that we’re constantly rebuilding parts of the distribution system that have to be replaced.

“We’re replacing poles that cost \$100 to \$125 to install – some of them 50 years old – with poles that cost \$1,000 to \$1,200,” Bruce Giffin, the co-op’s general manager says. “We competitively bid the construction and the materials for construction, just as we competitively bid anything of consequence, but without growth, rebuilding the distribution system drives the need for higher rates.

“Not rebuilding the system in a planned way means worse service, and rebuilding during a storm, often at time-and-a-half or double-time wages, means higher long-term costs.”

Here is a table showing current rates and 2015 rates:

	Now	2015
Rate A - Up to 40,000 kWh per year		
Minimum	\$48.00	\$56.00
Delivery Charge	0.0475	0.0450
Rate B - Over 40,000 kWh per year		
Minimum	\$62.00	\$68.00
Delivery Charge on First 2,000 kWh	0.08	
Delivery Charge on First 4,000 kWh		0.04
Large Power - Demand of 60 kW or More		
Minimum	\$275.00	\$275.00
Delivery Charge per kWh	0.022	0.022
Demand	8.67	8.67
Interruptible Service - Demand of 60 kW or More		
Minimum	\$200.00	\$200.00
Delivery Charge per kWh	0.019	0.022
Demand	7.00	7.00
Irrigation Service		
Minimum - 5 months	\$200.00	\$200.00
Delivery Charge per kWh	0.019	0.02
Demand	6.50	7.00
19 Hour Irrigation Service		
Minimum - 5 Months	\$0.00	\$25.00
Delivery per kWh	0.019	0.020
Demand	4.25	4.25

A higher minimum protects those members who use electricity every month, as a family would. This table illustrates the impact on the member in the middle – the median at 1,000 kWh per month.

	Now	2015
Minimum	48.00	56.00
Delivery on the First 900 kWh	42.75	40.50
Energy	90.00	90.00
Total	\$180.75	\$186.50

That amounts to a 3.2% increase.

The minimum and the delivery charge produce the money the co-op has to have to operate. So, if the minimum decreases, the delivery charge has to go up.

Here’s an example of a very low minimum with the same 1,000 kWh used. It shows why the co-op isn’t adopting low minimum charges.

Low Minimum Example	
Minimum	8.00
Delivery on the first 900 kWh	112.50
Energy	90.00
Total	\$210.50

That would be a 16.5% increase because accounts using electricity every month would be subsidizing accounts using electricity only a few months a year.

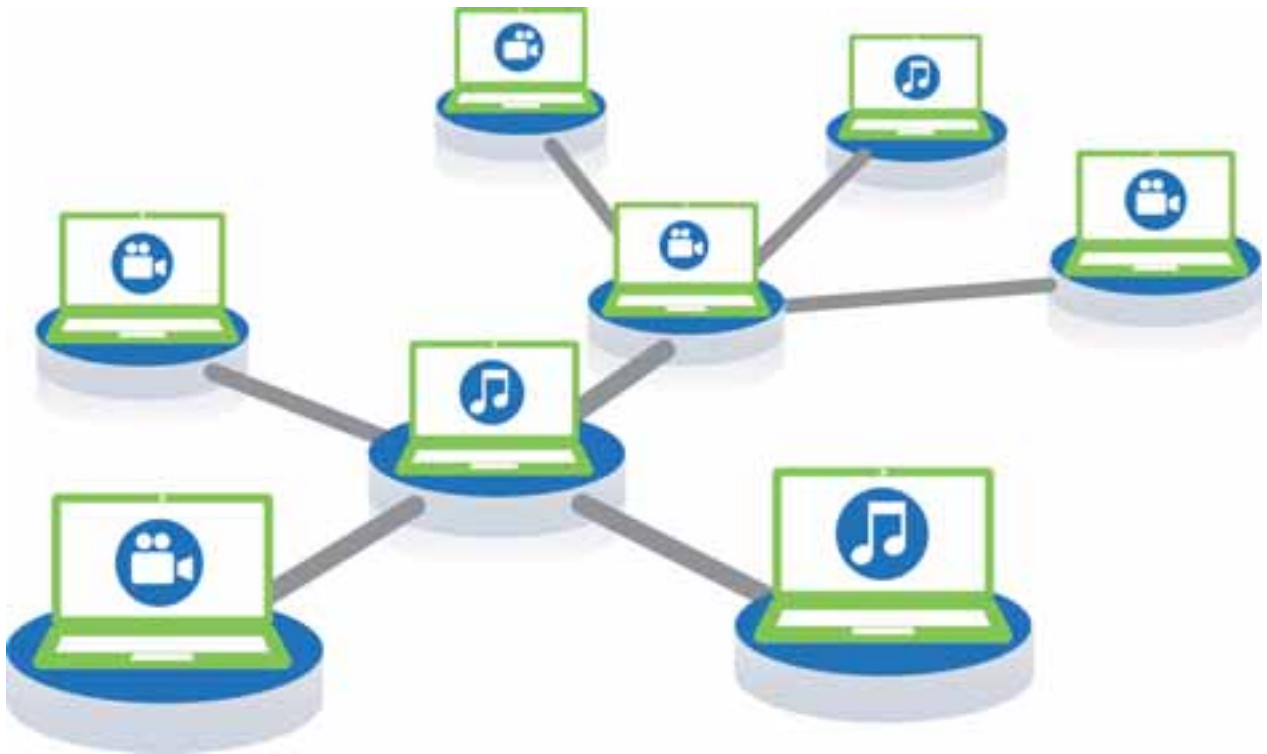
LifeLine Rate

For members 65 and older who use 6,000 kWh per year or less, who live in poverty, and who live in the dwelling for a minimum of eleven months a year, there will be no increase.

For one person, the poverty level is \$11,670 a year, and for two people, it’s \$15,730.

“Any increase is unwelcome,” Bruce Giffin said, “but for seniors using little electricity and living in poverty, it’s intolerable. So, the co-op’s board is implementing LifeLine Rates.”

For more information about costs, cost control and 2015 rates, go to e-co-op.com to see Bruce Giffin discuss all this with members.



Illegal Downloading and Protecting Yourself

Illegal downloading is the download of any copyrighted materials without consent of the copyright holder. Today, peer-to-peer and torrent networks are often used to share copyrighted materials, such as movies and music. As illustrated above, peer-to-peer networks allow a computer to download files and share them with other computers. These networks can automatically make files on your computer available to other users on the network.

If you are not sure whether a peer-to-peer or torrent network is installed on your computer, look for programs such as BitTorrent or uTorrent. A local computer repairman should be able to help identify any such networks as well.

Protect Your Computer

- Remove peer-to-peer networks from the computer.
- Make sure your home wireless network is secure.
- Use an up-to-date anti-virus software on your computer.
- Download or stream music and movies from only reputable companies, such as iTunes or Amazon.

Pay Your Bill Online at e-co-op.com!

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