



Rural HILIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

RECC to mark 80th Annual Meeting

When the first RECC electric lines were energized in February 1937, the 425 farm families surely didn't recognize where their new light and power source would lead. From a helpful tool and convenience, electricity has become a necessity today in our homes, farms and businesses – part of our lives that we depend on around the clock!

Those 425 member-owners have grown to 5,800 consumer accounts across five counties in central Illinois. The minimum \$5 monthly usage charge seems quaint now, with lights in every room, motors large and small to work for us, and electronics all around us providing information, communications and conveniences that would have seemed like magic in 1937.

But the cooperative principles that we were founded on have not changed over the years. The concepts of member ownership, local

control, and one member-one vote have carried us through periods of rapid growth, new power sources, good and bad economic times, and an evolving member base. They are the reasons for the success of our co-op!

RECC today

Today RECC serves accounts including schools, large commercial consumers, agribusinesses and housing subdivisions. Annual revenues are over \$15 million. The member-owners are still the focus of the cooperative's business, and they elect a nine-member board of directors to guide the operation of the co-op. Twenty-four full time employees work out of the Auburn headquarters, and are part of the local communities where they live.

RECC will hold its 80th Annual Meeting on June 8, 2017 at Glenwood High School in Chatham. Just like our early Annual Meetings, we will have election of directors

RECC Annual Meeting

June 8, 2017

Glenwood High School

and a report on the business standing of the cooperative. It's still also a social gathering of the membership, with a pork chop dinner, displays on safe and efficient use of electricity, and a chance to visit with co-op employees, directors and fellow members. A \$10 bill credit for all registered members is a more recent addition that's been appreciated by our attendees.

The free dinner will start at 5 p.m. on June 8, with displays and activities open to both adults and youngsters. The business meeting begins at 7 p.m., followed by door prize drawings and a Grand Prize award of \$300.

We hope to see you at our Annual Meeting, to help celebrate the past and plan the future of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative!



From all-day meetings in a tent, our Annual Meetings have moved to air conditioned dinners and Power Point business presentations! But it's still about member education and participation.

RECC directors earn new certifications

Two RECC directors completed advanced training from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in December. Clayton Bloom of Pawnee attended education classes offered by NRECA to earn the Director Gold Credential, which also requires continuing training every two years. Clayton was elected to represent District 1 in 2010.

Andy Goleman of Divernon earned his Board Leadership Certificate and also the Director Gold Credential from NRECA. Andy has represented District 7 on the RECC board since 2014.

NRECA offers these training programs on governance and leadership for co-op board members, to help them deal effectively with cooperative business issues.



Andy Goleman



Clayton Bloome

RECC is working to protect your privacy

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative accepts credit card payments from hundreds of members each month, providing a convenient, secure means for bill payments with built-in record keeping for our members.

With growing concern about security breaches and loss of private information, the Payment Card Industry (PCI) has introduced the Data Security Standard Compliance requirements for businesses that accept credit card payments. RECC has made several changes in credit card payment procedures for PCI compliance.

RECC now offers several automated and online methods of credit card payments. Online, members can use our Pay Now web page to make a payment using their credit or debit card. Members can also pay through our SmartHub online portal, from their credit card, debit card, checking or

savings account. Card numbers can be securely stored in the system for future payments, and members can set up recurring automatic payments for their monthly electric bills.

New phone payment policy

Last year, the cooperative introduced an automated telephone system that offers an option to pay by credit card so that members don't have to read their numbers to an employee over the phone. This assures better security, and avoids credit card numbers being overheard, jotted down on a piece of paper, or any other potential

sharing of the card number.

Beginning on February 1, 2017, our employees will not be able to accept verbal credit card information over the phone. Members can enter their credit card numbers using the automated phone system, available 24 hours a day. (Press Option 1 when you dial our office number, 217-438-6197.)

Increased security is demanded from all sides in today's financial transactions, and Rural Electric is striving to meet those demands. If you have questions about your credit card payment options, please give us a call or stop by our office in Auburn.

Beginning on February 1, 2017, our employees will not be able to accept verbal credit card information over the phone.

Shelley Crocks, Senior Member Accounts Representative, demonstrates the most recent consumer protection technology installed at RECC's office, a VeriFone payment terminal at our front desk. The terminal enables members paying in person to enter their own credit card information that is encrypted and sent to the billing system.





Rural Electric employees donate to Panhandle Food Pantry

Employees of RECC donated \$550 to the Panhandle Food Pantry in Raymond in December, as a show of support for the communities served by the co-op. Rural Electric matched the employee donations, for a total of \$1,100 to assist residents who may be struggling to maintain well-rounded meals in their households. The funds were presented to Darrin Dougherty, manager of the food pantry, who says they serve about 30 area families every week. Pictured from left are employees Jeff Lancaster, Sandy Lex, Chris Bridges, Darrin Daugherty, and RECC Director Lou Weitekamp, whose district includes Raymond.

The co-op and employees have donated in recent years to food pantries in Auburn, Girard and Waverly, and RECC has given extra food from its Annual Meetings to the Inner City Mission in Springfield. President/CEO David Stuva says it's just part of the cooperative principle of "commitment to community."

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which are responsible for 12 percent of household electricity use. ENERGY STAR-certified audio/video equipment is up to 50 percent more efficient than conventional models.

Source: EnergyStar.gov

The Value of Electricity

A dollar's worth can get you:

36



(intense) hours of gaming

48



hours of watching TV

72



freshly-ironed shirts

72



hours of laptop Internet access

100



hot pots of coffee

375



pieces of toast (nicely browned)

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy;
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative

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See our web page for monthly
Board meeting reports.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Rural Electric Youth Day moved up to March 29

Registration deadline is Feb. 27

Because of statewide SAT testing for high school juniors scheduled in April, the date for the Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield has been changed from April 5 to March 29. That also moves up our registration deadline to February 27.

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative is sponsoring up to ten area students again this year for the popular Youth Day in Springfield and a chance to win a free trip to Washington.

On March 29, over 200 students from across the state will tour the Capitol and other historic sites, and meet with their state legislators. Two of those students will be selected to represent RECC on the Youth To Washington trip, June 9-16, with about 1,000 young people from around the country. RECC sponsors these trips to encourage students to learn more about our government's operation and about electric cooperatives.

Any junior attending a high school in RECC's service area is eligible for these expense-paid programs. Application request forms have been sent to our local schools, or students can contact our office directly. We will mail an application kit and background information directly to the student. The application form includes a summary of the student's school and civic activities and accomplishments, and a brief essay question pertaining to the rural electric program.

Applications must be returned to RECC by February 27, and the ten students selected for the Illinois Youth Day program will be notified by March 3 so that they can

arrange their school schedules around the trip. Transportation will be provided from Auburn to Springfield and back.

At the end of the Youth Day activities in Springfield, our students will have individual interviews to select two winners for the trip to Washington, D.C. They will be judged on their written application, personal poise and confidence, and demonstrated understanding of the rural electric program. The two winners will travel with the Illinois delegation by bus from Springfield to Washington this summer, in one of the best-recognized youth programs in the nation's capital.

Tell your child, grandchild, neighbor or friend about these two super programs sponsored by your electric cooperative, and encourage them to apply. They can call our office at (217) 438-6197 to ask for an application packet, or e-mail a request to recc@recc.coop. Don't let them miss this chance to meet new friends, learn about our government and co-ops, and have fun!

