

Norris Electric *News*

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Norris Electric holds 78th Annual Meeting

In the midst of a cold February day, Norris Electric held its 78th annual meeting of members Saturday, February 13, at Newton Community High School. Members of Norris Electric Cooperative were updated on the cooperative's finances, power supply, and upgrades to its infrastructure.

President Gordon McClure called the meeting to order at 11:00am and welcomed members.

Board Secretary Frank Draper read the proof of mailing of the Annual Meeting Notices and Board Treasurer Dean Dietrich reported that the cooperative is in good financial condition. Although margins were slightly lower 2015 than in 2014, the co-op was still able to retire capital credits totaling nearly \$900,000 for the years 1971 and 1972, without raising rates. Dietrich said, "We do not think we will have to raise rates for at least a couple of years, or longer. That's very hard to do with new legislation and new environmental laws that raise everyone's costs." He added that Norris' electric rates are consistently some of the lowest among cooperatives in the state.

Nick Reitz, vice president of government relations at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, thanked the audience for being part of a grassroots effort that was successful in sending 1.2 million comments to the USEPA promoting an "all-of-the-above" strategy to support the use of coal, oil and renewable energy for the nation's power needs. He announced with relief that this week



During Norris Electric Cooperative's annual meeting, the following directors were elected, or re-elected: From left are: re-elected Director Dave Sheppard of Jasper County, newly elected directors Ted Helmink of Cumberland County and Kurt Holscher of Crawford County, re-elected Director Justin Parcel of Clark County, and Manager Keith McKinney.

the U.S. Supreme Court had temporarily blocked regulation meant to limit emissions from coal-fired power plants.

In his comments, State Representative David Reis (R-109) said there is an "insatiable push for clean energy." He explained that wind turbines and solar panels have been heavily subsidized during the past five years. Money is running out and the President is now discussing the option of taxing oil at \$10 per barrel. He said his legislative district is rich in oil and coal, and mines are being shut down. "Clean energy comes at a cost in jobs and subsidies. Base load power comes from coal and nuclear. We need to step back and really calculate where base load power will come from. If the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining, we don't have a source of power," he explained.

State Senator Dale Righter (R-55) also voiced concerns regarding the push for renewables, saying common sense needs to dictate its direction. In addition, he addressed Illinois' budget crisis, "Spending more than we take in and creating more programs we can't manage was not the direction to go, and we need to change directions. We need to balance budgets every year," he said. He added that both he and Rep. Reis are working with Illinois' new governor to find a solution to the months-long budget stalemate, and "that we need a change in the economic climate to ensure our policies don't push people away who want to invest in Illinois and bring jobs to the state."

Kendra Flood and Troy Niemerg were two high school students who participated in the 2015 Youth Tours

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first traveling to Springfield and then to Washington DC. They spoke about their adventures and the lasting friendships they made along the way. Kendra and Troy thanked the Board and Members for making these trips available to high school students.

With increasingly complicated issues facing electric cooperatives, board director education is now more important than ever before. President Gordon McClure said Norris Electric takes this seriously. With the exception of the two directors who recently joined the board, the remaining nine have achieved the Certified Credential Director certificate. McClure said, “The directors attend courses beyond what are required for this certificate and stay in close contact with industry standards and legislative issues that may affect the cooperative.”

Norris Electric continuously works to improve electric reliability. Manager Keith McKinney said the co-op is continuing its aggressive line clearance work and hopes to get on a rotation, which would allow its workers to visit the same area every four years. He explained, “There are some very fast growing trees in our service area and it is hard to stay on top of them unless we shorten our clearance rotation. In doing so, we also reduce the number of power outages.”

The co-op continues to install and upgrade miles of line both above-ground and underground, and it built a substation to service a new natural gas pipeline near Altamont.

To help control costs, the co-op now enables members to monitor their daily and hourly electrical use via the Internet. Members are continuing to sign up for prepaid billing. This allows them to monitor their electric use, and pay “as they go,” rather than monthly.

During the meeting, Justin Parcel of Clark County, and Dave Sheppard of Jasper County were re-elected to the co-op’s board of directors. Kurt Holscher of Crawford County was elected to replace

longtime director Frank Draper, who retired from the board. Ted Helmink of Cumberland County was elected, replacing his father, Joseph Helmink, who passed away late last year. Draper was honored with a plaque for his service on the board, and Helmink accepted a similar plaque on behalf of his late father.

Norris Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy — an alliance of 750 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country. Norris Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than 19,371 meters over 4,081 miles of line in

parts of Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland and Wabash counties. For more information, visit www.norriselectric.com. Norris Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Numerous prizes were awarded and a delicious meal was served by Martins IGA of Effingham. Fire Box, a Blue Grass Band, entertained Members as they enjoyed their meal.





