

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

As we look back on 2026 so far, our January and February had several winter events. The most notable was Winter Storm Fern, which affected nearly half the country. Alerts for Fern affected about 230 million people from Texas to New England. With heavy snow, ice accumulations and freezing temperatures, Fern and its aftermath left many without power and many homes with far higher monthly usage than usual. It was an unpleasant mix of high bills and outages. **12878-001**

This event highlighted the critical role of our after-hours call center partner, the Cooperative Response Center (CRC). CRC provides 24/7 live call handling, outage reporting, dispatch support and other after-hours services for Clay Electric and many others nationwide. They have been an excellent partner to provide our members a way to contact us when the office is closed, but during high-volume periods like the nation-spanning winter storms we just experienced earlier this year, CRC's resources can be stretched thin. When widespread winter emergencies hit simultaneously across vast regions, call volumes can skyrocket as members report outages, seek updates or need assistance from dozens of states simultaneously. CRC's setup is designed for exactly these scenarios; their agents and automated tools work hard to efficiently handle the heavy volumes. Still, in exceptional circumstances, delays can happen.

To help ensure your information is quickly taken and understood when speaking with a CRC representative, we encourage our members to reference their most recent bill and have their account number, meter number

and map number available. All are printed at the top of your monthly bills. You can reference the high-lighted example here in the magazine. This information is also available, along with bill pay options and other features, on our app and website. You can visit our website at www.ceci.coop or download the app from your devices app store by searching for "Clay ECI" and downloading the utility with our logo.



As March arrives and we transition toward spring, let's reflect on the resilience shown during that challenging event. Our linemen, staff and partners like CRC worked tirelessly around the clock, often in harsh conditions, to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. Outages from such widespread storms are never easy, but your patience, preparedness and understanding during those days



Matt Conklin
CEO

made a real difference. We're proud of how our cooperative community came together.

This month, our forestry crew will still be working on the Iola substation's south feeder. They'll be clearing rights-of-way of dangerous trees to improve reliability. We expect them to be working generally in the area south of Iola, north of Hickory Hill Lane, east of Farina, and west of U.S. Route 45. Their work area will be highlighted on the map included in this section.

Don't forget to search for your member number in the center section of this magazine. Three lucky numbers are hidden each month in Clay Electric News — if yours is there and you call us, you'll earn a \$5 credit on your next bill!



Map data ©2026 Google

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.



Spring into Tax Day with energy-efficiency tax breaks

It's tax time. Save on energy costs and increase your energy efficiency with these federal tax credits.

Energy-efficient home improvement credit

Upgrade your doors, insulation and windows and get 30% back — up to \$1,200.

Install heat pumps, water heaters or a biomass stove

Save 30% (up to \$2,000) on energy-efficiency upgrades including heat pumps, water heaters, biomass stoves and biomass boilers. For details visit energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits.

Going renewable

Claim up to 30% back on the cost of clean energy installations including solar, wind, geothermal and battery storage, with no annual

or lifetime dollar limit (except for fuel cell property) through Dec. 31, 2025. To learn more visit energystar.gov, or to find information about specific technologies visit energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/solar-energy-systems, energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/geothermal-heat-pumps, and energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/battery-storage-technology. **18001-111**

Home energy rebates

These rebates help reduce the cost of energy-saving upgrades for both single-family and multi-family homes. You can use these discounts for things like Energy STAR appliances, insulation and more. Check the Energy STAR's Rebate Finder tool to start saving: energystar.gov/rebate-finder.



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.



After a Flood: Electrical Safety First

Water and electricity are a deadly mix. If your home or basement has flooded, take these precautions before using any electrical equipment.

1. Stay out until it's safe

- Do not enter a flooded area until power has been disconnected by your utility or a licensed electrician.
- Never enter water that could be in contact with electrical outlets or cords.
- When in doubt, have your utility or an electrician confirm it's safe before restoring electricity. Restoring power too soon can cause fires, shocks or further damage.

2. Get a professional inspection

- Have a licensed electrician inspect your wiring, outlets and service panel before restoring power.
- Replace or check appliances, furnaces and water heaters that have been submerged, even if they appear fine — internal components may be corroded, damaged and unsafe.
- Have water-damaged devices examined by a qualified electrician. Don't attempt to dry out and reuse electronics, extension cords or appliances that have been wet. They may need to be repaired or replaced.

3. Use caution with generators

- Run portable generators outdoors only, away from windows, doorways and vents.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator, never into a wall outlet.

Remember: "Dry" doesn't mean safe

Even if items look dry, hidden corrosion can make them dangerous. Always replace or have electrical devices inspected before use.

Learn more at:



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers and cyber criminals look for weak points to exploit before software companies can fix them. Update software programs on your computer, tablet and mobile phone as soon as possible when a newer version becomes available. Software updates often contain critical patches and protections against security threats. Turn on automatic updates to automatically update your security software, internet browser, operating system and mobile apps.

Source: consumer.ftc.org



Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Jan. 26, 2026

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, Jan. 26, 2026. Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Neil Gould, Bill Croy, Kevin Logan, Frank Herman, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi, Evan Smith and Josh Schnepfer. Also present was Matt Conklin, CEO. Tyra Cycholl, Attorney for the Board, was present via conference call. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided, and Neil Gould acted as secretary thereof.

The invocation was given by Matt Conklin 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 Jan. 19, 2026.

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 retirement of capital credits for Deceased Estates.

REVIEWED and **APPROVED**, IRS Mileage and Board Meal Per Diem. **14460-001**

REVIEWED and **APPROVED**, policy reviews to 800-12, 800-13, 800-14, 800-15, 800-16, 800-17, 800-18, 800-19 and 800-20.

UPDATED, on Federated issues including patronage check, safety report and work comp mod.

UPDATED, on Meridian Patronage Check.

HEARD, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC and Voting Delegates.

HEARD, a report by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC.

REVIEWED, Events and Training.

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

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

REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report.

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

- Selling the Digger Truck;
- 2026 Board Reelections;
- Employee Safety Award;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

DISCUSSED, selling the Digger Truck.

REVIEWED, timeline for petitions for reelection of Directors.

DISCUSSED and **APPROVED**, employee safety acknowledgment gift.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report.

REVIEWED, the Communications Report.

WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on Feb. 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., March 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., April 27, 2026, at either 3:30 p.m. or 7 p.m. and May 26, 2026, at 7 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

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