

Meet Your Board of Directors

Luke Fraley



Father of six, Regional Manager of Farm Credit Service's Jerseyville office, President of the Calhoun District 40 School Board—all are titles Luke Fraley claims. Needless to say, his plate is full. Yet, in 2015 he added to that list of responsibilities by joining the Illinois Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors. "It was a great opportunity... To be a part of something bigger than yourself, that's what it's all about." In addition, Luke's experience working with Farm Credit, also a cooperative, gave him some insight into the operations of a co-op. His professional background in both financial and agricultural fields contribute to his role as a Director as well.

In the beginning, Luke knew very little about Illinois Electric Cooperative, and even less about what it meant to be a Director. He soon realized that the duties required of a board member were much more in-depth, and much more complex, than he expected. This realization helped him adjust to his new position.

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Illinois Electric Cooperative

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“A significant amount of personal growth has taken place since I’ve been here.” Among the ways Luke has grown has been in the pursuit of seeing different points of view, whether among the members of the board or across the membership. As for his colleagues on the board, Luke recognizes the diversity among the group, which is “unique from a co-op standard,” and which he believes contributes to an important difference in the ways issues are approached. The hard-working nature of all Directors does not go unnoticed to him, and it applies to all the cooperative’s employees. “The work ethic doesn’t stop at the board table,” he says.

Luke has also been aware of the community service aspect of his role on the board, which is extremely important to him. “Community service, like involvement on the board, is something everybody should be involved in.” For him, the opportunity to build area communities, as well as striving to make people happy wherever they live, is a very rewarding aspect of the job. Part of becoming more connected to local communities has involved talking to people about fiber internet opportunities and their electricity needs. The ability to answer members’ questions, and to listen to their concerns, is a very gratifying experience for Luke.

“The most rewarding part is being a part of something that I feel is genuinely helping our rural areas—actually all of our communities.” In the future, Luke sees “a lot of change” at Illinois Electric. As technological advancement in areas like fiber internet improve, and IEC continues to pursue them, co-op employees and Directors will be working harder than ever. He also recognizes the challenge of a changing population, and says Illinois Electric must “keep evolving with the changing demographics of our area,” which includes facing the threat of a declining rural population. Ultimately, Luke has a lot of hope for the future, and confidence that the co-op will be able to meet its challenges down the road. “I see the future as being very bright.” He also looks forward to getting involved with the trainings offered to Directors, which he has not yet had the chance to explore in-depth.



Director Luke Fraley speaking with fellow director Jim Freeman at the co-op's Annual Meeting.

At home, Luke is almost certainly kept busy by his role as a husband to his wife, Kari, and a father (again, of 6 kids, aged 1 to 12 years). While he may not see his position on the IEC board lasting forever—turnover, he believes, is an important part of representing members—he does intend to continue committing himself to his duties as a Director. “If not me, then who?” he asks, reaffirming his commitment to any of the numerous roles in which he currently finds himself.

This article on Luke Fraley is the eighth in a series of written profiles on Illinois Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors, which have been compiled and written by Noah Sellars, one of our college interns.



Isaac Shaw, Pittsfield High School



Sydney Bauer, Pittsfield High School

CEO Scholarships Awarded to Isaac Shaw and Sydney Bauer

The Morgan-Scott, Greene-Calhoun, and Pike CEO programs each awarded three scholarships to CEO students. The criteria for the scholarships was chosen by the students. The criteria revolved around the students' personal businesses and their presentation skills.

Two of CEO scholarship winners are members' children. Isaac Shaw, son of Steve and Teresa Shaw of Pittsfield, is a recent graduate of Pittsfield High School. He plans on attending John Wood Community College and then transferring to the University of Illinois majoring in Ag Business.

Sydney Bauer, daughter of Ronnie and Teresa Bauer of Pittsfield, is a recent graduate of Pittsfield High School. She plans on attending John Wood Community College and then transferring to Texas A&M double majoring in Ag Finance and Accounting.

CEO scholarships were also awarded to Maggie Marable, Pittsfield High School, Madilyn Gilmore, North Greene High School, Abby McElroy, Greenfield High School, Gillian Bowman, Greenfield High School, Lucas May, Routt Catholic High School, Killian Delaney, Franklin High School, and Mallory Erickson, Jacksonville High School.

CEO programs are funded by business investors from within the communities. Each class meets for 90 minutes every day throughout the school year. The class hosts a trade show at the end of the school year for the student-run businesses to showcase their products and hard work.

By providing the tools, leadership and entrepreneurial training, the program shows students how to establish and grow a business, the importance of soft skills, and how to build a local network of professional. Each student is also paired with a mentor from within their community.

The goal of the program is to encourage students to spark local economic development and stay within the communities they were raised in. CEO makes students aware of career opportunities through business connections provided by the program.

The co-op's involvement comes from a realization that the future vitality of the service territory is dependent on growth. As youth are a key part of the future of our service territory, this program creates a long-term investment in our local communities and the young people who call it home.

Lilian Baumgartner Wins 2019 Thomas H. Moore Scholarship

Lilian Baumgartner, daughter of Matt and Kery Baumgartner of Carrollton, was recently awarded the 2019 Thomas H. Moore Scholarship. Lilian graduated in May from Carrollton High School. Her future plans are to attend the United States Naval Academy majoring in aerospace engineering.

The scholarship, worth \$2,000, is one of six that is awarded each year to the son or daughter of an electric cooperative member in the state.

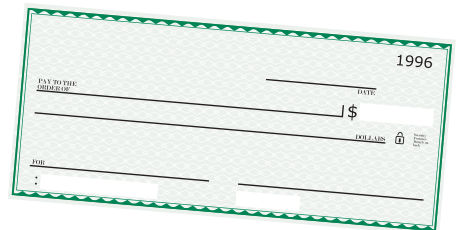
The IEC Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) in January, 1994. It is designed to provide financial assistance to deserving students in the “electric cooperative family.”



Lilian Baumgartner winner of a 2019 Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship.

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