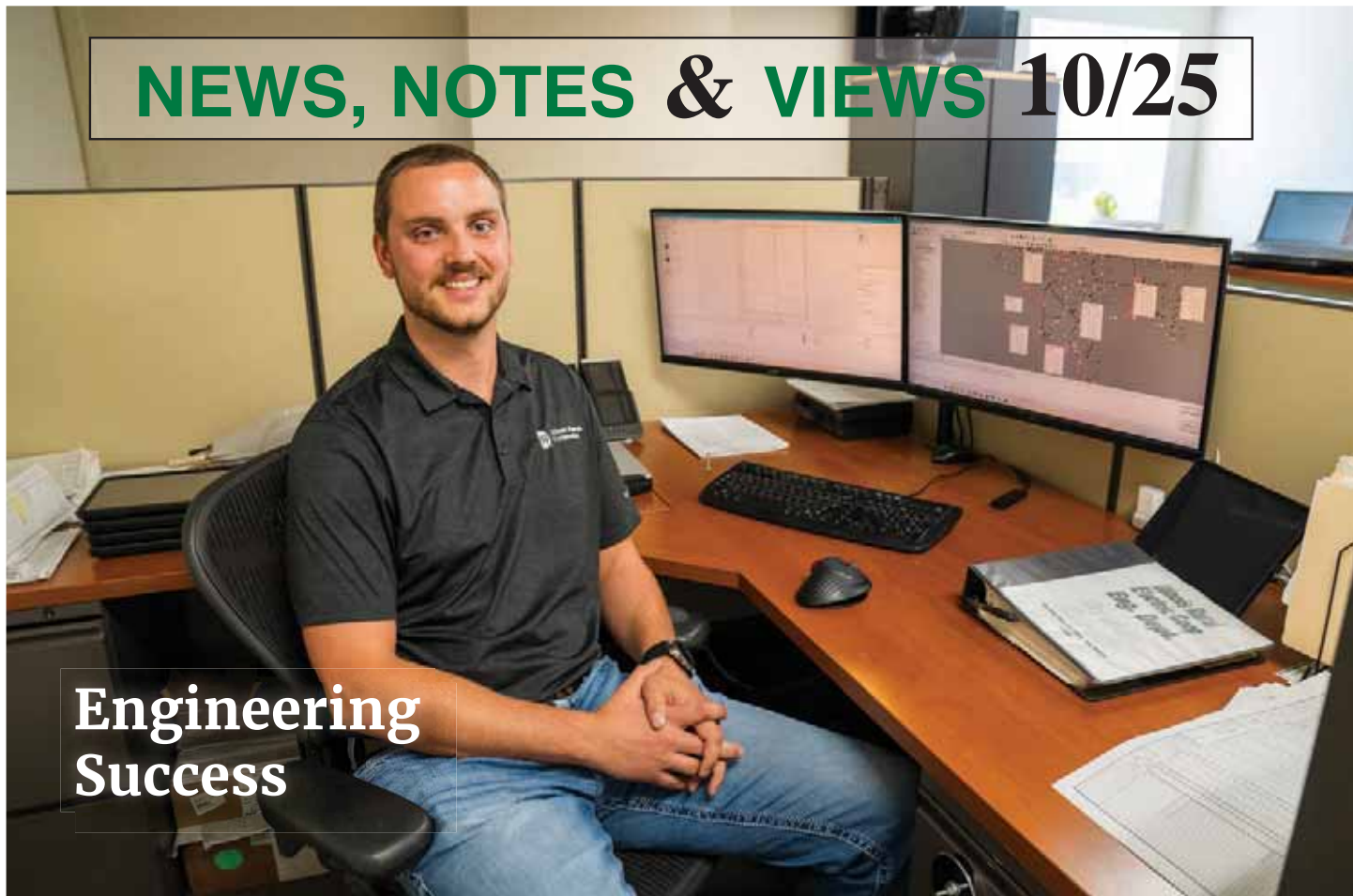


NEWS, NOTES & VIEWS 10/25



Engineering Success

Manager of Engineering Joe Baalman

Illinois Electric Cooperative is proud to announce that Joe Baalman has officially earned his Professional Engineer (PE) license. This designation marks a significant milestone in his career and will be beneficial to the co-op. With the passing of the PE exam, Joe has earned a new title of Manager of Engineering.

After graduating from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 2019 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Joe set his sights on becoming a licensed PE. The process requires not only a degree, but also passing two national exams, gaining four years of professional experience, and receiving references from fellow licensed engineers.



