

EnerStar Electric Cooperative holds Annual Meeting of Members



As is tradition, EnerStar Electric Cooperative members gathered for their 78th Annual Meeting of Members, following a pancake and sausage breakfast, on Sat., March 18. Once again, members were able to participate in the meeting through real-time voting. Each household was given a remote to help “voice” their answers to questions offered by President/CEO Mike Clark throughout the meeting.

In his address, Clark updated members on EnerStar Electric’s upcoming community solar initiative, rate stability, financial condition and member satisfaction. “It’s a great day to be a co-op member,” said Clark. “I am very proud of where our cooperative is. Our equity levels and our system infrastructure are both in a good position, but you can count on us to always seek

opportunities for improvement.”

Community Solar

A majority of Clark’s presentation was regarding Co-op Solar, a new community solar initiative being launched later this year. Clark explained the purpose of the project is to offer members an affordable solar energy option from a trusted source. EnerStar is working closely with its wholesale power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Association, who is taking the lead on the project.

“Someone may want their electricity to be sourced from a renewable energy, but there can be drawbacks to rooftop or ground-mount solar,” said Clark. “They may not have room on their property or trees may block where the solar array would be located. With community solar, not only are these types of things not an issue, but

there are other benefits as well, like no maintenance; and it can be more affordable.”

Clark emphasized that one of the benefits is that the solar energy would be coming from arrays across the Midwest. “It may be raining here, but not at one of the other sites,” said Clark. Co-op Solar will have 7 solar arrays in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

But what Clark is most excited about is that the Illinois site is being built in Paris, on land owned by EnerStar. “Because one of the sites is located in our hometown, we have some unique opportunities to involve the community in the solar project.” He added that EnerStar is currently in talks with Paris High School and Lakeland Community College to develop learning opportunities for students.



Clark told the audience that he expected solar pricing to be released in the next couple of months and a Ribbon Cutting ceremony would be held on September 27.

Saving Your Energy Dollars, Energy Efficiency Grants and Rebates

Clark explained to the audience that the cooperative is doing what it can to keep the cost of the member's monthly bill as low as possible.

"That is really what drives us. That is why we offer energy education pieces in our magazine or software that allows members' to track their energy use," said Clark. He added that is why the local cooperative offers rebates for energy efficiency or bill credits for shifting electric load. The idea is that if you are going to use a kilowatt hour, the basic measurement of electricity billed to a consumer, then it is a "good" kilowatt hour, meaning there was some value to it, and it is not wasted energy.

To promote energy efficiency, EnerStar, in conjunction with its power supplier, Wabash Valley Power, is pleased to offer several money saving rebates.

By switching from traditional to ENERGYSTAR® LED bulbs, EnerStar members will use 70% less energy per bulb, and the bulbs should last about 15 years. "As of this meeting, we have given away to our members over 10,000 energy efficient LED light bulbs," said Clark. The cooperative handled the rebate for these bulbs but if a member needs more, they can purchase Energystar® rated bulbs and receive a rebate from Wabash," said Clark. "Members can receive 25 bulbs per calendar year each with a \$3.50 rebate." He added for members to call the Member Services Department for more information. He also said that LED rebates are available for business accounts under a different program.

EnerStar also received a PowerMoves grant that allowed for the cooperative to replace all rental security lights in the service

territory to LED bulbs. Because of the energy savings, the monthly rental fee dropped from \$11 per month to \$9 per month beginning with the April 2016 billing statement.

Clark also encouraged members interested in lowering their electric bill to consider PowerShift©. The program allows members to shift electricity usage during peak times to reduce the cooperative's wholesale electricity costs. Under this voluntary program, those savings of up to \$117 in bill credits are passed on to participating members when the co-operative is allowed to control electric load on electric water heaters, central AC, and fixed pool pumps. Members will also be able to sign up for whole house load control and receive a \$150 bill credit.

He also added that energy efficiency rebates are also being offered for both HVAC and LED bulbs through the PowerMoves program. Members can call the office, visit www.powermoves.com for more information.

COOPERATIVE HEADQUARTERS
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PAY BY PHONE
888-999-4201

OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Serving the Illinois counties of Edgar, Clark, Vermilion, Douglas and Coles.

