



A good year for SIEC

It is hard to believe we're nearing the end of 2013 already! It has been a quick year and it has been a good year for YOUR Cooperative. If you will allow me, I would like to comment on a few things that have taken place in this past year and offer just a small glimpse of what we see for 2014. **Kevin Ulrich**

Any service organization is only as good as its employees and those directors setting policy, and the Cooperative has been blessed to have had excellent ones over the years. In 2013, we saw the retirement of four employees, whose years of service total 119 between them. Pamela Bierstedt retired after 17 years of service, Terry Grissom retired after 22 years, Lamar Houston retired after 40 years, Larry Lovell retired after 40 years of service, of which the last 23 were serving as your general manager, and Dale Taake, a 20-year director for Pulaski County, decided not to seek another term. In August, Bob McIntosh was elected by our membership to fill the director's position from Pulaski County, and David Johnston was hired as our new director of administration and finance. We want to thank all who have left for their contributions – you will be missed – and welcome aboard those who are joining us. We work hard to keep our employees trained, efficient and able to work safely and when you have contact with them, I hope their enthusiasm

shows. We think they are some of the best and we're proud of them.

We are thankful to report to-date no major storms caused any extensive damages to our system, and even though we had a pretty wet spring, the summer has been very productive in allowing our crews to get a lot of field work done. Of course, our office employees are not hampered by the weather, but their work load can certainly be affected as the amount of work being done outside, kWh being sold, and members making changes in their services all impact them so high activity outside means high activity inside as well. Even though the beautiful weather helped us to get a lot done, it also impacted our electricity sales - we had a spring of better than budgeted kWh sales but have been falling behind as the summer and fall progressed due to lower than usual air conditioning load. We also lost the large load of the prison at Tamms earlier this year, a loss that impacted many within our communities. As I am sure you understand, the more kWh we can sell, the better we can distribute the operating costs of providing service.

At the annual meeting of members in August, we celebrated our 75th anniversary in business and presented a "look-back" to the days of old when electricity was just coming to the rural areas. What a history and success story the rural

electrification program has had. Your Cooperative today still holds those same values in serving its membership and I assure you, "we never forget who we're working for". In keeping with the "cooperative" spirit, we also announced the board of directors had voted to refund approximately \$506,000 in capital credits to members receiving service in 1985. Those members still receiving service from us today received those credits on their electric bill at the end of October and those no longer receiving our service received their checks accordingly.

2014 promises to be a very busy year for us. Our first major job is a complete computer conversion that is starting before the end of 2013, but the really intense part will take place in the first 2 – 3 months of 2014. As technology and our membership changes, we continue to strive to provide better member support through electronic services, so as the conversion completes and we prepare to go "live", we will keep you fully informed of any changes,

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Chris Bennett
General Manager



"We never forget who we're working for." 

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however large or small, so nothing will be a surprise to you.

We also plan to “experiment” with an office presence at our current location on Hwy 145 in Massac County. Presently, it is just a warehouse and staging area for our crews and materials. By mid-2014, we plan to have an office presence at that location at least one day per week where we can provide billing and engineering/operations assistance to our members. Based on the activity level, we will determine the need to expand that service. We also plan to put in a payment drop box to allow any payments to be dropped off there as well. In Dongola, we will experiment with an increase in our office hours during certain periods of the year, just to see if there is a need for more availability. Once our computer conversion is complete,

we plan once more to offer prepay metering as an option for our members, especially for those that would rather choose the prepay option as opposed to a larger meter deposit.

We want to have more of a presence in our various communities by offering safety training to first responders, providing safety education in our schools and having a presence at our county fairs. One way to do so, as suggested by our own employees, is to build a “live line” demonstration unit that we can take to these locations and share with you concerns over how to best handle certain electrical situations. We all think electricity is great when we can flip that switch and the lights come on, but down deep, we are also a little scared of it – and we should be as it can harm you if not handled properly! In 2014, we hope to start

helping others to better understand how to handle various situations and who better to provide that training than employees that have extensive training and work with it every day?

2013 has been a great year, and we are thankful for the support of our membership, but we’re also looking forward to 2014 as we’re excited about some new services. But before closing out 2013, it’s also a time to reflect and think of who we are, how we got here and who is depending on us – not only as a company, but as individuals. Christmas time is a really special time and if you’re fortunate to have close family and friends, you too are blessed! Merry Christmas, and may 2014 be a wonderful year for you and your family, for SIEC and for our country.



Merry Christmas



...from the Directors & Employees
of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

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Local Electric Co-op Director Achieves Credentials

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) Board Director Carole Kelley of Buncombe recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership (BL) certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Kelley was recognized at NRECA's regional meeting for her commitment to education and attainment of the CCD/BL certificate in front of more than 1,000 electric cooperative officials.

Today's electric utility environment imposes new demands on electric cooperative directors, particularly increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a working knowledge of the cooperative principles. SIEC has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative members. *John Lee Smith*

The NRECA CCD program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic



Pictured are SIEC Board Director Carole Kelley and General Manager Chris Bennett.

competencies contained in five core courses: Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Roles and Relationships, Strategic Planning, and Financial Decision Making.

Additionally, Kelley received the NRECA BL certificate, which recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after

becoming a CCD. Directors who have attained the BL certificate have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

The NRECA is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 member-owned electric cooperatives, which provide service to 42 million people in 47 states.

Co-op Connections Card

Attached to the outside of this issue of the *Illinois Country Living* magazine, you will find your very own Co-op Connections Card. This is a benefit for SIEC members only, in our service territory. Please turn to Page 9 of the magazine to find which local businesses have signed up as of the writing of this



article, October 15. Check back monthly, to find out which busi-

nesses have been added and what discounts they provide for you. Or, check any time at www.siec.coop and click on the menu line that says: Co-op Connections Card. We hope you enjoy your benefits through this membership card and thank you for making our electric cooperative what it is today.

Richard T. Fox

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"Like" Us on Facebook and "Follow" Us on Twitter:

Once we reach 1,000 "likes" on Facebook, we are giving away a special SIEC promotional package which includes: SIEC cap, coffee mug, insulated lunch bag, t-shirt and a **\$25 electric bill credit**. To be eligible, you must be a member of SIEC and either "like" us on Facebook... **Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC)** or "follow" us on Twitter... @SIEC_Dongola.

Did you read your November bill insert?

Make sure you do when you open your SIEC bill statement, because we have a lot of important information for you this winter.



Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative Board of Directors

- Carole J. Kelley (President) Johnson Co.
- William E. Littrell (Vice President)..... Union Co.
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- Ronald E. Osman (Attorney)
- General Manager Chris L. Bennett
- Editor Jerri Schaefer
- For Outages Call:**
800-762-1400 * 618-827-3555

Our office will be closed
December 25th and January 1st
for the holiday season.



Member prize



In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Jerri with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

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618-827-3555 • Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4 p.m. • Web address: www.siec.coop

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