

Clay ELECTRIC News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

7784 Old Hwy. 50 ■ P.O. Box 517 ■ Flora, Illinois 62839 ■ www.ceci.coop ■ 618-662-2171 ■ 800-582-9012

From the Manager

With the arrival of warmer weather, our crews are gearing up for maintenance and improvement projects across our service area. As we work diligently to enhance the reliability of your electric service, I urge everyone to be safe, especially when traveling near work zones.

Please exercise caution, adhere to posted speed limits and remain vigilant when approaching areas where our crews are working. Your cooperation ensures the safety of our dedicated team members and helps us complete our projects efficiently. **12114-002**

Switching gears, I am delighted to report the success of our recent trip to Springfield, where six outstanding juniors from our community had the opportunity to explore the rich history of our state's capital. Our juniors had the privilege of meeting with their legislators, providing them with a unique opportunity to engage in Illinois politics. They also enjoyed a tour of Lincoln's Home, where they gained valuable insights into the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

I am thrilled to announce that we have selected three exceptional students from the Springfield trip to embark

on Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June. During their time in the nation's capital, these students will have the opportunity to meet with their federal legislators and explore the rich history and culture of Washington, D.C.

This trip represents a unique opportunity for our students to engage with policymakers at the federal level and gain a deeper understanding of the workings of our government. I have no doubt that they will represent Clay County with the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism that they demonstrated in Springfield. I'm grateful to the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for their parts in this opportunity.

As you may remember, we have been collecting member satisfaction surveys over the last few months. At CECI, we are committed to delivering exceptional service and meeting the needs of our



members. I am pleased to share some of the results, which reaffirm our dedication to excellence.

According to the survey findings, our members have rated us an impressive 4.63 out of 5 in overall satisfaction. This exceptional rating serves as a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team members, who continuously strive to exceed your expectations.

Your feedback is invaluable to us, and we are grateful for the trust and confidence you have placed in Clay Electric Cooperative. Rest assured, we will continue to listen to your input and work tirelessly to provide you with the reliable service you deserve.

Lastly, keep an eye out for your member number in the middle of this magazine. We've hidden three member numbers in the pages. If you find yours and give us a call, you'll get a \$5 discount on your next bill! Happy hunting!



Matt Conklin
CEO

Member Satisfaction Survey results

Your cooperative mailed to all members a survey in the February bill. The survey was also available online from the ceci.coop website and on social media. We are pleased to present the findings of the member satisfaction survey, conducted to gauge the sentiments and preferences of our valued members. The survey encompassed various aspects of our cooperative's services, as well as the receptiveness of members to potential new programs.

Part 1: Rating Statements

The front of the survey was a series of seven statements that our members were asked to rate their agreement with a "1" being strongly disagree, a "3" being neither agree or disagree, and a "5" being strongly agree.

Satisfaction with Cooperative:

Members overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with our cooperative, with an average rating of **4.63 out of 5**.

Information Dissemination:

The majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with how they receive information from the cooperative, with an average rating of **4.6 out of 5**. CECI routinely communicates through digital and traditional channels, with Facebook being the primary social media platform and Illinois Country Living Magazine being the big print platform. Members are also sent mailers and bill stuffers when necessary, and a new Mass Notification System has been adopted to send email and text messages if needed.

Reliability of Distribution System:

Members rated the reliability of our distribution system highly, with an average rating of **4.58 out of 5**. In the past five years, CECI has hired a dedicated forestry crew to handle line clearance and tree tickets. This frees up our linemen to focus on line maintenance, pole inspections and other needed tasks to keep the grid stable. We have seen a marked decrease in blinks and outages over the last five years. **13201-001**

Value for Service:

The majority of respondents found the service they receive worth the cost, with an average rating of **4.37 out of 5**.

Friendly Staff Interactions:

Members overwhelmingly reported positive interactions with our staff, with an average rating of **4.76 out of 5**. We are very proud that our highest rating for the entire survey is for the friendliness and helpfulness of our staff. The office takes great pride in providing efficient, friendly service to our members every day.

Timely Resolution of Problems:

The majority of respondents indicated that problems with service are generally resolved quickly, with an average rating of **4.66 out of 5**. The greater reliability of the system and more hands available has greatly improved our response times. We are grateful for the patience and understanding of the membership when issues do arise and make every effort to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

Likelihood to Recommend:

Members expressed a high likelihood of recommending our cooperative to friends and family, with an average rating of **4.62 out of 5**.

Part 2: Additional Insights

Electric Vehicle Ownership: Only one out of 256 members reported owning an electric vehicle, indicating a low adoption rate within our membership base.

Interest in Smart Home

Thermostat: When asked about interest in a Smart Home Thermostat with incentivized use, 72.6% of respondents indicated they were not interested. While CECI does not have a Smart Home Thermostat program in place, they are becoming more common at other cooperatives, municipalities and other utilities. We will continue to look into programs that have found success in other areas and see if they may be a fit for our membership.

Response to Time of Use Rates:

Over half of the respondents (53.2%) expressed willingness to change their electrical usage habits to take

advantage of Time of Use (TOU) rates, suggesting a moderate level of receptiveness to this pricing structure. A TOU rate is a rate where the price of kilowatts varies over the course of the day, becoming cheaper at off-peak times and more expensive during peak hours. Like the old long-distance rates, a TOU rate would incentivize the use of power to times that are less stressful to the grid. CECI does not currently have TOUs available, but as we look to ways to save the cooperative money and pass those savings onto the membership, new rate structures are an option we are researching.



