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

December brings colder weather, holiday preparations, and an important annual event for many of the members we serve through our management partnership with Clay County Water, Inc.

Clay Electric Co-operative has a management agreement with Clay County Water to provide administrative and office services, including helping organize its annual meeting. This year, the Clay County Water 2026 Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2026, at Floyd Henson Junior High School at 609 North Stanford Road in Flora. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m., with the business meeting starting at 6 p.m.

The annual meeting gives Clay County Water members an opportunity to hear annual reports, participate in the election of two directors, and conduct other company business. Eligible members who participate will receive a $10 credit on their water bill.

Members can qualify for the credit in one of two ways. The first is simply to attend in person, register as a member, and participate in the meeting. If you are unable to attend, you may instead appoint another eligible Clay County Water member who will be attending to represent you by proxy. Both members must complete and sign the proxy form, and the appointed representative must submit it at the meeting.

Each member attending the meeting may represent only one other member by proxy. A valid, signed proxy form must be presented at the meeting. Both members will receive a $10 water bill credit. One bill credit will be assigned to each member regardless of the number of water meters associated with the account.

Proxy forms are available from the Clay County Water Facebook page or from the office at 7784 Old Highway 50 in Flora. We encourage Clay County Water members to take part, either in person or through a properly completed proxy. Member participation is an important part of keeping a locally governed water system informed and accountable to the people it serves.

As December settles in, it is also time to prepare for the winter weather that will eventually find its way to us. Snow and ice can quickly make rural roads dangerous, so give yourself extra travel time, slow down, increase the distance between vehicles, and avoid sudden braking or sharp steering on slick roads. Bridges, overpasses and shaded areas can freeze before the rest of the roadway, even when pavement elsewhere appears clear.

It is also a good time to make sure your home and vehicle emergency kits are ready. At home, keep flashlights, fresh batteries, bottled water, nonperishable food, blankets, charged portable phone batteries, necessary medications and other basic supplies where they can be easily reached. In your vehicle, consider keeping a blanket, flashlight, phone charger, bottled water, basic first-aid supplies, an ice scraper and other cold-weather necessities in case you become stranded or delayed.

Extremely cold weather can also create problems with household plumbing. Pipes in exterior walls, crawl spaces, cabinets and other poorly insulated areas are especially vulnerable to freezing. During severe cold, open cabinet doors beneath sinks to allow warmer air to circulate around plumbing. For faucets served by pipes that are particularly prone to freezing, allowing a small, steady drip can help keep water moving and reduce the chance of a frozen pipe. Know where your home's main water shutoff is located before an emergency occurs, so you can act quickly if a pipe does burst. **4256-002**

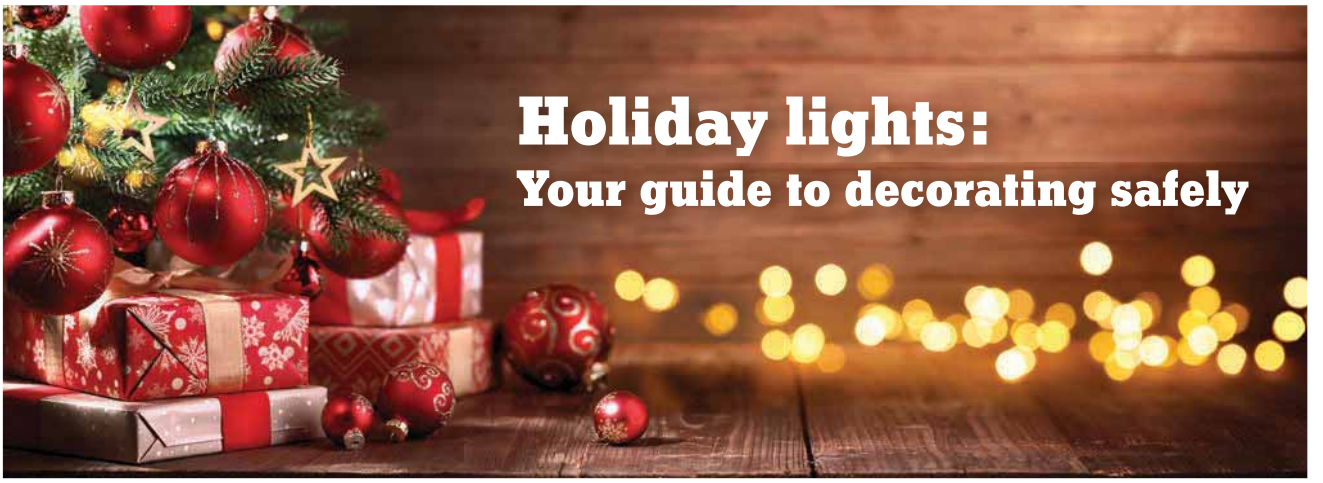
A little preparation before severe weather arrives can prevent a great deal of trouble later. Pay attention to forecasts, give yourself extra time when traveling, and make sure your family knows where emergency supplies and important shutoffs are located.

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.

From all of us at Clay Electric Co-operative, we wish you and your family a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We also look forward to seeing our Clay County Water members at the annual meeting on Dec. 10.



Matt Conklin
CEO



Holiday lights:
Your guide to decorating safely

Holiday lights add warmth and sparkle to the season, but damaged cords, overloaded outlets and improper installation can create electrical and fire hazards. Follow these holiday lighting safety tips when hanging, using and storing indoor and outdoor lights to help keep your home and family safe.

