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



Matt Conklin
CEO

As November arrives and we begin looking toward Thanksgiving and the holiday season, it is a fitting time to think about the many ways we can give back to our community. One of the simplest and most meaningful ways to help someone in need is by donating blood.

Clay Electric Cooperative will host our 4th Annual Giving Thanks Blood Drive on Tuesday, Nov. 10, from 1-5 p.m. at the Oil Belt Christian Service Camp at 555 Park Road in Flora.

Blood donation has become an important part of Clay Electric's commitment to our community. We sponsor two blood drives each year. Our spring drive is held at Clay Electric headquarters in May, while the Giving Thanks Blood Drive each November allows us to partner with Oil Belt and provide another opportunity for local residents to donate before the holiday season.

Blood donations are needed every day to help patients undergoing surgery, cancer treatments, emergency care and treatment for serious illnesses and injuries. Blood cannot simply be manufactured when it is needed. Hospitals depend on volunteer donors who are willing to give a little of their time so that blood is available when patients need it most.

If you are eligible to donate, we encourage you to consider making an appointment. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 1-800-733-2767, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, or using the Blood Donor App. **12441-001**

Whether the person receiving that blood is a neighbor from down the road or someone you will never meet, every donation represents one person helping another. That spirit of neighbors helping neighbors fits with the cooperative principles that guide Clay Electric and with the season of Thanksgiving. We hope you will join us on Nov. 10 and help make our fourth Giving Thanks Blood Drive another successful one.

November is also a good time to make sure your household is prepared for changing weather. Fall can still bring thunderstorms, high winds and heavy rain, and winter weather will not be far behind. Taking a little time now to check your emergency supplies can make an outage much easier to manage later.

Make sure you have working flashlights and fresh batteries available, along with bottled water, nonperishable food, blankets and any medications your household may need. If someone in your home depends on electrically powered medical equipment, review your backup power plan before severe weather arrives and make sure batteries or other backup equipment are ready to use.

Portable generators can be extremely helpful during extended outages, but they must be operated safely. Generators should always be used outdoors and well away from doors, windows and vents because of the danger of carbon monoxide. Never connect a portable generator directly to your home's wiring unless it is connected through a properly installed transfer switch. Improper connections can send electricity back onto power lines and create a deadly hazard for our linemen and others working to restore service.

In service to our members, our forestry crew will continue its important work clearing rights-of-way to improve reliability and public safety. Their work area remains the same as last month and is 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.



Save some green on energy bills this winter

How can you save on heating costs this winter?

Some answers to that question are simple.

Turn down the thermostat a few degrees from where you would normally keep it, and dress in layers. Keep your feet warm and have plenty of blankets nearby.

Most people like to pull up the covers at night when it's cold outside. Use flannel sheets and a thick comforter so you can turn down your thermostat while you sleep.

It also helps to use insulated or lined curtains to keep cold air out, not only in your bedroom but throughout your home.

Another way to make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible is to get an energy audit before the cold weather hits. The changes you make based on the audit could help you save on energy costs this winter.

Other energy-saving tips

- **Get your heating system regularly maintained** by an HVAC professional so that it is working at peak efficiency. Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly.
- **Vacuum or clean vents** on a regular basis.
- **Keep fireplace dampers closed** when not in use. If you do not use your fireplace, plug and seal the flume.
- **Do not heat an empty home.** A programmable or smart thermostat can make this automatic. According to the Department of Energy, lowering the temperature by 7 to 10 degrees for 8 hours a day can reduce energy costs by up to 10 percent. **19001-939**
- **Seal uncontrolled air leaks.** Use weatherstripping around doors and windows as needed. Check attics, attic access, outlets, walls and chimneys, as well as pipes entering or exiting your home for common sources of air leaks.
- **Let the sunshine in** during the day to use Mother Nature's warmth. Close window coverings after dusk, however, to reduce heat loss.
- **Set ceiling fans to run clockwise** to push down and redistribute warm air that naturally rises.
- **Consider turning down your water heater** to 120 or 125 degrees. Also install a water heater blanket to help insulate it, which will give it a headstart in warming your water.
- **Consider updating your furnace or HVAC system to an energy-efficient model** by looking for the ENERGY STAR designation when it comes time to replace it.
- **Decrease use of built-in ventilation fans** in your kitchen and bathrooms. In the colder months, they transfer heat from inside your home to the backyard. Use the fans only when needed and turn them off as soon as you can.
- **Bring in the moisture with a humidifier** or research other ways to do that (e.g., well-watered plants and/or containers of water throughout the home). Dry air makes the air feel colder, and increasing moisture in the air causes indoor air to retain more heat.

