

# Clay Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

7784 Old Hwy. 50 ■ P.O. Box 517 ■ Flora, Illinois 62839 ■ [www.ceci.coop](http://www.ceci.coop) ■ 618-662-2171 ■ 800-582-9012

## From the Manager

It's September, and that means cooler mornings, harvest equipment in the fields, and kids settling into their school routines. It's a busy time for our members, whether you're out on the farm or getting the family back on schedule at home. As we stay busy, we should strive to stay safe around electricity and make the most of our energy use as we ease into fall.

For our farming folks, harvest season means long days with big machinery, so it's crucial to keep an eye on those overhead power lines. Always look up before moving equipment like combines or augers, keeping a good buffer between equipment and power lines to avoid any contact. If something does snag a line, remember to stay put in the cab and give us a call right away at 618-662-2171. You should not attempt to exit the equipment unless a serious threat to your

health and safety, like a fire, forces you to. Then hop from the equipment and land with your feet together and continue to hop, or shuffle step, away. Electricity flows into the ground like a ripple on a pond, and if you take big steps, you could become the path electricity takes from one ripple to another. Be mindful of your surroundings and always strive to keep safety at the forefront of your mind.

As the days shorten, we're all relying more on lights and outlets outdoors, so take a moment to inspect those extension cords and fixtures for any fraying or damage. With the damp fall weather creeping in, using weatherproof covers and GFCI outlets can make a world of difference in avoiding shocks. And, speaking of weather, now's the perfect time to weatherize your home — sealing up drafts around windows and doors with some caulk or stripping keeps the warmth in without overworking your heater, which can really add to your energy savings. **13365-001**

Inside, as families adjust to school nights, it's easy for lights and gadgets to stay on longer than needed. Encourage the kids to flip switches



Matt Conklin  
CEO

off when they leave a room. If you're dusting off portable heaters for those chilly starts to the day, place them on steady surfaces away from anything flammable, and go for ones with auto-shutoff features. Pair that with a quick tune-up on your furnace or heat pump, including fresh filters, and you'll notice better efficiency right away!

By weaving these practices into our daily lives, we're not just saving a few dollars; we're helping ensure our cooperative's grid stays reliable for everyone.

Thank you for being a valued member of our cooperative. Be sure to keep an eye out for your member number in the center section of this magazine. There are three member numbers hidden within the pages of Clay Electric News. If you spot your number and give us a call, you will win a \$5 discount on your next bill!

### Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

7784 Old Hwy. 50,  
P.O. Box 517,  
Flora, Illinois 62839  
618-662-2171  
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Office hours:  
7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.  
[www.ceci.coop](http://www.ceci.coop)  
[facebook.com/ceci.coop](https://facebook.com/ceci.coop)



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.

# Beyond opening the box: Take steps to operate a generator safely

When the electricity goes out, your initial thought might be to run to the local hardware or big box store and buy a generator. However, using a generator should not be taken lightly, since it can be dangerous and even life-threatening if used incorrectly. There are several steps you should take before ever starting one up.

## But first, homework

Before purchasing a generator, the first step is to research the best option for your home and budget. The second, and more important step, is to educate yourself on how to use one safely.

Homeowners can choose from two types of generators: standby and portable. Standby generators are installed directly into the home's electrical system and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

A portable generator is usually gas-powered and is, well, portable. You can power appliances by plugging them into it. Your generator should have

more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator can create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on. **11486-002**

## Safety tips

When you refuel a portable generator, make sure the engine is cool. Keep children and pets away from the generator, as it could burn them.

Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated during inclement weather. Use a generator only when necessary during wet conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure and on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it.

## Generators can be deadly

Carbon monoxide fumes emitted by the gasoline engine on the generator can be deadly. Always operate your portable generator outdoors at least 20 feet from your home.

Misusing a portable generator or using a standby generator that is not installed correctly (and does not meet the electrical code) can cause backfeed, which puts others in danger. Backfeed happens when a generator feeds electricity back through a home's electrical system and meter into the power lines. To prevent this dangerous scenario, standby generators should have a transfer switch installed by a licensed professional. Do not plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system. Instead, use a properly rated extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator for power.