Hang lights safely

- Choose lights that are safety certified by a recognized testing laboratory such as UL.
- Inspect light strands for frayed cords, broken sockets or damaged plugs.
- Use only outdoor-rated lights outside.
- Secure lights with plastic clips or hooks, not nails or staples. **18001-321**
- Don't pull light strands so tight that the wiring is strained or damaged.
- Plug outdoor lights into ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets. If needed, use a portable GFCI.
- Keep extension cords and plugs away from water, snow and ice.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Use holiday lights safely

- Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords.
- Connect only the number of light strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways. Do not run cords through doorways or under rugs or carpets.
- Turn off holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed. Consider timers or smart plugs to turn them off automatically.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand and know how to use it.

Store decorations with care

- As you take down lights, check for broken bulbs, damaged sockets and frayed cords.
- Wipe lights with a dry cloth and let them dry completely before storing them. Moisture can damage cords, plugs and electrical connections.
- Wrap light strands loosely around a reel or spool to prevent tangles and damaged wires.
- No reel? Wrap lights loosely around a sturdy piece of cardboard to help keep strands organized.
- Store extension cords with your decorations. They are intended for temporary use and shouldn't be used year-round.
- Label light strands or storage containers by location, such as roofline, tree or inside, to make next year's setup easier.
- Store lights and electrical decorations in sturdy bins with tight-fitting lids to protect them from moisture, dust, insects and rodents.
- Store electronic decorations in a cool, dry place. Excessive heat and humidity can shorten their life.

Don't forget battery-powered decorations

- Remove batteries from decorations before storage to prevent leaks and corrosion.
- Recycle used batteries according to local guidelines.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Unleashing the Power of OUR Community!

Clay County Water, Inc.
ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, December 10th, 2026

Registration begins at 5:30 PM.
Meeting begins at 6:00 PM.

Floyd Henson Junior High School
609 N Stanford Road, Flora, IL

Members attending in person or via proxy will receive a $10 bill credit!

Safety Tip

When it comes to heating pads and electric blankets, remember to plug them directly into a wall outlet — never into a power strip or extension cord. Turn off and unplug your heating pad after every use. If it sparks, smokes or overheats, stop using it immediately and replace it.



SafeElectricity.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.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Brighten your holiday season with energy efficient lighting options. If you're decorating with holiday lights, choose EnergyStar®-certified LED light strings. LEDs are the most energy efficient and durable lighting options available. For an even simpler savings strategy, put your holiday lights on a timer so they are not using energy when everyone is asleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy

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Office hours:
7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.
www.ceci.coop
facebook.com/ceci.coop

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Oct. 26, 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 6:55 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26, 2026.

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

The invocation was given by Frank Czyzewski, 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 Monthly Safety Report;
- Monday Morning Safety meeting held Sept. 21, 2026.

Motion by F. Herman seconded by Richard Rudolphi to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

APPROVED, the Consent Agenda, including the following:

- **APPROVED,** the prior meeting minutes;
- **APPROVED,** resolution for compensation;
- **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,** CFC Report from the Board;
- **REVIEWED,** CRC Report from the Board.

Motion by F. Czyzewski seconded by J. Schnepper, to retire the capital credits of several members.

At 7:02 p.m., approved entering into Executive Session, motion by F. Czyzewski seconded by J. Schnepper.

At 7:27 p.m., approved exiting Executive Session and returning to Regular Session, motion by J. Schnepper seconded by E. Smith.

On motion by B. Croy seconded by K. Logan, **APPROVED,** the revisions to Policy 900-4 and 900-5.

REVIEWED, the Federated update.

HEARD, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC.

HEARD, the AIEC Board Meeting Report from Kevin Logan.

HEARD, the NRECA BLC 909 class will be offered Thursday, Dec. 10.

Motion by R. Rudolphi 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 September 2026;
- September 2026 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- September 2026 Form 7;
- September 2026 Balance Sheet.

REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report by Matt Conklin, CEO.

REVIEWED, the proposed 2027 Budget.

Motion by R. Rudolphi seconded by F. Herman to reduce the donation amount to Full Armor. This motion failed 2 to 7.

Motion by E. Smith seconded by J. Schnepper to approve the Manager's Report by Matt Conklin.

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

- PCA projections;
- CFC Strategic Planning;
- Adam McKnight continuing education;
- CECI rate discussion;
- Material Cost Increases;
- New Battery Storage;
- Hurricane Isaias Mutual Aid;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

DISCUSSED, the PCA projections.

SCHEDULED, the CFC Strategic Planning meeting for Jan. 6 and 7.

WERE INFORMED, of Adam McKnight's continuing education classes and reimbursement.

DISCUSSED, CECI rate increases.

WERE UPDATED, on material cost increases since 2020.

DISCUSSED, possible new battery storage facility in our territory.

DISCUSSED, sending two linemen to assist with Hurricane Isaias Mutual Aid.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report. **12425-001**

REVIEWED, the Communications Report.

WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on Nov. 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., Dec. 16, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. with Christmas party to follow, Jan. 25, 2027, at 3:30 p.m. and Feb. 22, 2027, at 3:30 p.m.

REVIEWED, a thank you card.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 9:15 p.m.