

# Clay Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

7784 Old Hwy. 50 ■ P.O. Box 517 ■ Flora, Illinois 62839 ■ [www.ceci.coop](http://www.ceci.coop) ■ 618-662-2171 ■ 800-582-9012

## From the Manager

As March gives way to April, it's a good time to reflect on the strength and commitment that keep our cooperative strong year-round.

I'm proud to share that four of our dedicated board members, Frank Herman, Bill Croy, Richard Rudolphi and Frank Cyzewski, have successfully maintained their Director Gold credentials through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This is NRECA's highest-

level voluntary director education achievement, recognizing those who go beyond basic training to stay continuously informed on the complex challenges facing rural electric cooperatives.

To earn and maintain Director Gold, directors first complete foundational programs (Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership Certificate), then pursue advanced coursework on topics like governance, risk management, power supply strategies, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, policy development and more. What sets Director Gold apart is its ongoing requirement: Directors must earn three approved continuing education credits every two years to keep the credential active. This ensures our board members remain at the forefront of industry trends and best practices, even as the energy landscape evolves rapidly.

Why does this matter to you? Your elected directors guide the policies that shape our cooperative's direction



from reliability improvements to rate decisions. By committing to this ongoing training, our directors demonstrate their dedication to making informed, forward-thinking decisions that safeguard reliable, affordable service for our community. **9001-001** In a time of widespread industry changes, having a well-educated board helps us navigate uncertainties effectively and keep our cooperative resilient for generations to come.

Ongoing training is not limited to our board of directors. Every member of the Clay Electric team is constantly improving. Our outside crews take technology classes and attend hands-on trainings to improve their skills. Our office staff network with professionals within the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and NRECA to stay sharp. Our management team attends trainings and takes coursework to ensure they are informed and capable of steering the cooperative in the day-to-day operations and the challenges that come

along. With constant betterment, it is our hope to best serve our members.

In service to our members, this month our forestry crew will still be working on the Iola substation's south feeder. They'll be clearing rights-of-way of dangerous trees to improve reliability. We expect them to be working generally in the area south of Iola, north of Hickory Hill Lane, east of Farina, and west of U.S. Route 45. Their work area will be 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!



Matt Conklin  
CEO

# Lineworkers are ready when it matters most

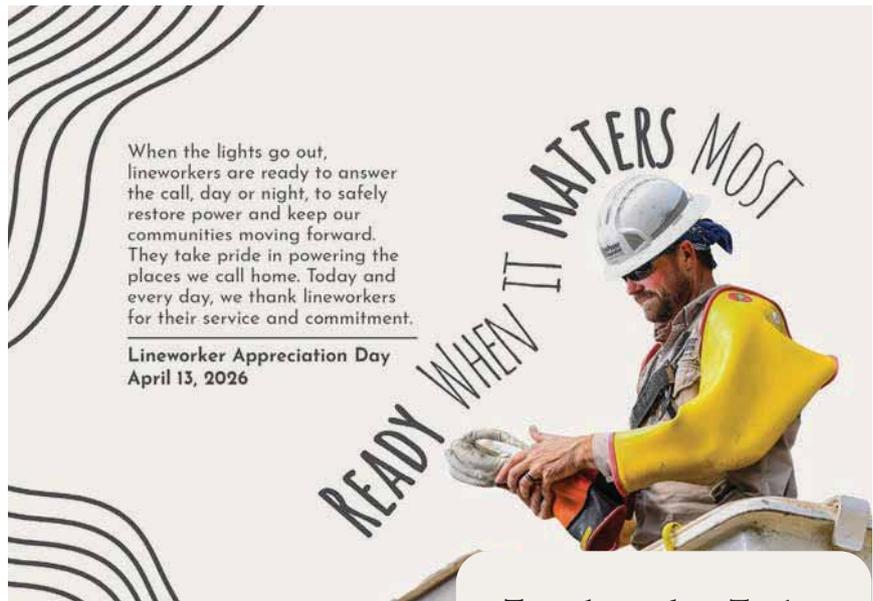
By Matt Conklin

**A**s CEO of Clay Electric Co-operative, I have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. In April, we take time to pause and recognize the brave people who make that possible every single day — our lineworkers.

