

# Clay Electric News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

## From the Manager

As the leaves start to change and the autumn breeze fills the air, it is that time of year again when we all look forward to the excitement of Halloween. The costumes, the candy and the joy of watching our children and grandchildren light up with anticipation as they prepare for Trick-or-Treat night.

However, it is also a time when we must be especially vigilant to ensure the safety of our loved ones and our community. The safety of our members is of paramount importance to Clay Electric Co-operative, and I would like to take a moment to share some important tips for a safe and enjoyable Halloween.

### Trick-or-Treat safety

- **Stay visible:** When choosing or creating costumes, prioritize visibility. Add reflective tape, glow sticks or LED lights to costumes to ensure your children are easily seen by passing motorists.
- **Accompany young children:** Always accompany young children while they are out trick-or-treating. Hold their hands and always keep them close to you.
- **Plan a route:** Plan your route ahead of time and let someone know where you will be. Stick to well-lit areas and avoid shortcuts through alleys or unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- **Check candy:** Before indulging in the sweet treats, carefully inspect all candies and goodies for signs of tampering. Discard

any items that look suspicious or have damaged packaging.

- **Respect traffic rules:** When crossing streets, always use crosswalks and obey traffic signals. Teach your children to look both ways before crossing and never dart out into the street.

At Clay Electric Co-operative, we are committed to your safety and the wellbeing of our community. Let's all do our part this Halloween to ensure that our families and neighbors enjoy this tradition without any accidents or mishaps. **12911-001**

Remember, a safe and happy Halloween makes lasting memories. Let's make this season memorable for all the right reasons. Your cooperative family at Clay Electric Co-operative is wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful, safe and joyous Halloween.

Back to business, even with fall in full swing and winter just around the corner, the various incentives for solar installations are still on the table on the state and federal level. With more and more programs coming out to make solar builds more economically feasible, it's important to stay educated about the ways a solar system could be beneficial to you. Clay Electric Co-operative, like most cooperatives, runs off a net billing model. This differs from what Ameren and other Illinois investor-owned utilities are mandated to provide. When you have a solar system on CECI's distribution grid, your production benefits you in one of two ways. If you use the kilowatts you produce, you get full retail

value for them, as you aren't buying those kilowatts from the cooperative. If you generate excess kilowatts and feed them back into the grid, you don't forfeit them; instead, you receive credits on your account at the wholesale value, known as the avoided cost, which is the rate at which we would purchase those kilowatts from the power plant.

If you are looking into solar, it is imperative that you contact the cooperative. With many financial incentives available, not every solar company is focused on the happiness of the end-user. Clay Electric Co-operative is dedicated to finding the best solutions to our members' power needs. Sometimes that means a solar system is a perfect fit and other times it isn't. Our goal is to make sure that our members don't regret their purchases, and we will do all in our power to make sure they have all the knowledge available to them to make their best decisions.

Don't forget to be on the 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!



Matt Conklin  
CEO

# LOOK UP

## BEFORE YOU CLIMB

Using a ladder near overhead power lines could cause electrocution. **When using a ladder:**

**Keep yourself and all equipment 10 feet away from overhead power lines.**

- Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
- A ladder could make direct contact with the line.

**Use a ladder during ideal weather conditions.**

- Rain can make the ground slippery.
- Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.

**Do not trim trees/branches that are near power lines.**

- It is dangerous to trim near overhead power lines.
- By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.

**Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.**

- All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
- Always follow the 10-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.

Anything that elevates you can take you too close to a power line if you are not aware of your surroundings.

Follow all safety recommendations when using a ladder. Look up before you climb.

The logo for Safe Electricity.org features the word "Safe" in a bold, black, sans-serif font above the word "Electricity.org" in a similar font. A stylized black plug icon is positioned to the left of "Electricity.org". A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of the text.

# Share information that saves lives during Teen Driver Safety Week

**E**ight people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October (Oct. 15-21, 2023), which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines

## Distracted driving

There were 3,522 people killed by distracted driving in 2021\*, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lead by example and, as the NSC touts, “Just Drive.”

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Other distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage or using an app. **7744-001**

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.
2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel.
3. Do not eat while you drive.
4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.



## Downed power lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.
- If you walk or run from one voltage “ripple” to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).
- If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in

voltage (called touch potential).

- Your body becomes electricity’s path to ground when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

## What to do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 911 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other electrical safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).

*\*2022 statistics not available as of the writing of this article.*



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

August 28, 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 7:00 o'clock p.m. on Monday, Aug. 28, 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, 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 Matt Conklin and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. **18001-042**

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**, the 2023 Annual 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**, Form 990, waiting final version.

**WERE INFORMED** of the CFC Quarterly Loan Payment.

**WERE INFORMED** of Federated Updates.

**REVIEWED**, the NRECA EPA Updates and Rulings.

**HEARD**, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC Reports.

**HEARD**, an update by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC.

**DISCUSSED**, upcoming Region 5 meeting.

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

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

**HEARD**, the Manager's Report on Safety.

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

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

**HEARD**, the Manager's Report on Cybersecurity.

**REVIEWED**, the Cyber security quote for additional security.

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

- CFPC Training;
- ACRE Certificate;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**WERE INFORMED**, the CEO has completed the CFPC Training.

**WERE INFORMED**, the Board received an ACRE Certificate.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.

**DISCUSSED**, the Annual Meeting and the quorum necessary to conduct business.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on Sept. 25, 2023, Oct. 23, 2023, at 7 p.m. and Nov. 27, 2023, at 5 p.m. and discussed the date for the December meeting and set the Safety Meeting for Sept. 6, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.


There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 8:52 p.m.



**CO-OPS GROW COMMUNITIES**

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month. As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

**Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.**

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7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.  
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