Conclusion

Overall, the results of the member satisfaction survey reflect a high level of satisfaction with our cooperative's services and operations. It also gives us insight into what new technology our membership has adopted and would consider adopting in the future. The more CECI knows about what you want, the more it can work towards an energy future that has all the amenities our membership expects at a price the membership can afford.

Clay Electric
Co-operative, Inc.
A TrueSource Energy® Cooperative
1911 and Highway 10
P.O. Box 100
Flora, IL 62839

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

3RD ANNUAL MASONIC LODGE AUCTION FOR SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN

SATURDAY, MAY 25TH at 10:00am
Charlie Brown Park Fairgrounds
Old Route 50, Flora

To make a donation, call 618-843-3815
or mail checks or money orders made to
'Shriners Hospital' to:
Don Fry
323 East 4th Street
Flora, IL 62839

UP, UP AND AWAY

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO A BALLOON RELEASE

Everyone has great intentions when planning a balloon release. However, as soon as balloons are let go, they can go from sentiment to hazard.

ALTHOUGH BEAUTIFUL TO LOOK AT, BALLOONS CAN DAMAGE THE POWER GRID AND CAUSE POWER OUTAGES.

LATEX AND MYLAR BALLOONS AND ATTACHED STRINGS & RIBBONS CAN:

- Threaten birds and animals (via ingestion and entanglement).
- Harm marine life.
- Obstruct the flight path or cause damage to an airplane's engine.
- Cause ground and ocean trash.
- Create plastic pollution.

ACCORDING TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS:

- What goes up, must come down: balloons will fall back to earth either semi-deflated or in tiny and hard-to-retrieve fragments.
- Only an estimated 5% of all released balloons return intact.
- Even if balloons are marketed as degradable, they may take several weeks to break down.

ALTERNATIVES TO BALLOONS:

- Blow bubbles.
- Light candles.
- Throw biodegradable confetti.
- Plant trees.
- Plant flowers.
- Paint stones.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

March 25, 2024

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. (CECI) was held at the Clay Electric Co-operative Headquarters, Flora, Ill., beginning at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, March 25, 2024.

Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Neil Gould, Bill Croy, Frank Herman, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi, Evan Smith, Kevin Logan and Josh Schnepfer. Also present were CEO Matt Conklin and Tyra Cycholl, Attorney for the Board. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided, and Neil Gould acted as secretary thereof.

The invocation was given by Frank Herman and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following proceedings were had [all action being first duly moved and seconded, and all action taken being upon the unanimous vote of the Board or without dissenting vote of abstention unless otherwise stated]:

APPROVED, the Suggested Agenda.

APPROVED, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **APPROVED**, the prior meeting minutes;
- **APPROVED**, (a) to admit to membership those applicants connected for service since the last such review by the board, and (b) cancel those former members shown on the Manager's Report since the last such review by the Board, said members no longer taking service.

REVIEWED, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **REVIEWED**, the Work Orders;
- **REVIEWED**, the Disbursements;
- **REVIEWED**, the Credit Card Statements;

- **REVIEWED**, the Attorney Retainer;
 - **REVIEWED**, the Account Summary Report;
 - **REVIEWED**, the Federated Report from the Board;
 - **REVIEWED**, the CFC Report from the Board.
- WERE UPDATED**, on Federated Capital Credit check.
- HEARD**, the CRC News update.
- HEARD**, the NRECA Report.
- HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC as well as the new SIPC CEO.

HEARD, a report by Kevin Logan regarding the AIEC board meeting and Legislative Update.

DISCUSSED, upcoming Board Events and Training including Lobby Day, Legislative Conference, NRECA BLC 984 and CFC Forum/Aces Conference.

HEARD and **APPROVED**, a financial report by Matt Conklin as to the following:

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in February 2024;
- February 2024 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- February 2024 Form 7;
- February 2024 Balance Sheet.

HEARD, the Manager's Report on Safety including the Quarterly Safety Committee Meeting.

REVIEWED, Monday morning Safety meeting held March 25, 2024.

REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report.

HEARD and **APPROVED**, the Manager's Report by Matt Conklin on the following topics:

- Youth to Washington Tour;
- Annual Meeting Discussion;

- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

APPROVED, sending three students to Washington, D.C., as presented.

DISCUSSED, the Annual Meeting and were informed Bob Pierson, Frank Czyzewski and Evan Smith are up for reelection.

APPROVED, increasing the Annual Meeting bill credit to \$15 for registration at the Annual Meeting.

APPROVED, special door prizes for the 80th Annual Meeting including a TV, 8-\$80 bill credits, 8-\$50 bill credits and 8-\$25 bill credits.

DISCUSSED, a policy regarding Board expectations and House bill 5021.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report.

REVIEWED, the Communications Report. **11544-003**


WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on April 22, 2024 at 7 p.m. and May 28, 2024 at 7 p.m. (moved to Tuesday due to the holiday) and June 24, 2024 at 7 p.m. and July 22, 2024 at 7 p.m. and the Annual Meeting at Oil Belt on Aug. 22, 2024.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three member numbers hidden throughout Clay Electric News. If you find your member number that corresponds to the one found on the upper right corner of your bill, call our office and identify your number and the page it's on. If correct, you will win a \$5 credit on your next electric bill.

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