National Lineman Appreciation Day, April 11th

They wake before the sun, pour steaming cups of coffee, and kiss their family goodbye. After swinging by the office to get the day's orders, our linemen climb into their trucks and head out. Our lineworkers form a solid team with one job: to deliver safe, reliable electricity. But that job can change in a million ways when rough weather steps in. Power restoration takes precedence on a lineworker's to-do list. These brave men are always on call. We have crews standing by to serve you 24 hours a day, in the middle of the night or wee hours of the morning, weekends and holidays. These highly skilled men light our homes and businesses every day.

They endure harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives better.

Today (and every day), please take a moment to thank them. Norris Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are the heart of the Co-op Nation, proud and strong.

Norris Electric Cooperative • 8543 N. State Highway 130 • Newton, Illinois 62448 • 877-783-8765
Office hours: Monday — Thursday 7:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m

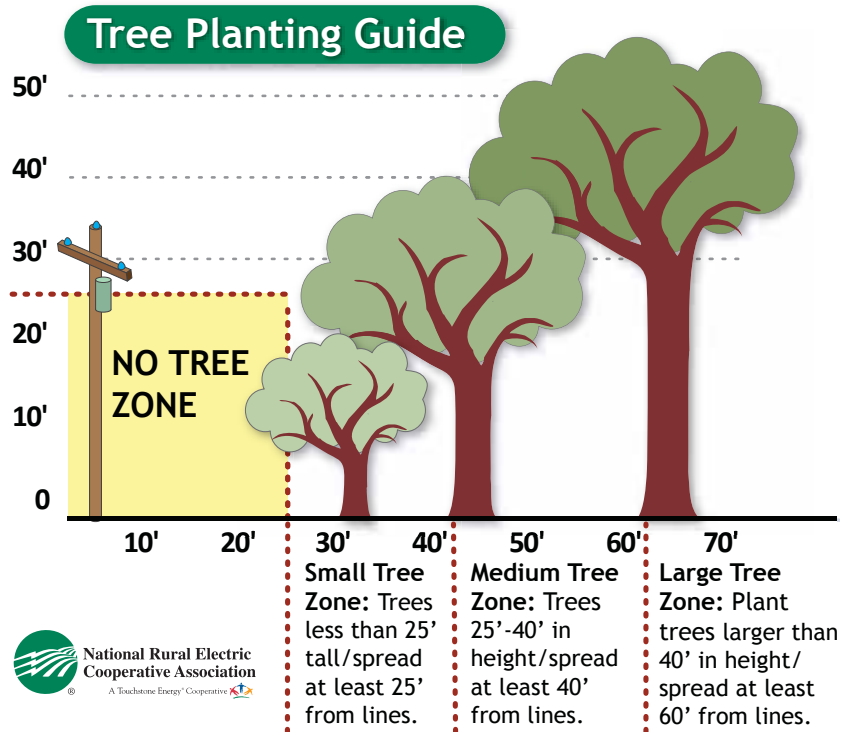
Arbor Day – April 22nd

Plant a tree!

Spring is right around the corner and this is the time when many of us start to plant trees. Trees provide many aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits but everyone needs to be aware of the dangers and risks created when trees grow into power lines.

Take the time to research tree selections and choose the right tree for the right place, especially when it comes to power lines. Trees and wood in general can potentially conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if grown close to electric lines. Power outages or interruptions in service can occur when branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can also cause fires.

For more information, visit: www.earthday.org and www.arborday.org.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Earth Day is April 22. Give back to the environment by planting a deciduous tree near your home. Deciduous trees lose their leaves during the fall, allowing sunlight to warm your home. The extra shade during summer months will keep your home cooler and give your AC a much needed break.

Six things you should know when planting a tree.



- 1. Call Before You Dig** - Several days before planting, call the national 811 hotline to have underground utilities located.
- 2. Handle with Care** - Always lift tree by the root ball. Keep roots moist until planting.
- 3. Digging a Proper Hole** - Dig 2 to 5 times wider than the diameter of the root ball with sloping sides to allow for proper root growth.
- 4. Planting Depth** - The trunk flare should sit slightly above ground level and the top-most roots should be buried 1 to 2 inches.
- 5. Filling the Hole** - Backfill with native soil unless it's all clay. Tamp in soil gently to fill large air spaces.
- 6. Mulch** - Allow 1 to 2 inch clearance between the trunk and the mulch. Mulch should be 2 to 3 inches deep.

For more tree-planting tips and information, visit arborday.org.

Source: Arbor Day Foundation
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