

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

At Clay Electric's annual meeting in August of last year, I spoke to you briefly about our goal to do a better job of communicating with you on the platform in which you feel most comfortable. Additionally, I told you about some upcoming initiatives designed to decrease hold times, and prevent busy signals when you call to report an outage.

I am happy to say we now have made a change that should accomplish that goal.

Previously, when you called into your cooperative, you were calling directly into our local office and then the line would be transferred to our call center if your call wasn't picked up. That was certainly better than just getting dead air. The problem with that method was it didn't account for the number of physical lines we had available. We are a small cooperative, so we only have three incoming lines, with two people here locally to answer them.

Now imagine if an entire substation were to lose power because of a transmission level failure. Our power supplier is located south of Marion and has to contract with Ameren to use a portion of its transmission lines to get to us. So, if there is a transmission outage, then we will also have distribution outages.

That means you won't have power at home, even though there isn't



anything wrong with our local system. It also means that many more people will not have power in their homes either.

It's at that point you would typically call in to report the outage. And, that's exactly what you should do! It alerts us to a problem so we can investigate and get to work fixing it. Unfortunately, all of those other people are trying to call in as well. Remember though, we only had three physical lines. Everything else had to ring here locally, and then be transferred to the call center. If all three lines are busy, then the transfer couldn't happen.

Well, now we have a solution. Because our **1-800-582-9012** phone number can be managed at a different location, our after-hours call center will now manage the number.

So, what exactly does that mean?

When you call the **1-800-582-9012** number now, your call will first try to ring here at the office like

before. However, it's no longer dependent upon our physical lines. Instead, the call center's lines are handling the routing of your call. So, if we don't pick up because our two staff members are busy, (Thank you Ginger and Karen!) then you won't get a busy signal or dead air. Instead, one of the call center employees will answer and help you with the call. That way, you can get a report in and we

will get the message.

Of course, no system is perfect and we are bound to have a few flaws we need to work out. I am hopeful this will provide some relief to those of you who have let us know there was a problem. We never forget that our job is to serve you, the member, and this change reflects that goal.

Thank you for being patient with us while we get the system up and working. We have a few more modernizations coming your way soon as well. I will get the information to you as soon as things are up and going!

Until next time, stay safe out there.



Ed VanHoose
Manager

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Regular meeting December 21, 2015

Trustees present were: Frank Czyzewski, Bill Croy, Neil Gould, Frank Herman, Kevin Logan, Bob Pierson, Richard Rudolphi, Danny Schnepfer and Greg Smith. Also present were Executive Vice President/General Manager Ed VanHoose, and Cooperative Attorney Melanie Pearce. The invocation was given by Richard Rudolphi.

Approved the agenda as presented by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose.

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held November 22, 2015.

Accepted 14 new members for service.

Canceled 16 members no longer receiving service.

Reviewed and Approved work orders in the amount of \$169,720.16 for the month of November 2015.

Accepted the disbursement list for the month of November, 2015.

Appointed Frank Czyzewski as Voting Delegate and Richard Rudolphi as Alternate for NRECA.

Appointed Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as Voting Delegate for NRTC.

Appointed Frank Herman as Voting Delegate and Bob Pierson as Alternate for CFC.

Appointed Danny Schnepfer as Voting Delegate and Richard Rudolphi as Alternate for Federated.

Reviewed notes from NRECA regarding legislative proposals, and CEO Succession Planning.

Heard a report by Trustee Logan, as to the recent AIEC Meeting, specifically financials, succession planning in management for several Cooperatives, NRECA International Program, the status of the Illinois Budget impasse, and the upcoming AIEC Meeting.

Approved NRECA training for Luke Johnson.

Informed of information of Board Members needed by AIEC for publication in the AIEC Directory.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to grant program and contractors for Agricultural Energy Audits.

Heard a report by Trustee Herman concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting specifically financial information, Generation and Energy Resources reports, NERC compliance efforts, and possible billing changes.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to an anticipated rate study, as to give more insight as to peak issue.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to various roof repair estimates with various proposed methodologies of repair.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the following;

Reviewed Form 7/Operations Report.

Reviewed cash flow report.

Reviewed SIPC power bill.

Reviewed power factor.

Reviewed power cost adder.

November 2015 Financial Trending Analysis.

Federated Capital Retirement Statement

Approved entering into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Approved entering into Open Session.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to contact by Jesse James as to building of an electric system for development of James subdivision.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the recent quarterly meeting of the CECI Safety Committee.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose concerning new Procurement Standards instituted by FEMA.

Reviewed Policy 100-10 Board of Trustee's and Employee's Business ethics. Discussed revising separate policies, one for Trustees, and one for Employees, as the consequences for violations are different. Gen. Mgr. VanHoose will present revised proposed drafts of said policies at the next Regular Meeting.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the following;

Informed of new overtime rules, effective in 2017, for salaried employees

Reviewed "2016 Cooperative Estimated Payroll Premium Rates" – Federated Worker's Compensation Modification.

