

# 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

### Happy New Year!

As we turn the calendar to 2026, we're excited to embrace a year filled with potential and new possibilities. At Clay Electric Co-operative, we're always looking for ways to improve the quality of services we provide. Over the past several years, we've focused on strengthening our infrastructure, and we've seen great results. The number and duration of outages have trended down as our work on the system has continued. **14838-001**

Looking ahead, our team is eager to continue its diligent work to maintain our system and further increase reliability. If you have big plans in the works for 2026, now is the time to reach out and let us know! We're here to help you plan ahead for projects that may impact your energy needs. From new home builds to solar panel installations or equipment upgrades that require expanded capacity, early communication ensures we can assist in securing the materials and services you'll need. The more notice you can provide us with, the better prepared we'll be to assist.

Your cooperative is working continually with our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), on ways to put power over their bills in the hands of our members. We are working on new programs that will utilize our recent technological improvements to save our members money. Continue to look here in Illinois Country Living Magazine and on our website and social media for more information as it becomes available.

Finally, don't forget to look for your member number in the center section of this magazine. Each month, three member numbers are hidden within the pages of Clay Electric News. If you find yours and give us a call, you'll win a \$5 discount on your next bill!



Matt Conklin  
CEO

## Preparing for Storm Season?

## DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



Snowbrush  
Shovel  
Windshield washer fluid  
Cat litter for traction



Warm clothing  
Blankets  
Drinking water  
Nonperishable foods



Properly inflated spare tire  
Wheel wrench & tripod jack  
Jumper cables  
Fire extinguisher



Reflective triangles  
Reflective vest  
Brightly colored cloth  
(to tie on side mirror)



First-aid kit  
Flashlight and batteries  
Compass  
Car charger for cell phone

 Safe Electricity.org®

Source: NSC

# Winter safety for outdoor workers

## How to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia this winter

When the temperature drops, so does your body's ability to stay safe. Outdoor workers — and those who enjoy outdoor sports like hunting, fishing or hiking — face added risks and must take extra steps to guard against frostbite and hypothermia.

Follow these tips and have a plan to stay safe when working outdoors:

- **Watch the weather.** Monitor the temperature and wind chill. Take frequent breaks indoors to help prevent cold stress.
- **Stay warm and dry.** Dress in loose, warm layers. Wear a moisture-wicking base, an insulating mid-layer and a protective outer layer (flame-resistant/arc-rated (FR/AR-rated) if required for your work). Use warm socks and waterproof boots. Remove any wet clothing as quickly as possible.
- **Protect your head and face.** Use a hat, hood or hard-hat liner. When required for your job, choose FR/AR-rated liners or balaclavas. Avoid bulky hats or loose scarves.
- **Keep your hands safe.** Wear insulated gloves or mittens to guard against frostbite. If working with electricity, always use voltage-rated protective gloves with approved liners — never substitute regular winter gloves in place of necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **Fuel your body.** Drink warm fluids, stay hydrated and eat high-energy foods.
- **Know the warning signs.** Watch for frostbite (numbness, skin color changes) and

hypothermia (shivering, confusion, slurred speech).

- **Be prepared on the road.** Keep a winter emergency kit in your vehicle with blankets, traction aids and extra PPE.

### Recognizing frostbite

Frostbite happens when skin and tissue lose circulation and freeze, commonly affecting fingers, toes, ears and nose. **14227-001**

### Symptoms of frostbite:

- Numbness or tingling in the affected area
- Skin that turns red, white or bluish gray
- Cold, hard or waxy-looking skin
- Stiff muscles and joints

### Treating frostbite:

1. If possible, move indoors to a warm place.
2. Warm the affected area with warm (not hot) water, or place hands under armpits.
3. Avoid rubbing or massaging frostbitten skin, as this may cause further damage.
4. Seek medical attention for severe frostbite or skin with blisters.

