

# 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

Over the last three months, I've been writing about the Seven Cooperative Principles. The next one I would like to share with you is "Education, Training and Information." Your cooperative works hard to help our members, elected representatives, managers and employees understand the cooperative business model. It's a major reason that I've been writing about them since July. Clay Electric, like all cooperatives, is a completely different animal from the investor-owned, profit-driven utilities most people think of when they imagine a power company.

Your cooperative is a not-for-profit corporation and exists because of members like you and to serve members like you. Money we collect through rates that exceed what we need to operate in a given year are kept track of and returned to the membership in time as capital credits. Being a member is different than

being a customer. You are a member-owner with a stake in your electric cooperative and a vote in how business is conducted. You elect directors which form the board of trustees for Clay Electric Co-operative, and they set the policies which the employees follow in their day-to-day operations.

To better serve our membership, our directors and employees are constantly training and learning so they can make informed decisions and steer the cooperative forward in uncertain times. Clay Electric's goal is to continue to educate our directors, staff, and membership so they can make the best decisions possible. This means we keep our ears to the ground for changes in Illinois' legislative and regulatory landscape. **14636-001**

We also stay up on technology to the best of our ability. If you have questions about how your cooperative works, the challenges we face, or how technology might work for you, please

contact us. We are happy to answer our member's questions from the implication of bills being debated in Springfield to whether a solar installation makes financial sense for your home. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions about your cooperative or service.

As always, keep a lookout for your member number in the center section of this magazine. There are three member numbers hidden in Clay Electric News. If you find your number and give us a call you win \$5 off your next bill!



Luke  
Johnson  
CEO



Community born.  
Community led.  
Focused on YOU.

October is  
National Co-op Month!

# Discuss electrical safety with kids

Often when the topic of electronics and children comes up, the conversation gravitates toward the pros and cons of screen time. However, an often-overlooked topic is how to talk to your children about the potential safety hazards associated with electronics, sources of electricity and their environment in general. **11516-001** As soon as children can walk, parents and caregivers should discuss with them how to be safe around electricity, both inside the home and when playing outdoors.

Clay Electric Co-operative and Safe Electricity recommend sharing these outdoor safety tips with children:

- Do not touch or go near a sagging or downed power line. Instead, tell an adult to call the electric cooperative to report it.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- Fly kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones in large, open areas, such as parks or fields, far away from power lines. If any of these items (or any object) gets caught in a power line, never try to retrieve it. Tell an adult to call the electric co-op for help.
- Never fly kites or other toys when a thunderstorm may be approaching.
- Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment could kill you.
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment that can kill. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a toy that goes inside the fenced area surrounding a substation. Tell an adult to call the electric co-op instead.
- Stay away from outdoor electrical equipment marked “keep out,” “high voltage” or “danger.”
- Do not play, sit or climb on a padmount transformer, a.k.a. green box. (Note to adults: While green boxes are typically safe to be around, it is better to leave this equipment alone just in case a box has become unlocked, vandalized or have become damaged in some way. Please call us to report an

unlocked cabinet or any signs of damage.)

Additionally, share the following indoor safety tips with children:

- Do not play with electrical cords or plugs.
- Younger children should ask an adult before plugging in or unplugging something. In addition, never pull or tug on cords. Instead, gently pull the plug out of the wall by grasping the plug.
- Do not touch or use cords that appear damaged.
- Keep cords away from heat and water.
- Never stick fingers, tongues, toys or other objects into electrical outlets or light sockets.
- Never sleep with phones, tablets or other electronics in the bed

or under a pillow. The electronic device can overheat or experience a short in the charging cable, causing bedding to catch on fire, burns to the skin or electric shock.

- Never play with electronic toys or gadgets in the bathtub or near water.
- Never touch appliances, switches, outlets, sockets, cords or plugs with wet hands or while standing in water. Parents should keep towels near bathroom and kitchen sinks so little hands can be dried right after they are washed.

Many electrical injuries and fires can be prevented. It is never too early or late to start talking about electrical safety with children and loved ones. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**ARE HOME ELECTRONICS AND APPLIANCES DRAINING YOUR ENERGY?**

If you collect your spare change in a jar, all those coins add up over time, usually to a larger amount than you expect.

Small amounts of consumed energy throughout your home add up as well, so plug “energy vampires” into a smart power strip that detects dormant devices or unplug items when not in use, especially those with illuminated controls.

