

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

Our history, our future

One of my favorite quotes has always been, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Yet, sometimes remembering our history with the goal of repeating it can actually be a good thing. As the nation’s 30,000 cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month this October, it is a great time to look back with an eye toward lessons learned, so we can better plan for the future.

Take the history of your electric co-op. Clay Electric Co-operative was founded when neighbors worked together to bring electricity to our rural community. Big, investor-owned power companies thought rural America couldn’t generate enough profit, so they only built electric services for larger cities. Back then, there were frequent meetings among neighbors to discuss the formation of the cooperative. Once established,

annual meetings were the “must attend” event of the year. The co-op – on behalf of the member-owners – committed to provide the community with electricity.

Fast forward to today – and tomorrow. Clay Electric Co-operative currently serves more than 2,500 members. Just recently, your board has reinstated the capital credits return program, and this year we are scheduled to return a little over \$172,000.

We understand the spirit that helped create this co-op must be continually nurtured. While times and technology will continue to change, our commitment to you will not.

Although we started out to provide electricity, our impact (with your support) has grown.

As we continue to look toward the future, you can be confident Clay Electric, your cooperative, will commit



Ed VanHoose
Manager

to explore new ways to help our members and our community. Right now, we are exploring opportunities for community involvement at the local level with donations to many civic organizations where employee volunteers help make a difference every day. In addition, we are active on both the state and federal levels, advocating for you here in rural southern Illinois.

Over the years, as we’ve listened to you and your fellow co-op member-owners, we know that we should keep pace as technology and consumer tastes evolve. As always, we welcome your insights, suggestions, and participation as we move forward, continually building on our founding cooperative principles.

Considering a renewable energy source?

Call us first!

Interest in “green” energy is alive and well, even in our area. We have seen a few solar array systems installed on the Clay Electric Co-operative system. Members are looking for ways to save money on utility bills, and renewable energy systems will continue to grow. If you, as a Clay Electric member, are considering such a system, please contact us first to get the information you need to make your decision.

Since these types of systems have the capability of returning electricity back into the electric grid, there are some major safety considerations to sort out before a system is installed. Most of the time, these systems do not provide an emergency backup of power when Clay Electric has an outage. If you are considering backup power, a standby generator is what you probably need to consider.

Examine the economics to determine whether such



a system will lower your monthly electric costs. We can provide you information on our interconnection policies, as well as answer questions you may have. That way you and your installer will have the information needed as you progress with your system.

For more information on policies and requirements, please contact Doug Hockman at Clay Electric Co-operative at 662-2171.

Clay's 73rd Annual Meeting of Members

Clay Electric Co-operative members held their 73rd Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday, Aug. 24 at the Oil Belt Christian Service Camp in Flora and re-elected three area men to the board of directors. They also had the opportunity to hear from General Manager Ed VanHoose on the organization's financial condition and innovative ways to respond to members' needs.

During his address, VanHoose shared board goals and progress Clay Electric has made in the past year. He explained that "the board is working hard to be progressive while maintaining the safety, reliability and affordability of electric service for all members."

VanHoose reminded members the cooperative retired more than



During Clay Electric Co-operative's 73rd annual meeting, members re-elected three men to the board of directors. Shown left to right with General Manager Ed VanHoose are Richard Rudolphi, Danny Schnepfer and William Croy.

\$200,000 in capital credits last year and plans to retire an additional \$170,000 in November. He also

reported that economic development is a high priority, and the co-op is currently in talks with the local fire district to help it obtain financing for a new fire truck.

"The board and staff of Clay Electric puts a tremendous amount of effort into keeping your cooperative financially stable and reasonably priced," said VanHoose. "Even with increases in wholesale power costs and the need for a new headquarters in the near future, your board has done everything in its power to keep costs under control."

Don Gulley, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) president/CEO, addressed the crowd. SIPC, based at Lake of Egypt, is the generation and transmission provider for Clay Electric. Gulley explained the challenges SIPC continues to face in light of low natural gas prices and the increase in costs to produce the electricity members want. He projected an upcoming 4 percent increase in power supply costs.

During the meeting, three area men were re-elected to the cooperative's board of directors. They are Richard Rudolphi of Noble, Danny Schnepfer of Louisville and William Croy of Clay City.

Heating and Cooling Tips for Manufactured Homes

If you own a manufactured home, take measures to ensure you have an efficient heating and cooling system. You can also make simple improvements that save energy and make your home more comfortable.

- \$ Install ceiling fans**
Install ceiling fans throughout your manufactured home. Ceiling fans are energy efficient and can be used to keep warm or cool air moving throughout your home. Be sure to turn them off when you're away. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not rooms.
- \$ Option for smaller budgets**
- \$\$ Option for flexible budgets**
- \$\$ Efficient roof color**
Choose a light-colored roof if you live in the southern part of the U.S. and a dark-colored roof if you live in the northern U.S.
- \$\$ Install a mini-split system**
Eliminate unnecessary heating and cooling by installing a single zone strategy throughout your manufactured home. A zone system allows you to save energy by only heating or cooling rooms that are occupied.
- \$ Install awnings**
Install awnings over windows to keep sunlight from overheating your home during the summer.
- \$\$ Add insulation**
If you have a home that was manufactured before 1976, you could add insulation to your home's underbelly to reduce any heat loss.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Regular meeting July 24, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. (CECI) was held at the principal office of the Cooperative, R.F.D., in Flora, Illinois beginning at 7:00 o'clock p.m. on Monday, July 24, 2017.

