

NEWS, NOTES & VIEWS 09/19

Meet Your Board of Directors

Pat Stendback



Pat Stendback got the call about interviewing for a position on the IEC Board of Directors while feeding his cows, and it took him by surprise. "I had never even thought about that," he says of the moment back in 2016. Then, like now, Pat kept himself busy, both at home and at work. Professionally, he works as a corporate driving recruiting manager at Dot Foods in Mt. Sterling. At home near Pleasant Hill, where he lives with his wife, Debbie, he also raises cattle and goats. Their children—one son, one daughter, both grown—have found their own busy occupations, as well, one as an engineer in St. Louis, and the other also working at Dot with a degree in finance and an MBA.

Pat's willingness to accept a position on the Board was the result of multiple factors. Much of his interest came from the uniqueness of co-ops. "It's such a distinct, different business model. That's one of the things I like about it the most...it's different." For this reason, Pat knew he had much to learn about serving as a director for an electric cooperative, a fact which remains true today.

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Illinois Electric Cooperative

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"It's not something you pick up overnight," he says. "There's still a lot to learn," Pat acknowledges, which is a good thing, because, as he says, "I get to learn from a lot of different people." This reflects on his opinion of his colleagues on the Board. "I love our board. I think we have a really, really good board," says Pat. In his roughly three years as a director, he has come to realize and appreciate the dedication and work ethic evident on the Board. "If there's anything I underestimated, it's the amount of time and dedication it takes to do it... You know, you really have to be dedicated to it." It is this commitment across the board and the co-op staff which ensures the members get the exceptional service they deserve and have come to expect.

What Pat brings to the board from other areas of his life are business experiences in transportation, logistics, and risk prevention. His professional experiences managing large groups of people also benefit him within Illinois Electric. Pat has found that, along with the professional development he has encountered, community service and connections have also come as a result of board membership. "The beauty of being a Director in our co-op is our reliability is very high," he says, noting that, through conversations with members over various cooperative-related issues, never has he received a complaint about Illinois Electric's service. This rewarding feeling which comes from serving in his position on the Board is good for Pat as well. "It's just the feeling that you're helping and contributing to your neighbors... You're providing something that's really a lifeline for rural living," he says, noting his position is similar to many of the members. "I live in the country, too. It's as important to me to have reliable service as it is to anyone else."

In the cooperative's future, Pat knows the threat of population loss in rural areas is very real. "The fact of the matter is that all of west central Illinois is shrinking. The dilemma we face is...our consumer base is shrinking."



Director Pat Stendback at DOT Foods headquarters in Mt. Sterling.

In the face of this challenge, Pat does see areas where IEC has shown an ability to meet this threat, specifically when it comes to expanding into new internet technologies, like fiber optic. Going beyond electricity will help keep costs and risks lower if the population does continue to decrease, Pat believes. "If we're going to keep it cost effective for our members, we're going to have to diversify beyond just electricity."

Overall, Pat remains enthusiastic about his role as an IEC Director. He continues to learn the business and discover what his role is and will continue to be on the board. So far, Pat is satisfied with his experience serving the co-op. "I'd say it's been a positive experience."

This article on Pat Stendback is the ninth 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.



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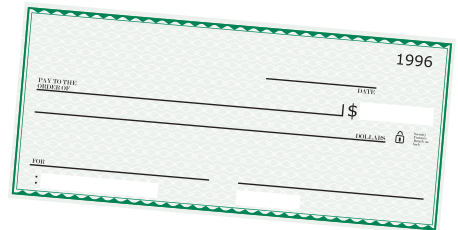
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