

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

One of the Seven Cooperative Principles is Democratic Member Control. Our members guide the cooperative's direction as we navigate the complex future ahead. Our annual meeting is the primary expression of this democratic control. During this meeting, members vote on bylaw changes and elect representatives to the board of directors. Each year, three of the nine members of our board of directors are up for election. This year, director seats for districts two, six and eight will be decided. We hope to see many of our members at this year's 80th Annual Meeting. **14551-001**

The 80th Annual Meeting will take place next month on Aug. 22 at Oil Belt Christian Service Camp, west of Flora. Leading up to our annual meeting, we want to remind our members about our annual scholarship

opportunity. Each year at the annual meeting, we draw three \$500 scholarships for the children of our members. To be eligible, they must be members of the graduating class of 2024 with plans to attend an accredited 2- or 4-year college or trade school. The form for the drawing can be found on page 6 and must be returned to the cooperative by mail or in person by Friday, Aug. 16. More details about the 80th Annual Meeting will be provided in next month's magazine.

This year is particularly special as we celebrate our 80th Anniversary. The meeting will feature live entertainment by local talent Guy Ash, and we will have additional door prizes drawn at the end of the business meeting. Oil Belt Christian Service Camp will once again be our gracious host. Registration for the annual meeting,

including entertainment and a pork chop or chicken dinner, will begin at 5 p.m., with the business meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. Door prizes and scholarships will be drawn at the conclusion of the meeting. We look forward to seeing all our members there.

Remember to keep an eye out for your member number hidden within this magazine. We've placed three member numbers throughout the pages. If you find yours and give us a call, you'll receive a \$5 discount on your next bill! Happy hunting!



Matt Conklin
CEO



ways to prepare your home for Summer Vacation

Once you have packed your bags, get your house ready for vacation too.

1. Set or program your thermostat to 85 degrees.
2. Unplug small appliances and electronics.
3. Turn your natural gas water heater to low.
4. Turn off your electric hot water heater.
5. Use light timers or smart lighting.
6. Ensure your sump pump is operational.
7. Clean out your refrigerator.
8. Pause your mail.
9. Make sure doors and windows are locked.
10. Let a neighbor know your plans.

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Clay Electric
Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Unleashing the Power of OUR Community!

We're turning the spotlight on YOU—because your community events deserve recognition. Each month, we'll select one outstanding event to feature in the magazine, showcasing the heart and soul of Clay County, Illinois.

Have a community event in the works? Submit it at least a month prior to the big day and watch your event steal the limelight! Send your dazzling submissions via email to Admin@ceci.coop or via mail to Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. Community Spotlight, PO Box 517 Flora, IL 62839.

Let's make every event a blockbuster! Your community works deserve to be in the spotlight, and we're here to help make it happen.

Hiring a home improvement contractor?

Selecting the right one is key

Taking on significant home renovations or upgrades can be challenging, especially when selecting the right contractor for the job. Choosing the wrong one can result in disastrous consequences, including extensive damages, insurance loss and even injuries.

Here are some tips to help you select the right one for the job.

Craft a detailed plan

Before starting any home improvement project, it is crucial to have a detailed plan in place. The more detailed your plan, the more precise your cost estimates will be.

Know your material costs

Since 2020, building material prices have surged by 35.6%. Understanding material costs before seeking a quote will reduce the risk of sticker shock.

Obtain referrals

When searching for a contractor, always ask for references. Referrals from friends, coworkers and family members can provide insight. Additionally, consider seeking recommendations from neighbors, local hardware stores and past real estate agents **14445-001**.

Interview several contractors

To ensure that you choose the right general contractor for your home improvement project, it is important to interview a minimum of three candidates. During this process, use a checklist and ask each contractor numerous questions, including whether their business is licensed and insured.

Before hiring someone, check with your local municipality to learn about necessary licenses.

Additional questions for prospective contractors may include:

- What is your experience with this type of project?
- Can you provide references from previous clients?
- What is your timeline for completing the project?

- What is your process for communicating with clients?
- What is your approach to solving problems and handling unexpected issues?
- How do you handle change orders or additional work requests?
- What is your payment schedule and method?
- What does your contract include? (See next section.)

Again, be sure to verify that prospective contractors have appropriate insurance and licenses, as well as a clear contract outlining the project scope, timeline, budget and any other important details.

Contract and ground rules

Here are some important elements that should be included in a contract:

- Business name and contact information of the contractor.
- Contractor's insurance and licensing details.
- A highly detailed description of the work to be completed, including a timeline and schedule.
- A materials list (including model numbers) and who is responsible for providing the materials.
- Payment terms: Expect to put down a deposit before work begins. Certain states have restrictions on the size of the down payment for home improvement contracts. Check your state's laws and requirements before agreeing to a down payment amount.
- Required permits and who is responsible for securing them.
- A process for handling changes and disagreements.
- A termination clause to protect both parties.

Obtain lien releases and receipts

To prevent a mechanic or construction lien from being placed on your property, request copies of receipts for all materials and lien releases from the general contractor and all subcontractors. This is especially important if your contractor fails to pay their subcontractors or suppliers, as attempts to collect the debt may result in the sale of your home to cover the unpaid amount.

Hold onto your wallet

Delay making the final payment until you are fully satisfied with the finished work and have received lien releases and receipts. This should be outlined in your contract and payment schedule to avoid any misunderstandings or disputes.



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.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

May 28, 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 6:55 p.m. on Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

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

The invocation was given by Frank Czyzewski and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. **14707-001**

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.

APPROVED, purchasing the Ferris Lawn Mower as quoted and to sell the current mower by sealed bid.

At 6:59 p.m., entered into Executive Session.

At 7:27 p.m., exited Executive Session and returned to Regular Meeting.

REVIEWED and **DISCUSSED**, new Policies.

APPROVED, Policy 800-5, with the clarification the CDL is Class A, and 800-6 as presented.

WERE UPDATED, on CFC Voting Delegates to Annual Meeting.

REVIEWED, CFC Quarterly Interest payment.

REVIEWED, Federated Member Updates.

REVIEWED, the NRECA EPA Report.

HEARD, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC.

HEARD, a report by Kevin Logan regarding the AIEC updates and AIEC Compliance Exchange.

DISCUSSED, upcoming Board Events and Training including NRECA BLC 961 and CFC Forum/Aces Conference.

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

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

HEARD, the Manager's Report on Safety.

REVIEWED, Monday Morning Safety meeting held May 20, 2024.

REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report.

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

- Storm Update;
- CECI Member Survey;

- Paris Van Dyke Scholarship;
- Adam McKnight Continuing Education;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

WERE UPDATED, on Storm damage.

REVIEWED, the CECI Member Survey.

WERE INFORMED, Paris Van Dyke won the Thomas H. Moore Memorial Scholarship through AIEC.

REVIEWED, Adam McKnight's continuing education reimbursement for cyber security classes.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report.


REVIEWED, the Communications Report.

WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on June 24, 2024 at 7 p.m., July 22, 2024 at 7 p.m., Aug. 26, 2024 at 7 p.m. and Sept. 23, 2024 at 7 p.m. and the Annual Meeting at Oil Belt on Aug. 22, 2024.

REVIEWED, a thank you post from Lee O'Donnell.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

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