Trustees present were: Frank Czyzewski, Bill Croy, Frank Herman, Kevin Logan, Bob Pierson, Neil Gould, Richard Rudolphi, Danny Schnepfer, and Greg Smith. Also present were: Ed VanHoose, Executive V.P. General Manager, and Tyra Cycholl, CECI Attorney. The meeting was opened by Richard Rudolphi, who presided and Greg Smith, Secretary, acted as secretary thereof.

The invocation was given by Neil Gould.

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 July suggested agenda.

Approved the consent agenda as presented, including the following:

Approved, the minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on June 26, 2017.

Reviewed, that the Board of Trustees hereby: (a) approve and admit to membership those 9 applicants connected for service since the last such review by the board, and (b) cancel those 12 former members shown on the Manager's Report since the last such review by the Board, said members no longer taking service.

Approved, a list of work orders in the amount of \$152,124.55.

Approved the checklist for the month of June 2017.

Approved the Credit Card Statements.

Reviewed the June Attorney Retainer.

Heard the legal report as presented by Tyra Cycholl regarding modification of Policy 200-1;

Approved Policy 200-1 as presented regarding the addition of remote disconnection/reconnection.

Advised of the Cyber MAG meeting recently attended by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose. **Reviewed** the US Bank Notification.

Heard a report on the recent SIPC meeting by Trustee Herman.

Heard the Prairie State report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose.

Reviewed the 2017 AIEC Annual Meeting agenda.

Heard the AIEC Legislative Update.

Reviewed communications with Representative David Reis's office.

Discussed and Approved the IEC Federal Credit Union merger with Members Choice Credit Union as presented.

Updated on the Building Committee discussion to purchase adjoining property to the Cooperative headquarters.

Discussed the ramifications of the purchase. **Voted** not to purchase the property.

Heard a financial report by Manager VanHoose as to the following:

- a. June 2017 Form 7
- b. June 2017 Cash Flow;
- c. SIPC Power Delivered in June 2017 dated July 10, 2017
June 2017 Power Factor.
June 2017 Power Cost Adder
June Line Loss.

Heard a General Safety Report for June 2017.

Reviewed Monday morning safety meeting sheet dated July 18, 2017.

Heard and Approved a report by Manager VanHoose as to the following:

- a. Disposition of Miscellaneous Property;
- b. Truck Repair

c. Travel issues with IL Driver's license

d. Riskrecon

e. ACES Alternate

f. NRCO Quarterly News

g. Illinois Energy Roadmap

h. Annual Meeting Notice

i. Upcoming meetings

Reviewed Thank You notes from Molly Gould, Ginger Williams, and Rose Fowler.

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose regarding the retirement of Capital Credits to the estate of one deceased Member. **Approved** the request pursuant to Cooperative Policy.

Reviewed 3 Liability Insurance Certificates.

President Rudolphi then left the room. **Reviewed** a sponsorship request by Sydney Rudolphi for the 2018 Clay County Fair Queen Pageant. **Discussed** addition of a budget item to support a 2018 Clay County Fair Queen Candidate. Thereafter President Rudolphi returned to the room.

Adjourned.

**Clay Electric
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Office hours:

7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

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The dreaded vampire loads

By Tom Tate

Perhaps you are familiar with an undesirable aspect of the electronic and IOT (Internet of Things) revolution: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, set-top television boxes, instant-on televisions and gaming systems. There are others, but these four represent the major offenders.

Let's look at how these vampire loads occur and why they are approaching 10 percent of average household electric use according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Chargers take the 120 VAC (volts alternating current) power at the outlet and reduce it down to the voltage required by the connected device, usually 5 to 12 VDC (volts direct current). Obviously, when your device is charging, the charger is using electricity, but you might be surprised to learn that chargers are still using small amounts of energy even when they're not connected to a device.

Television set-top boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the set-top box's lights are on, it is using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working – even when the TV is off. This is especially true for those devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the “instant-on” feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must be on at nearly full power. So, in this

mode, it can be a real energy drain.

The typical gaming console can use as much energy as a regular refrigerator even when it's not being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which is where the energy drain comes from. Games on the console are frequently updated, which requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? Garlic garlands? Silver bullets?

Fortunately, none of the remedies of fable are necessary. You just need to change how you handle these energy-sucking electronics. Here are a few suggestions.

- Unplug chargers when not in use.

- Invest in smart power strips.

These look like normal power strips but have a twist; one of the outlets is the “master” that receives power all the time. The others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment set ups. Have the television in the master outlet and when you turn

it on, the set-top box, speakers, streaming devices, etc. will turn on too. They are also ideal for PCs and their peripherals.

- Turn off the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off set-top boxes that do not contain the DVR functionality or use a smart power strip.

- Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the console completely off when you finish using it.

- When replacing any device or appliance, look for an EnergyStar rated product.

Vampire loads are a real problem that will only continue to grow as the digital age advances. But you can fight the vampires with vigilance and application of the recommendations above. Check with Clay Electric for additional suggestions and energy-saving advice.

Tom Tate 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.



October
is National Cybersecurity
Awareness Month.

Cybersecurity Tip

Create long passwords that only you will remember and change them every six months. Remember, a strong password is at least 12 characters long.