Discussed formal approval for AIEC to grant Access to Federated of Loss History; so Approved.

Informed of CECI's employee contribution of presents to various foster kids who did not receive from Angel Tree or Shop With A Cop.

Discussed CECI Christmas Party. Thereafter **Approved** Managers report as presented.


Approved one Purchase Power Agreement in the form as presented.

Approved the retirement of Capital Credits to the estates of two deceased Members, pursuant to Cooperative Policy.

Reviewed photo of Trustee Croy in local news, 2015 Clay County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Adjournment.

**Clay Electric
Co-operative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

7784 Old Hwy. 50,
P.O. Box 517,
Flora, Illinois 62839
618-662-2171
800-582-9012

Office hours:
7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

www.ceci.coop

www.facebook.com/ceci.coop



The importance of member engagement

By Adam Schwartz

In 2012, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the premier trade association representing approximately 900 electric cooperatives in 47 states, released a report entitled, “The Electric Cooperative Purpose - A Compass for the 21st Century.” The findings of the blue ribbon task force comprised of a dozen co-op leaders from across the country were that an electric cooperative’s purpose is to, “Power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.”

Clay Electric Co-operative is a member of NRECA and firmly believes that you, our members, need to be at the heart of everything we do. We are proud of the fact that we are different from investor-owned utilities like Ameren, where the primary purpose is to generate profit

for their stockholders. Many of those stockholders don’t live in the communities served by the utility. While Clay Electric Co-operative must generate enough revenue to cover our costs, profit is not our primary motive. Serving you and your neighbors is our number one priority.

As the Electric Cooperative Purpose report noted, “Our story is about ordinary people that banded together to improve the quality of life by providing electricity to our community when no one else would do it.” But that was 72 years ago. As we look to the future, we once again need your active participation in determining the future of our co-op.

Cooperatives enjoy the support of people from all walks of life. We operate in every type of business from agriculture, housing, finance, health care, technology,

small business, food and many more. Co-ops can be found in the most rural to the most urban areas.

Clay Electric welcomes your input on what we can do to ensure we are meeting your needs.

One thing you can absolutely count on from your locally owned electric co-op: we will never be moving to Mexico or China like you hear of so many other companies doing. We will always be local – right here and ready to serve our members.

Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop

Avoid a bad decision when your water heater breaks

By Paul Wesslund

Save money and help the environment with a replacement energy efficient electric heater!

If you want to save money on your energy bills and reduce greenhouse gas – and other emissions – to help the environment, a good step would be to have a replacement plan for your water heater when it fails.

That helpful tip comes from an expert who’s just published research showing that the increased use of electric appliances would improve energy efficiency at home and for the nation.

Keith Dennis is the senior principal of end-use solutions and standards at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). His article, published in the November issue of *The Electricity Journal*, shows that for decades we’ve been using assumptions and measurements for energy efficiency that



are no longer accurate. It explains that electric water heaters are a much better choice than natural gas – both for environmental impact, as well as home energy savings. And that’s important. Water heating accounts for approximately 15 percent of your home’s energy use.

The problem is, replacing a water heater is often a panic decision—water heaters seem to break at the worst time, and you’re more likely to be thinking about the guests coming to visit the next day than the best energy efficient decision.

“Most people replace their water heater in an emergency situation,” Dennis says.

The bottom line: Before your water heater quits or begins to leak, have a plan on replacing it with an energy efficient electric water heater. Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

How to clean refrigerator coils

...and why it matters!

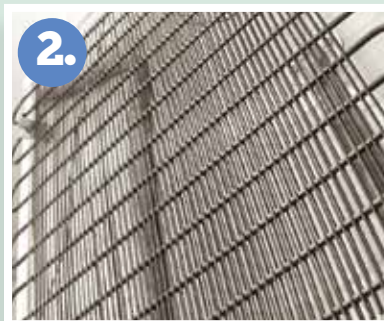
Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home. It requires only minimal maintenance – just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat. If the coils are covered with dust, gunk or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly and will

not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grimy coating. This can be an expensive problem. The bottom line? A minor investment in time once a year can save you cold cash down the line.

Materials you will need: Vacuum cleaner with hose, damp cloth



1. Locate the refrigerator's coil, a grid-like structure, or fan that will likely have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't find them in the front or back, this may be the case with your fridge.



2. If the coil is in the back, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet when possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or icemaker to allow enough room to work.



3. Gently vacuum and clean the coil. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt wherever you see it. If you have pulled the fridge out, vacuum and wipe down the sides and back of the fridge and the floor.



4. Once the floor is dry, plug in the refrigerator and rearrange the power cord and supply lines so they don't get a kink or stuck under the weight of the refrigerator. Slide the refrigerator back into place. Be sure to replace the toe kick panel if this was removed.

TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM



PROVIDING POWER FOR 50,461 OWNERS. AND COUNTLESS FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Young or old, count on your Touchstone Energy cooperative for a local take on our region's renewable energy options. Learn more at TouchstoneEnergy.com.

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.



Time to change the clocks

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 13. Clocks are set forward by one hour.