When storms impact our communities and outages occur, many people experience the inconvenience, but our lineworkers see a call to action. Our crews are always ready when it matters most — leaving family dinners, working through the night and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and as quickly as possible. That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they aren't just restoring power to a system — they're restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand that electricity is more than a convenience; it's essential to daily life, to local businesses, to schools, farms and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to lineworkers.

Electric cooperatives like Clay Electric Co-operative were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours behind the scenes. **8945-001** At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events, Clay crews stand ready to assist



When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

Lineworker Appreciation Day  
April 13, 2026

**To our lineworkers:** Thank you for your hard work, your readiness and your unwavering commitment to the communities we serve. We are proud to stand behind you and grateful for all that you do.

neighboring co-ops — sometimes close to home, and sometimes across state lines — to help restore power. This spirit of mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand that any time the lights go out, it can be frustrating, bringing everyday life to a halt. We are incredibly grateful to our members for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical, and at times, it can be dangerous. Our crews approach each job focused on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 4, 2026, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and dedication, which are the backbone of our cooperative.



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.



Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Unleashing the Power of OUR Community!

Clay Electric Co-operative's Community Spotlight is featured in each issue of Illinois Country Living Magazine and on our Facebook page each Thursday.

If you have a community event you would like to see spotlighted, send your submissions to us by email at

Admin@ceci.coop

or by mail to

Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. —  
Community Spotlight,  
P.O. Box 517, Flora, IL 62839



# CELEBRATING OUR LINEWORKERS

Lineworkers are the backbone of our electric cooperative communities, working tirelessly – often in the harshest weather – to keep the lights on across Illinois. Whether restoring power after storms, repairing lines in the middle of the night or maintaining miles of rural infrastructure, their skill, courage and commitment provide families, farms, schools and businesses with safe and dependable electricity. They climb poles, operate heavy equipment and face challenging conditions with pride, putting service above self. We celebrate our lineworkers for their dedication and resilience, and the vital role they play in powering our communities every single day.

## Lineworker Appreciation Day

April 13, 2026 (State)

April 18, 2026 (National)



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# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Feb. 23, 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 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026.

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

The invocation was given by Bob Pierson, 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]:

**APPROVED**, the Suggested Agenda.

**HEARD**, the Manager's Report on Safety including:

- The Monthly Safety Report;
- Monday Morning Safety meeting held Feb. 23, 2026.

**APPROVED**, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **APPROVED**, the 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.

**APPROVED**, the retirement of capital credits for Deceased Estates.

**REVIEWED and APPROVED**, policy reviews to 100-10, 800-21, 800-22 and 800-23.

**UPDATED**, on CFC quarterly loan payment.

**UPDATED**, on Federated group retention rebate.

**UPDATED**, on CRC Patronage Capital.

**WERE UPDATED**, on NRECA issues from Jim Matheson.

**UPDATED**, on NISC Patronage Capital.

**HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC and Patronage Capital.

**HEARD**, a report by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC.

**REVIEWED**, Events and Training.

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

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

**REVIEWED**, the Cybersecurity Report.

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

- Selling the Digger Truck;
- U.S. EPA onsite visit;
- Directors' Gold recipients' award;
- Planning implementation tracking for strategic planning;
- Infrastructure update;
- Line of Credit Paydown;
- Upcoming Dates;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**APPROVED**, selling the Digger Truck on Purple Wave Auction at the

discretion of Matt Conklin when we no longer need the old truck.

**UPDATED**, on the U.S. EPA onsite visit. **8048-002**

**CONGRATULATED**, Frank Czyzewski, Frank Herman, Bill Croy and Richard Rudolphi on being Gold recipients.

**REVIEWED**, the planning implementation tracking for strategic planning.

**WERE UPDATED**, on infrastructure changes to breakers.

**WERE INFORMED**, the line of credit was moved to a 30-year loan.

**DISCUSSED**, the quarterly safety committee meeting date and employee/lineman appreciation day.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on March 23, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., April 27, 2026, at either 3:30 p.m. or 7 p.m., May 26, 2026, at 7 p.m. and June 22, 2026, at 7 p.m.

**REVIEWED**, a thank-you card from South Kentucky RECC.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

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Office hours:  
7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

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