Member Services

Clark told the members in attendance that an open-door policy and a renewed commitment to the community would be a main focus during his tenure. That also includes value-added services that the co-op can offer the membership.

He told the membership he was pleased with the results from the SmartHub program, which 25 percent of members are using to access daily and monthly electric consumption and report power outages via their computers or mobile devices. He also explained that about 230 members are participating in the Prepay Advantage program which gives members control to prepay for electricity when they want, as often as they want and in an amount that fits their budgets. "Our younger members really enjoy both of these options where they can control their electric account on their smart phone," said Clark.

Financial Update, Bill Credits, Capital Credit Refunds

Clark spent a considerable amount of time helping members understand the breakdown of their electric bill.

He explained the last rate restructuring was in 2013 and he believed rates would remain stable through 2017. "There are some interesting things going on in the electric industry, and much of that is due to our nation's political climate," Clark said. "Wabash Valley Power, our wholesale power provider, will watch that very closely."

Since last year was another good year financially for the cooperative, residential members enjoyed an average \$2.86 per month credit

Member Satisfaction Survey Results

Year	Satisfied 8-9-10	Very Satisfied 10s only
2013	68.9 %	30.5 %
2015	74.7 %	38.3 %
2016	79.0 %	41.0 %

on their monthly bills. Previously, EnerStar had issued member rebates for the last two years when the margins exceeded the budgeted forecast. "We decided instead of turning around and refunding money to the membership, we would simply add monthly credits on the bills through the Distribution Cost Adjustment (DCA)," said Clark.

In addition, the wholesale power cost adjustment, which is the difference from wholesale power costs since the rate change in 2013, resulted in a second credit on the members' bill of around \$2.63 per month for the average residential consumer.

Concluding his remarks on the financial update, Clark announced that the cooperative's equity level was at a healthy 49.3%, a few points higher than the state median for Illinois electric cooperatives. He explained that an improved financial position means the cooperative is in a position to retire capital credits, which represent the members' ownership in the cooperative.

Capital credit checks were issued in 2015 and 2016, and the cooperative anticipates another refund later in 2017 for members who received electric service for the years 1982 to 1984.

Member Satisfaction

Clark was pleased to announce results from recent member surveys continue to improve as 79% of the membership is satisfied with the cooperative, an almost 5% increase from the previous year, and 41% of the membership are very satisfied.

"Keeping members informed is a priority," stated Clark. "We want to know how we are doing. When you receive surveys from our statewide association or our generation cooperative, if you don't feel you can give us high marks, we would like to talk to you to see how we can improve." He encouraged members to call or stop in the office to talk to him.



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2017 Annual Meeting Board Director Elections

During the annual meeting, members re-elected three members to the board of directors. Front row shown (l-r) Jeff Zimmerman of Oakland, and Robert Staley of Paris. Back row shown (l-r) CEO Mike Clark, and Daniel Gard, Jr, of West Union

Thank You

Enerstar would like to thank the following vendors and businesses who donated door prizes to our 77th Annual Meeting of Members

Your support is greatly appreciated!

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| Benjamin's Office Connection | Longview State Bank |
| Brownstown Electric | Murphy Farm Seeds |
| Edgar County Bank & Trust | Rachel's Red Barn |
| Farm Credit Services | Scentsy Gifts, Jeni Lueken |
| Faulk's Garage | State Farm - Terry Elston |
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YOU HAVE THE POWER



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ELECTRIC BILLS—AND SAVE UP TO \$117* THIS SUMMER!

If you're a member of your local electric cooperative, the PowerShift® program can help make electricity more affordable for our members—by automatically shifting part of your electricity usage from when it's most expensive to when costs are lower.

Sign up before May 15, and you can start saving this summer! Call your co-op Energy Advisor or visit online at Powermoves.com/powershift for details.



POWERMOVES.COM

Energy Efficiency Programs from Your Electric Cooperative

*Annual bill credit for electric water heater switch is \$27, central air conditioner is \$45, and pool pump is \$45, or all three for \$117. Restrictions may apply. Contact Enerstar Electric for details.



Enerstar's office will be closed Monday, May 29, 2017 in observance of Memorial Day