### Recognizing hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops dangerously low.

### Symptoms of hypothermia:

- Shivering
- Confusion or slurred speech
- Drowsiness or exhaustion
- Slow, shallow breathing

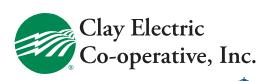
### Treating hypothermia:

1. If possible, move indoors to a warm place.

- 2. Call 911 immediately, especially if the person is unconscious.
- 3. Provide warm fluids, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
- 4. Remove any wet clothing and warm the torso with layers of blankets or clothing.
- 5. Wrap the body and head, leaving the face uncovered.
- 6. If layers are not available, add body heat.

Cold weather brings unique challenges, from icy roads to freezing winds that make outdoor work even more hazardous. Lineworkers and other outdoor professionals face these risks daily to keep essential services running.

When temperatures drop, look out for one another and take steps to stay safe. Prevention matters — limit your time in the elements, wear proper protective clothing, and stay alert. Working smart in the cold helps ensure everyone makes it home safely.



## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Unleashing the Power of OUR Community!

Clay Electric Co-operative'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

or by mail to

Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.—  
Community Spotlight,  
P.O. Box 517, Flora, IL 62839

## 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.



# HEATING SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER

## Simple precautions can help you avoid **fire hazards** and **electrical dangers**

There is nothing like curling up by the fire on a cold winter day. But heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. With a few simple steps, you can prevent most heating fires from happening.



### STAY COZY AND SAFE THIS WINTER:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment like furnaces, radiators, fireplaces, electric or wood stoves and space heaters.
- Maintain a 3-foot kid- and pet-free zone around heating equipment.
- Plug heaters and electric fireplaces directly into wall outlets. Never use extension cords or power strips.
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Unplug heaters when not in use.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Test smoke alarms every month.
- Hire a qualified professional to install or service stationary heating equipment and water heaters according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Have your heating system, vents and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.



### SMART TIPS:

- Install and test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to alert you before it's too late.
- Have a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family.

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Nov. 24, 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 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 24, 2025.

Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Neil Gould, Bill Croy, Kevin Logan, Frank Herman, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi, Evan Smith and Josh Schnepper. 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 Richard Rudolphi 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 Nov. 17, 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.

**APPROVED**, the SIPC waiver as presented.

**REVIEWED** and **APPROVED**, policy reviews to 1000-1, 1000-3, 1000-4, 1000-15, 1000-16, 1000-41 and 1000-45.

**DISCUSSED**, CFC Quarterly Loan Payment.

**DISCUSSED**, CRC Line of Credit rollover.

**UPDATED**, on Federated issues.

**UPDATED**, on NRECA issues.

**HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC and **REVIEWED** the SIPC Member Rate.

**HEARD**, a report by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC meeting.

**REVIEWED**, Events and Training.

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

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

**REVIEWED**, the Cybersecurity Report.

**REVIEWED** and **DISCUSSED**, the 2026 Budget including:

- SIPC Power Cost;
- Capital Credits;
- Advertising and Donations;
- Capital Items;
- Construction Work Plan Projects;
- 2026 Budget.

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

- Request for Use of Tower;
- EDSA request for bill credit;
- Illinois legislative update;
- Non-union Insurance Discussion;
- Apex Solar farm update;
- LWG letter of engagement;
- Operations Report;

- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**DISCUSSED** and **APPROVED**, Clay County 911/Sheriff Department's use of the Tower.

**DISCUSSED**, ESDA's request for bill credit for volunteers.

**DISCUSSED**, the Illinois Legislative update.

**DISCUSSED**, Non-union insurance.

**HEARD**, an update regarding a new solar farm.

**UPDATED**, on LWG letter of engagement.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on Dec. 17, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. with the Christmas party to follow, Jan. 26, 2026 at 3:30 p.m., Feb. 23, 2026 at 3:30 p.m., and March 23, 2026 at 3:30 p.m. **10842-001**

**DISCUSSED**, a succession plan for the board.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

## Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

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Office hours:

7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

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