Contact us for more information about energy audits or energy efficiency. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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Office hours:
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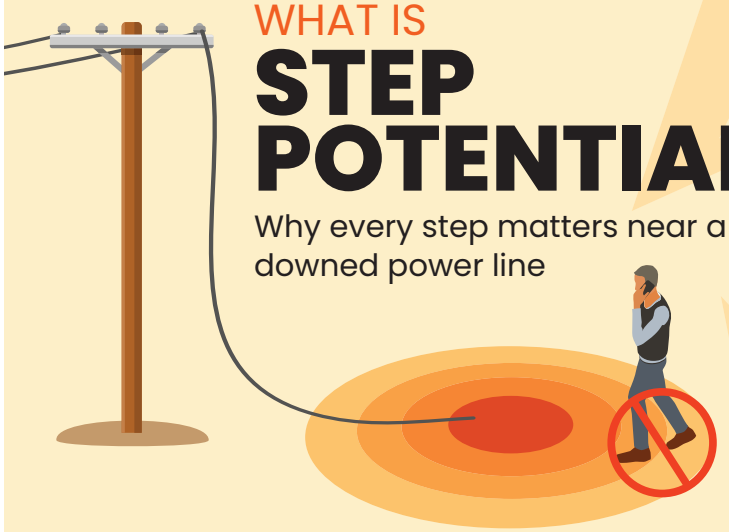

WHAT IS STEP POTENTIAL?

Why every step matters near a downed power line

When a downed power line touches the ground, **electricity can spread out like ripples** on a pond.

If your **feet touch two different voltage levels,** electricity can move through your body.

That is step potential, and it can be deadly.

IF YOU SEE A DOWNED POWER LINE:

- **STOP.** Keep yourself and others at least 50 feet away.
- **CALL 911.** Report it and wait for help.
- **Never touch the line or anything it touches,** including fences, vehicles, trees, equipment or people.

IF YOU ARE NEAR A DOWNED LINE, DO NOT WALK OR RUN AWAY:

- **Shuffle to safety.** Keep feet close together and on the ground.
- **Hop away.** Keep feet together; hop and land together.

Downed lines can be silent, still and deadly. Stay away and call 911.

Learn more: Safe Electricity.org

4th Annual

Giving Thanks Blood Drive

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Oil Belt Christian Service Camp
555 Park Road, Flora

Call 1-800-733-2767, visit RedCrossBlood.org or use the Blood Donor App to make an appointment.

Efficiency Tip

Keep registers and vents clear of furniture, rugs, curtains and other items. Better airflow helps rooms feel more comfortable and keeps your system from working harder than needed. That can mean less wasted energy and help lower heating and cooling costs.

Safe Electricity.org

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.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Sept. 28, 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 7 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 28, 2026.

Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Neil Gould, Bill Croy, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi, Evan Smith, Josh Schnepper and Frank Herman. Also present were Matt Conklin, CEO, and Attorney for the Board Tyra Cycholl. Kevin Logan joined the meeting via conference call at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided, and Neil Gould acted as secretary thereof.

The invocation was given by Richard Rudolph, 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]:

Motion by B. Croy seconded by E. Smith to approve the suggested Agenda as presented.

APPROVED, the Suggested Agenda.

HEARD, the Manager's Report on Safety including:

- The Quarterly Safety meeting held Sept. 9, 2026;
- The Monthly Safety Report;
- Monday Morning Safety meeting held Sept. 21, 2026.

Motion by N. Gould seconded by F. Herman to approve the consent Agenda as presented.

APPROVED, the Consent Agenda, including the following:

- **APPROVED,** the organizational minutes, annual meeting minutes and 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;
- **REVIEWED,** Federated Report from the Board.

HEARD and **APPROVED,** the retirement of member capital credits.

Motion by F. Czyzewski seconded by E. Smith to approve the IRS mileage rate as presented. **15048-001**

At 7:18 p.m., approved entering into Executive Session; motion by B. Croy seconded by J. Schnepper.

At 7:30 p.m., approved exiting Executive Session and returning to Regular Session; motion by B. Croy seconded by F. Herman.

DISCUSSED, the CEO employment.

On motion by N. Gould seconded by F. Herman,

APPROVED, the CEO salary per the resolution.

WERE UPDATED, on the UUS patronage capital credit.

WERE UPDATED, on the CRC patronage capital credit.

REVIEWED, the Federated update.

WERE UPDATED, on NRECA news from Jim Matheson.

HEARD, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC.

There was no AIEC Board Meeting this month.

Motion by B. Croy seconded by F. Czyzewski to approve the financial report by Matt Conklin.

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

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in August 2026;
- August 2026 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- August 2026 Form 7;
- August 2026 Balance Sheet;

REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report by Matt Conklin, CEO.

Motion by E. Smith seconded by R. Rudolphi to approve the Manager's Report by Matt Conklin.

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

- Annual meeting update;
- PCA projections;
- CECI rate discussion;
- Internet backup discussion;
- Disbursement of Capital Credits;
- Territory Discussion;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

DISCUSSED, the Annual Meeting attendance and comments.

DISCUSSED, the PCA projections.

DISCUSSED, CECI rate increases.

WERE UPDATED, on possible internet backup suppliers.

DISCUSSED, updating the capital credit policy.

DISCUSSED, a territory issue with the City of Flora.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report.

REVIEWED, the Communications Report.

WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on Oct. 26, 2026, at 7 p.m., Nov. 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., Dec. 21, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. with Christmas party to follow, and Jan. 25, 2027, at 3:30 p.m.

REVIEWED, a thank-you card from the Clay County CEO.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 8:35 p.m.