

Logan earns gold

Recently Kevin Logan, member of the Board of Trustees of Clay Electric Co-operative, completed a series of continuing education classes earning him Director Gold Credential. This credential was created to recognize directors committed to continuing their education beyond the first two levels, the Credentialed Cooperative Director and the Board Leadership Certification. The Director Gold Program Certification demonstrates their ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability.

The Director Education and certification program is managed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). NRECA's Director Certificate programs are

specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors, at every stage of their service, understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up to date on the key issues and trends in the industry, and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future.

NRECA offers director education courses throughout the year in conjunction with a wide variety of NRECA educational conferences and events across the country, in partnership with statewide associations and onsite at individual cooperatives.

To maintain Director Gold Status, directors must earn three credits from the NRECA Approved list of Continuing Education Programs within a two-year period.



Kevin Logan, left, is presented a pin and his Director Gold certificate by CECI Board President Frank Czywewski.

Digital devices impact energy use

By Tom Tate

Ah, the Digital Age. We have gadgets galore, the ability to manage our homes in new and innovative ways, brilliant images and captivating sounds of modern entertainment options and of course, the internet. Clearly, digital devices reign supreme. Yet these cool new capabilities come with a couple of pitfalls; vampire loads and the issue of “technology reincarnation.”

Over the course of the Digital Age, electricity use has continued to increase. Families have multiple televisions. Computer prices have plummeted, meaning many homes now have multiple computers. Everyone in the family needs a cell phone. Gaming consoles and set top cable/satellite boxes satisfy our desire for entertainment.

Major appliances aside, most digital devices do not use 120-volt power, which is the standard voltage of a home outlet. They actually use a lot less. So, trying to plug your brand new smartphone directly into an outlet is going to lead to a fried device and lots of tears from someone. This is why low-voltage devices come with a power adapter. These “wall warts” as some term them, take the 120-volt electricity supplied by Clay Electric Co-operative and convert it to say, five volts. Unfortunately, most folks leave their adapters plugged in to make recharging easier. The problem with this approach is that the seemingly innocuous wall wart uses power even

when it isn't charging a device.

This invisible energy consumption is often called “vampire load.” Studies show that 5 to 10 percent of the average home's energy use is from vampire loads. The only way to stop this is to unplug the power adapter when it is not in use or employ smart power strips. These look like the typical power strip but with a twist—only one socket gets power all the time. When the device or appliance connected to it turns on and starts using power, the remaining sockets receive power too. This is perfect for entertainment systems, computer set ups and a variety of other situations.

Technological advances have steadily increased energy efficiency and reduced purchase prices. On its face, this seems like a good thing. Unfortunately, when replacing a product at the end of its life, the tendency is to go bigger, or continue to use the old tech. This is the second issue I noted—technology reincarnation.

For example, flat screen television prices have plummeted as technology has evolved—and so has the amount of electricity they use. Consumers wander into the big box store and are dazzled by walls of giant, brilliant televisions. What they used to pay for the paltry 32” model now might net them a 50” giant. And who doesn't want to see their favorite show or sports event in near life size? But if you spring for the bigger TV, you won't benefit from the increased energy

efficiency of the newer technology. The bigger model uses as much juice as the older, smaller TV, which likely ends up in another room (reincarnated in another setting) still using power. Or refrigerators. These are the show-pieces of the evolution of smart appliances. Many new models include touchscreens and cameras; they communicate over the internet and probably even keep food cold and make ice. Yet what often happens is the old refrigerator ends up in the basement or garage, reincarnated as a dedicated beverage unit or overflow.

I'll offer a couple words of advice to help you avoid—or at least reduce—the effects of vampire loads and technology reincarnation. Invest in smart power strips or make a point to use outlets where you can conveniently unplug power adapters when not in use. Don't oversize your replacement appliances and entertainment gear unless family needs dictate the larger capacities. And recycle the replaced appliances and equipment to stem technology reincarnation. You will enjoy the Digital Age for a lot less.

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.

Busting the myths about “smart meters”

By Tom Tate

By now, most Americans have likely heard of the “smart grid.” This phrase is being used to describe the computerization of America’s electrical infrastructure. The purpose of this computerization is to improve the reliability, efficiency, resiliency and security of the electric grid.

A key component of the smart grid is an advanced metering infrastructure, also known as AMI in the utility world. AMI systems utilize digital meters as well as computer technology to measure electric use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters. The digital meters communicate via radio or the existing power lines and have been loosely termed as “smart meters.” AMI benefits electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed over the years concerning smart meters. These myths can be classified into three categories: privacy concerns, security and health effects. Let’s take a look at each, starting with privacy.

Clay Electric Co-operative (CECI) takes great pains to keep your information private – and that information includes the details of your electric use. The only people who see that data



are co-op employees and you. Your co-op will not release this information to anyone else without your specific permission. The myths are that the data collected can tell when you are home or away and exactly what you are doing when you are there and that this data is being given to the government. Naturally, the data will show when you are home because for most families, energy consumption is higher then. But having said that, the current smart meter cannot identify what activities are taking place down to the specific appliance in use. This myth is simply unfounded.

What about the myth that these meters actually make the electric grid less secure by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems through the smart meter and wreak havoc? While hackers continually attempt to break into electric systems, their

focus is at higher levels in the operation. Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons. Hackers like to work remotely via the Internet, and smart meters don’t offer that option. Radio-based smart meters require the hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal, break the proprietary communication protocol and to be there for extended periods of time to collect the short burst of data sent. Therefore, smart meters are an unlikely and unprofitable target for hackers.

