

## Cooperatives drive democracy

By Adam Schwartz

It has often been said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. It is easy to take our right to vote for granted, maybe because there are so many opportunities to exercise that right. There are national, state and local elections for political offices. Then there are elections for social or other civic organizations. If you own stock, you are asked to vote in those elections. So it is understandable to see how “election fatigue” can take hold.

As we head into the final stage of what has been a divisive national election, it is a good time to remember that elections don't have to be about name calling and bitterness. Co-ops can and do play a role in cultivating a civil society where people can practice democracy at the hyper local level. As a member of Clay Electric Co-operative, you have the right to run for the board of directors. Even if you choose not to have that level of participation, you should feel empowered to reach out to current board members and candidates.

The beauty of belonging to a co-op is every member has a voice, but you must use that voice if you want to be heard on the issues that matter to you. In their document, “A Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade,” the International Cooperative Alliance, a global organization made up of co-ops from over 100 countries, identified member participation as one of the



(L – R) Frank Czyzewski, President; Greg Smith, Secretary-Treasurer; Bob Pierson, Director; Ed VanHoose, Executive Vice President/General Manager

five key ingredients for a co-op to be successful.

Voting and being actively involved in the affairs of the co-op are key ways in which members can participate. Take the time to get to know candidates running for CECI's board. Seek out ways that you can help spread the word about the good work your co-op is doing.

The cooperative business model is a great one, it fosters engagement and creates strong communities. Over 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized this value when he said, “The Cooperative is the best plan of organization. Under this plan, every business is [governed by a board],

every person has one vote and only one vote. Everyone gets profits based on their use of the co-op. It develops individual responsibility and has a moral as well as a financial value.”

Those words are truer today than ever before. Let your voice be heard, and take the time to participate in all the elections.

*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](mailto:aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop)*

# Don't Miss...

# APPLEKNOCKER 2016

Sat., Sept. 24th 9:45 am to 4 pm  
New Flora Elementary School  
445 Emory Street

8:15 am Kids' 100 Yd Dashes;  
8:30 am Annual FAF 5K & 1 Mile Run



Shooting Stars  
FHS Band

Power & Grace Tumblers

Chris Clark Bicycle Stunt Show  
<http://www.elsenpeterproductions.com/talent/chris-clark-bicycle-stunt-show.html>

HotShots Performing  
Jump Rope Teams  
<https://www.hotshotstn.org/>

Kahok Dancers  
Double Take Drumline  
DAS\*zle Dance & Tumble

New Run Course Chip Timing  
Run & Dashes Recognitions

Inflatables — 10 & Under  
One Man Band  
Stilt Walker / Mime  
Balloon Art

Boy Scout Troop #282  
Rope Bridge  
Bench Worx Wood Craft Making

Clay Electric Pole Climbing  
Demo  
Horse Back Riding

Health & Safety Displays  
FHS FCCLA Apple Dumplings



## A Full Day Of Family Fun And Learning!

# Electrical safety warning for Pokémon Go players

Clay Electric Co-operative and other utilities are reminding players of Pokémon Go to stay away from electric substations, power plants and other electric equipment. The new smartphone-based augmented reality game sends players to real world places to “catch” Pokémon.

Pokémon turn up everywhere—from grocery stores to hospitals. But they’re also appearing at electric substations, drawing players into dangerous situations.

“Electric utilities cannot control where the Pokémon appear, and players should make sure they catch



their Pokémon from a safe distance,” said Ed VanHoose Exec. V.P./Gen. Mgr. of Clay Electric Co-operative. “Any game or activity that distracts

people from the possible dangers around them and potentially brings them in proximity to our electric equipment and lines is a major concern for all us.”

Remember these important electrical safety tips from Clay Electric as you try to #CatchEmAll:

- Never touch electric equipment, including transformers and power lines.
- Never touch a downed power line. Assume all lines are energized and dangerous.
- Never climb utility poles.
- Never enter an electric substation.

## Electrical safety lessons for kids

By Meghaan Evans

We all know electricity plays a major role in our everyday lives, and it is a powerful resource that should be respected. Unfortunately, our children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. At Clay Electric Co-operative we encourage you to share electrical safety tips and lessons with your little ones as often as possible. We also understand their attention spans run short, so here are a few creative ways to get them involved.

Depending on the age of your child, consider designating an “electronics deputy.” The deputy should be responsible for pointing out electronics in your home that are not in use and keeping appliances safe from liquids. Reward your deputy for pointing out overloaded outlets or other potentially dangerous situations.

Emphasize the importance of fire prevention with your children, and create a family fire drill plan as an extra precaution. Incentivize your children by rewarding those who followed the plan and made it *safely* out of the home.