**TOP NINE ENERGY VAMPIRES**

- TVS
- VIDEO GAME CONSOLES
- COMPUTERS
- SURROUND SOUND SYSTEMS
- PRINTERS
- STANDBY COFFEE MAKER
- CELL PHONE AND TABLET CHARGERS
- MICROWAVES
- SATELLITE / CABLE BOXES

Safe **LEARN MORE:**  
Electricity.org®

# Get familiar with cyber basics

## October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

**A**t a time when we are more connected than ever, being “cyber smart” is of the utmost importance. This year has already seen more than a fair share of cyberattacks and breaches, including the high-profile attacks on the Colonial Pipeline and other critical infrastructure. Furthermore, as has been underlined by these recent breaches, cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated with more evolved bad actors cropping up each day. Luckily, there are several steps that we can take on a daily basis to mitigate risks and stay one step ahead of malefactors. Here are a few quick tips:

### Enable multi-factor authentication.

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) adds that necessary second check to verify your identity when logging in to one of your accounts. By requiring multiple methods of authentication, your account is further protected from being compromised, even if a bad actor hijacks your password. In this way, MFAs make it more difficult for password cracking tools to enable attackers to break into accounts.

### Use strong passphrases/password manager.

This may seem obvious, but all too often securing strong passphrases/password managers is overlooked. People spending more time online during the pandemic has certainly contributed to more bad actors prowling for accounts to attack. Using long, complex and unique passwords is a good way to stop your account from being hacked, and an easy way of keeping track and remembering

your passwords is by using a password manager.

### Perform software updates.

When a device prompts that it's time to update the software, it may be tempting to simply click postpone, and ignore the message. However, having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system on devices is one of the best defenses against online threats. So, don't wait – update.

### Check your settings.

Be diligent to double check your privacy and security settings and be aware who can access your documents. This extends from Google docs, to Zoom calls and beyond. For meetings on Zoom, for example, create passwords so only those invited to the session can attend, and restrict who can share their screen or files with the rest of the attendees.

Being cyber smart and maintaining stellar online hygiene is the best way



### PASSWORD DOS AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

#### DO:

- Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

#### DON'T:

- Don't use common words or numbers like “password” or “1234.”
- Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

### October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart

### Do your research.

Common sense is a crucial part of maintaining good online hygiene, and an intuitive step to stay safe online is to do some research before downloading anything new you are downloading to your device, such as apps. Before downloading any new learning app on your device, make sure that it's a by checking who created the app, what the user reviews say, and if there are any articles published online about the app's privacy and security features.

to protect yourself and others from cyberattacks. No single tip is foolproof but taken together they can make a real difference for taking control of your online presence. Following these tips is also easy, and free. By taking preventive measures and making a habit of practicing online safety, you can decrease your odds of being hacked exponentially – and prevent lost time and money, as well as annoyance.

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

August 30, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. (CECI) was held at the Clay Electric Cooperative Headquarters, Flora, Illinois beginning at 7:00 o'clock p.m. on Monday, August 30, 2021.

Trustees present were: Kevin Logan, Bob Pierson, Bill Croy, Neil Gould, Richard Rudolph, Frank Czyzewski, Frank Herman, Josh Schnepfer and Evan Smith. Also present were: Luke Johnson, CEO and Tyra Cycholl, Attorney for the Board. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided and Neil Gould, acted as secretary thereof. **13636-004**

The invocation was given by Evan Smith 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.

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

- **APPROVED**, the prior meeting minutes.
- **APPROVED**, (a) to admit to membership those 13 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;  
**REVIEWED**, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **APPROVED**, the Work Orders;
- **APPROVED**, the Disbursements;
- **APPROVED**, the Credit Card Statements;
- **REVIEWED**, the Attorney Retainer;
- **REVIEWED**, the Account Summary Report;
- **REVIEWED**, the CFC Report from the Board ;
- **REVIEWED**, the Federated Report from the Board and the Member Update.

**APPROVED**, the CFC Quarterly Loan Payment.

**REVIEWED**, the CFC memorandum regarding District 5 meeting Agenda.

**HEARD**, a report by Frank Herman regarding the SIPC Meeting. **DISCUSSED**, Board size on SIPC and updates to legislation.

**HEARD**, a report by Kevin Logan regarding the AIEC Board Meeting.

**HEARD** and **APPROVED**, a financial report by Luke Johnson as to the following:

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in July 2021;
- July 2021 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- July 2021 Form 7;
- July 2021 Balance Sheet.

**REVIEWED** the Safety Committee Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Monday morning Safety meeting held August 23, 2021.

**HEARD** and **APPROVED**, the Manager's report by Luke Johnson on the following topics.

- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on, Sept. 27, 2021, Oct. 25, 2021 and Nov. 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. in the Clay Board Room.

**APPROVED**, the Organizational Meeting Minutes from Oct. 26, 2020.

**HELD**, the Organizational Meeting for 2021.

**REVIEWED**, thank you cards

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

## 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.

## Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.

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