Illinois Electric Cooperative

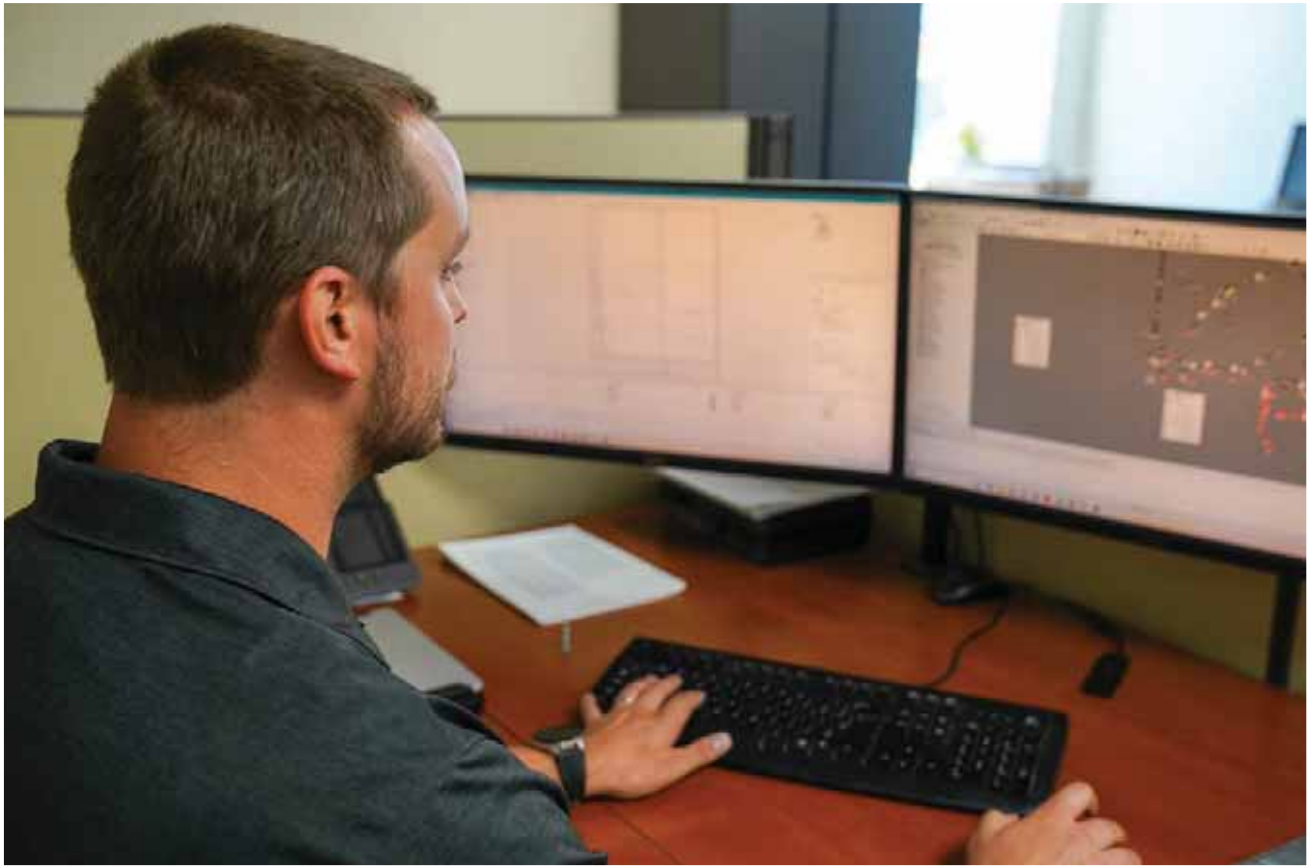
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The final step was the Principles and Practice of Engineering exam, an eight-hour test covering 80 questions. For the version of the exam Joe took, only 61% of first-time candidates pass the exam, and preparation is demanding. "The hardest part wasn't the test itself but the preparation," he explained. "Because my degree is in mechanical engineering, I had to study extra hard for the Electrical Power exam. I studied at least one hour each weekday and several hours on weekends for nearly five months." To maintain a PE license, Joe must complete 30 hours of continuing education every two years.

For the co-op, having a licensed engineer on staff is a major benefit. Many of our projects are funded through the USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which requires certain documents and plans to be certified by a licensed professional. With his new credentials, Joe can now sign off on these projects, taking

professional responsibility to ensure they meet all codes and standards.

It also means more time out in the field. "I'm stuck in the office most of the time, but inspecting new construction will allow me to get out into the field more often, which I'm looking forward to," Joe shared.

Achievements like this don't happen alone. Joe credits his wife, Dana, for helping him through the long process of studying and preparation. "I would not have made it through without her supporting and encouraging me along the way."

Everyone at the co-op would like to congratulate Joe on this major achievement. His PE license is a testament to his hard work and dedication!



COFFEE WITH THE CO-OP



Fiber Staking Engineer Aaron Rodhouse, Serviceman Joe Alexander, and member Ron Albrecht at Brantzel's in White Hall for Coffee with the Co-op.

Coffee with the Co-op was started last year as another avenue to meet with our members. There is no presentation as it's just us covering the cost of a coffee and being there to answer any questions a member may have. We have held these all around our service territory. To see when and where our next Coffee with the Co-op is, follow us on Facebook or check the back of your bill.



facebook.com/illinoiselectric



Ryan Little with his wife Megan and their four children Jackson, Emerson, Hudson, and Ella.

Employee Spotlight

Ryan Little

Manager of Operations

About the Employee

Ryan Little, a Winchester native, has been with Illinois Electric Cooperative since 2014 and currently serves as Manager of Operations. He and his wife, Megan, and their four children: Jackson (14), Emerson (14), Hudson (12), and Ella (10), reside just outside of Winchester.

Ryan's favorite part of his role is rooted in the cooperative difference: focusing on reliability and service for members over profits. With a large service area and relatively few members per mile of line, he embraces the challenge of delivering dependable electricity while keeping costs down.

Outside of work, Ryan can most often be found coaching his kids' teams or spending time with family. And if he had any extra free time, you'd likely find him out working on the family farm.



Illinois Electric Cooperative earns this award based on data modeled by the ACSI® in 2024. Award criteria are determined by the ACSI based on customers rating their satisfaction with Illinois Electric Cooperative in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org/badges. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.