While it is fun and engaging to turn safety into a game, it is important to ensure your children understand the risks they are facing if they do not practice electrical safety.

One of the most important safety tips you can give your kids is to avoid any downed power lines. In fact, it is best to avoid power lines, transformers and substations in general. A downed power line can still be energized, and it can also energize other objects, including fences and trees. Make sure your kids understand the potential dangers of coming in contact with a downed power line or low hanging wire.

And, if they encounter a downed power line, ask them to tell you or another adult to call Clay Electric.

Here are a few other safety tips you can share with your kids:

- Never put metal objects in outlets or appliances.
- Do not overcrowd electrical outlets.
- Never mix water and electricity.

No matter how you choose to get your kids interested in staying safe around electricity, Clay Electric is here to help. To learn more about electrical safety, visit [www.ceci.coop](http://www.ceci.coop), or [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.*

**We would like to THANK all of you that took the time to attend your recent Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting of Members of Clay Electric Cooperative was held on August 25th, 2016 at the beautiful facility of Oil Belt Christian Service Camp.**

# Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

## Regular meeting June 27, 2016

**T**rustees 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, Cooperative Attorney Melanie Pearce, Member Services Director Doug Hockman, Line Clearance Foreman Eric Moyer, and Youth Tour Participant Sam Larch. The invocation was given by Frank Czyzewski.

**Approved** the agenda as presented and amended by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose.

**Heard** a presentation by Sam Larch, concerning the recent Youth Tour sponsored by the AIEC and Clay Electric Cooperative.

**Heard** a report by Line Clearance Foreman Eric Moyer, who recently attended AIEC training that covered tree climbing and roping techniques, as well as tree clearing and safety issues.

**Approved** the minutes of the regular meeting held May 23, 2016 as amended, to reflect Trustee Herman as present and Trustee Smith as

absent.

**Accepted** 12 new members for service.

**Canceled** 3 members no longer receiving service.

**Approved** a list of work orders in the amount of \$35,389.95.

**Approved** the disbursement list for May, 2016.

**Appointed** Kevin Logan as AIEC Director, and Richard Rudolphi as Alternate Director.

**Approved** Billing invoice submitted by Attorney Pearce.

**Approved** Policies 1000-1, 1000-2, 1000-3, 1000-4, 1000-6, 1000-13, 1000-15, 1000-16, 1000-21, 1000-22, 1000-31, and 1000-32 as revised to incorporate rate changes which had previously been approved at prior meeting.

**Reviewed** NRECA memo informing of CEO transition and other updates and activities involving the Association.

**Heard** a report from Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to recent CFC Forum that he attended.

**Reviewed** SIPC Report by CEO Don Gulley.

**Heard** a report from Trustee Logan as to the recent AIEC Meeting including the Executive Summary.

**Heard** a report by Trustee Herman concerning the recent SIPC Board meeting specifically financial information, and an update as to Prairie State. **Heard** a report by Trustee Smith as to his committee discussing inventory as to fuels. **Heard** a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the existence and impact of Multi-value projects, which CEO Don Gulley will address with FERC.

**Heard** a financial report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to the following: **Reviewed** Form 7/Operations Report

**Reviewed** May cash flow report.

**Reviewed** SIPC May power bill.

**Reviewed** May power factor.

**Reviewed** May power cost adder.

**Reviewed** US Bank May Credit

Card statements.

**Reviewed** Financial Trend Analysis for May.

**Heard** Managers report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as follows:

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

**Approved** entering into Open Session.

**Heard** a safety report and Reviewed Federated Safety Inspection submitted by Kevin Inman.

**Heard** a report on recent Safety Trainings including Forklift Training, Flagger Training, Safety Committee Meeting, Rubber Glove Training, weekly Monday Morning Safety Meetings, and attendance record for the CECI Training and Safety Meeting held June 20, 2016.

**Heard** a report as to unpaid State of Illinois accounts totaling \$2,823.06.

**Reviewed** CRC Utilization report addressing member calls received and answered.

**Heard** a report as to a recent solar ad in Illinois Country Living (ICL) magazine.

**Informed** a Cyber Security Policy is now in effect with Federated Rural Electric Insurance.

**Informed** of a recent Board Member election policy at a neighboring Cooperative.

**Informed** of a contact for Farm Energy Audits.

**Informed** of an upcoming Chamber of Commerce meet and greet to be held at CECI headquarters.

Thereafter said Managers Report was **Approved**.

**Reviewed** thank you notes from Youth Tour Participants Justice Robey, Sam Larch, and Chyanne Plumb.

**Discussed** possible Christmas Party locations.

**Adjournment.**

## Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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