Finally there are the myths surrounding smart meters and ill effects on health. These concerns state that having the radio-based smart meter is the equivalent to having a cell tower attached to the side of your home. Again, this is unfounded. Let’s look at why. Number one is that they communicate intermittently for as few as five minutes a day. These devices are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, and their output is well below the levels this Federal agency sets. As one doctor observed, the radio waves emitted are more like those of a cordless phone or wireless router. Radio waves emitted by smart meters are much weaker and less frequent than other sources we use on a daily basis.

We will all benefit from the continued development of America’s smart grid and can rest easy with the knowledge that the rumors surrounding radio-based smart meters don’t hold water.



AMI meters, also known as smart meters, benefit electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

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Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting

Regular meeting September 26, 2016

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 Bob Pierson.

Recessed the regular meeting to conduct the Organizational Meeting.

Opened the Organizational Meeting by Melanie Pearce who presided and Greg Smith acted as Secretary.

Informed of the purpose of the Organizational Meeting.

Approved opening of nominations for the office of Secretary/Treasurer; thereafter, **Approved** the closing of nominations and election of Greg Smith.

Discussed inquiries into individual interest in office positions by various board members. Expressed appreciation for Frank Czyzewski serving as board President.

After much discussion **Approved** rescission of the election of Greg Smith and started nominating process beginning with the office of President.

Discussed strengths of various Board members in different offices and interest by various Board members.

Approved opening of nominations for the office of President; thereafter, **Approved**, the closing of the nominations and election of Richard Rudolphi.

Approved opening of nominations for the office of Vice President; thereafter, **Approved**, the closing of the nominations and election of Kevin Logan.

Approved opening of nominations for the office of Secretary Treasurer; thereafter, **Approved**, the closing of the nominations and election of Greg Smith.

Declared the Organizational Meeting adjourned.

Resumed the Regular Board Meeting with President Richard Rudolphi presiding

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

Approved the minutes of the regular meeting held August 22, 2016.

Accepted 10 new members for service.

Canceled 10 members no longer receiving service.

Approved a list of work orders for August 2016 in the amount of \$52,948.71.

Approved the disbursement list for August, 2016.

Reviewed CFC loan portfolio.

Reviewed CFC loan repricing document.

Informed by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose of Patronage Capital disbursement from CFC in the amount of \$26,410.87.

Heard a report by Trustee Herman regarding SIPC. Reviewed SIPC "Administration and Finance Department Summary: August Results." **Heard** further report from Gen. Mgr. VanHoose as to rates.

Informed there will not be an AIEC Regular Board meeting in September

Informed that Kevin Logan was awarded Director Gold Certification pursuant to the NRECA certificate program. Also **Reviewed** ranking of Illinois Directors who have earned NRECA Director Gold Credential.

Reviewed 2017 IEC Memorial Scholarship announcement.

Heard a report by the Building Committee presented by Trustee Smith, considering relocation, replacement, or repair of Co-operative headquarters. Relocation was explored, but no initial success; repair not viable. Board recommends giving Gen. Mgr. VanHoose discretion to proceed with solicitation of bids pursuant to Cooperative Building Solutions, with attention to drainage and landscaping. **Discussed** cost savings and rate impact. **Discussed** whether relocation option addressed by Building Committee should be dismissed. **Approved** Gen. Mgr. VanHoose to move forward with the bidding process.

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

a. Reviewed Form 7/Operations Report

b. Reviewed August cash flow report.

c. Reviewed SIPC August power bill.

d. Reviewed August power factor.

e. Reviewed August power cost adder.

f. Reviewed US Bank August Credit Card statements.

Approved entering into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing

Personnel.

Approved entering into Open Session.

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

a. Heard a safety report discussing general safety, including the results of an AIEC Crew Audit, where CECI crew received a perfect score. **Approved** a formal Board commendation to all CECI employees.

b. Heard a report as to Safety Leadership Summit. **Approved** attendance by Luke Johnson to said Summit.

c. Informed State of Illinois balances are up to date.

d. Heard a report as to an inquiry by Jesse James as to providing electricity to the James Subdivision. Gen. Mgr. VanHoose advises he is investigating viability of opportunity, considering service territory, and extension policies.

e. Informed of new Manager named at Norris Electric Cooperative, Tamara Phillips.

f. Rescheduled the November Regular Board meeting to Tuesday November 29, 2016 at 1:00 P.M. Further, the Regular meetings for December and January shall be scheduled to begin at 1:00 P.M. on the normally scheduled days. Rescheduled the Regular February meeting to March 6, 2017 at 1:00 P.M.

g. Scheduled the CECI Board and Employee Christmas Party for December 12, 2016, and the Regular December Board meeting for December 19, 2016

Thereafter said Managers Report was **Approved**.

Reviewed Thank You cards from Youth Tour Participant Chyanne Plumb, Clay County Farm Bureau for presentation at their Farm Safety Day, and City of Flora.

Approved one purchase power agreement.

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

Disbursed the Fall 2016 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives "Extra"

Heard a report by Gen. Mgr. VanHoose regarding the CECI booth at the recent "FAF Appleknocker Educational Festival."

Adjournment.