

## From the manager



**Matt Conklin**  
CEO

**S**ummer is here, and the temperature will be climbing. When you are looking at your thermostat this year, keep a few things in mind.

Raising your thermostat during the summer can help you save energy and reduce your electricity bills. When you set your thermostat to a higher temperature, your air conditioning unit will not need to work as hard to maintain a comfortable temperature, resulting in less energy consumption. Raising your thermostat can also help reduce your demand usage, which refers to the amount of electricity your home consumes at any given time.

When your air conditioning unit is running, it consumes a significant amount of energy to cool your home. By raising your thermostat, you reduce the frequency your air conditioner turns on, which in turn reduces the demand for electricity.

Your cooperative's energy bill has two parts, the energy charge and the demand charge. In the summer, the peak demand is typically set during the hottest part of the day when many people are running their air conditioners. By raising your thermostat and reducing your demand usage during these peak periods, you can save your electric cooperative money which allows us in turn to pass those savings back to the membership.

Additionally, raising your thermostat can be beneficial for the environment. When you use less energy, you reduce your carbon footprint and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

It's important to note that you should still set your thermostat to a comfortable temperature that meets your needs. If you raise your thermostat too high, you may become uncomfortable and end up using other methods to cool down, such as opening windows or using fans, which could offset any energy savings you achieve by raising your thermostat.

It's best to slowly find the best temperature for you and your family. Slowly bump up your thermostat until you become uncomfortable then back it back down a bit. Finding that perfect temperature that allows you to be comfortable while saving money is its own satisfaction.

Your annual capital credit allocation amount should appear on your bill in the coming months. This figure shows you how much of the money you have paid to Clay Electric Cooperative has been assigned to our margins for 2022 and will be paid back to you as capital credits in the future. Be on the lookout for your annual allocation on your bill, and while you are on the lookout, keep your eyes peeled for your member number in the center section of this magazine.

## CHECK THE WEATHER

### BEFORE YOU GO

From 2006 through 2021, 446 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S. Nearly two-thirds of the deaths happened while people were enjoying outdoor leisure activities such as fishing, camping and running.

June, July and August are the peak months for lightning across the U.S. More than 72% of lightning deaths occurred in these months, with Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having slightly more deaths than any other day of the week.

Lightning often strikes away from heavy rain; it can happen up to 10 miles away from rainfall. To prevent lightning-related tragedies, when thunder roars, go indoors.

Source: National Lightning Safety Council

**More Than 72% of Lightning Fatalities Occur From June Through August**



Safe Electricity.org®

# Energy-saving projects for the weekend warrior

**A**re you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less.

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

## Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences. **3393-001**

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker



Installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — you can also save on cooling since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home.

Photo Source: Daniel Spase

panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

## Play it safe.

Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

## Go green with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use — it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly

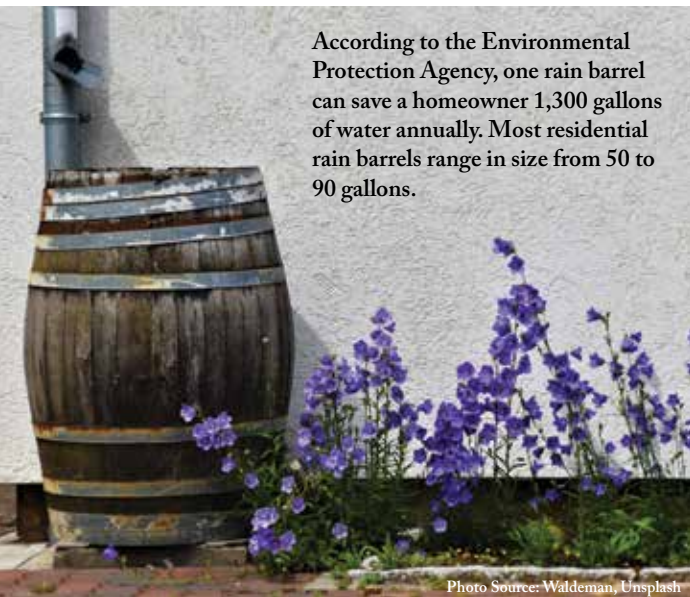
under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

## Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, you can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com) and [hgvtv.com](http://hgvtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.