## When not in use

Operate your generator once a month for 10 minutes to ensure it is running properly. Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions. Have a standby generator installed in an easily accessible, weatherproof area.

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## 5 Tips for a Safe Harvest

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures.

Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

1. Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
2. Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
3. Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
4. Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
5. Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.



# IMPACTS OF THE EPA'S POWER PLANT RULE

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) power plant rule threatens access to reliable electricity for millions of Americans. The EPA's power plant rule will:



- 1 Force the premature closure of many power plants that currently provide electricity 24/7.
- 2 Mandate the deployment of unproven carbon capture and storage technology.
- 3 Jeopardize the reliability of the grid at a time when America is already facing a surge in electricity demand.
- 4 Heighten the risk of rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the electric grid.
- 5 Increase costs for consumers as utilities are forced to pay for new power generation to comply with the EPA rule.



Unleashing the Power of OUR Community!

Clay Electric Cooperative's Community Spotlight is featured in each issue of Illinois Country Living Magazine and on our Facebook page each Thursday.

If you have a community event you would like to see spotlighted, send your submissions to us by email at [Admin@ceci.coop](mailto:Admin@ceci.coop) or by mail to Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc.—Community Spotlight, PO Box 517, Flora, IL 62339

## Safety Tip

Always use a spotter when there is potential for equipment to encroach overhead power lines. A spotter's perspective provides a much broader vantage point than the view from a cab. If your equipment brushes or contacts a power line or pole, stay in the cab and call 9-1-1.

  
Safe  
Electricity.org®

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

July 28, 2025

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 7 p.m. on Monday, July 28, 2025.

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 Bill Croy, 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.

**HEARD**, the Manager's Report on Safety including:

- The Monthly Safety Report;
- Monday Morning Safety meeting held July 28, 2025.

**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 CRC Report from the Board.

**APPROVED**, the July write-offs of four accounts totaling \$969.50.

At 7:05 p.m. approved going into executive session.

At 7:10 p.m. approved exiting executive session and returning to the regular meeting.

**APPROVED**, a raise for the attorney and will review compensation moving forward at the same time as the Director per diem.

**REVIEWED** and **APPROVED**, policy revision to Policies 300-1, 300-2 and 300-9, and policy reviews to Policies 300-3, 300-4, 300-5, 300-6, 300-7 and 300-8.

**REVIEWED**, Award for No Loss Time from Federated.

**UPDATED**, on NRECA issues.

**WERE INFORMED**, there is no increase to dues.

**HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC.

**HEARD**, a report by Kevin Logan regarding the AIEC, but there was no board meeting for the month.

**DISCUSSED**, upcoming Board Training and Events including:

- AIEC Annual Meeting;
- NRECA Region 5 Meeting.

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

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in June 2025;
- June 2025 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- June 2025 Form 7;
- June 2025 Balance Sheet.

**REVIEWED**, the Cybersecurity Report.

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

■ Employee Continuing Education;

■ New Employee;

■ Rate Discussion;

■ Flora Clay County ESDA Request;

■ Operation Report;

■ Communications Report;

■ Upcoming meetings.

**DISCUSSED** and **APPROVED**, Continuing Education classes for employees per our policy.

**WERE INFORMED**, the hiring of Andrew Milligan in the warehouse as a new employee.

**DISCUSSED**, CFC cost-of-service study and the need to increase revenue.

**APPROVED**, increasing rates on Rate 5, 11, 12 and 31, increasing the facility charge \$3.00 per customer and passing onto the customer ½ of the PCA costs, per the recommendation of the cost-of-service study.

**REVIEWED**, the request from Clay County ESDA for a credit to the bill. More information needs to be provided.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**APPROVED**, the bid to dehydrate the transformer.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on July 28, 2025 at 7 p.m., Aug. 25, 2025 at 7 p.m., and Sept. 22, 2025 at 7 p.m. and the annual meeting Aug. 21, 2025 at 5 p.m. Will review schedules for November meeting on Nov. 21 or Nov. 24 at 3:30 p.m.

**REVIEWED**, thank you notes:

- From SIPC together with a Resolution commending speakers at the Hearing including Kevin Logan; 11160-001
- From Haven Cash.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 9:22 p.m.