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Photo Source: Waldeman, Unsplash

# Stay safe while spending time outdoors

**A**s temperatures increase and sunny days abound, it is easy to be foot-loose and fancy-free. As you spend more time outdoors, keep these safety tips in mind to have a great summer.

## Pools and hot tubs

Before opening your pool or hot tub for the season, ensure there is ground fault circuit interrupter protection on underwater lighting circuits, as well as for lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas. Have your pool's electrical system inspected. Faulty wiring can cause swimmers to experience electric shock drowning.

## Boating and swimming

When boating or swimming, know that faulty wiring can cause the water to become energized. Never go swimming near boats plugged into shore power or docks with an electrical source. Energized water can cause electric shock drowning.

## Outdoor activities

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, approximately 440 people are struck and killed by lightning each year.\* Nearly two-thirds of the deaths occurred while enjoying outdoor leisure activities — 33% of the fatalities occurred during water-related activities such as boating, spending time on the beach and swimming, while 14% happened during sporting activities such as fishing, soccer and running.

## During a storm

When angry clouds roll in, take them seriously. Have a weather app installed on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder,

take cover. A watch means that conditions are likely for severe weather to develop; a warning means take action.

## When playing

When flying drones, remote-controlled planes, toys or kites, fly them in a wide-open area free from overhead power lines. **7412-010** If a toy or object gets stuck in an overhead power line, do not try to remove it. Instead, call your electric utility and a crew will address the issue safely.

same precaution applies to a pet or animal inside the fenced area of a substation.

## Releasing balloons

Although not an outdoor recreational activity per se, be careful with metallic balloons. If they are released intentionally or accidentally and get caught in a power line or other utility equipment, they can cause a major power outage. Additionally, be careful during a balloon release regardless of



Ensure that overhead power lines do not run through or over a tree before your child starts to climb. Select trees that are in a wide-open space without overhead power lines nearby.

If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them to never touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it. The

type of balloon. Be sure to release balloons in wide-open areas far from overhead power and airports.

For additional electrical safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

*\*Analysis of lightning-related deaths in the U.S., 2006–2021*

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

April 24, 2023

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 6:58 o'clock p.m. on Monday, April 24, 2023.

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

The invocation was given by Neil Gould 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 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;

**HEARD**, the Audit Report as presented by Brian Cherry. **9819-001**

**APPROVED**, the Audit Report. Thereafter at 7:34 p.m. Brian Cherry left the meeting.

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

- **REVIEWED**, the Work Orders;
- **REVIEWED** and **DISCUSSED**, the Disbursements;

- **REVIEWED**, the Credit Card Statements;
- **REVIEWED**, the Attorney Retainer;
- **REVIEWED**, the Account Summary Report;
- **REVIEWED**, the Federated Report from the Board.

**APPROVED**, Deceased Estates as presented

**WERE UPDATED**, on NRECA News.

**HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC Board Meeting.

**HEARD**, an update by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC and the Legislative Conference as there was no meeting.

**HEARD**, a report from Manager Conklin regarding the AIEC managers' meeting.

**DISCUSSED**, upcoming education courses with NRECA, Springfield Lobby Day, Aces Conference and CFC Forum.

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

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in March 2023;
- March 2023 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- March 2023 Form 7;
- March 2023 Balance Sheet;

**REVIEWED**, the Safety Report for the month of February.

**REVIEWED**, the Monday morning Safety meeting.

**HEARD** and **APPROVED**, the Manager's report by Matt Conklin on the following topics.

- Youth to Springfield Tour;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**WERE UPDATED**, on the Youth to Springfield Tour.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**WERE REMINDED**, of

upcoming meetings on May 22, 2023, June 26, 2023, July 24, 2023, and Aug. 28, 2023, at 7 p.m., and the Annual Meeting on Aug. 24 with Bill Croy, Josh Schnepfer and Richard Rudolphi up for re-election.

**REVIEWED**, the CFC training attended by Matt Conklin.


**REVIEWED**, a thank you note from Carrie Goldstein and Family.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 8:41 p.m.



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.

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