

# 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

**A**s we enter the last month of the year, Clay Electric Co-operative wants to wish you and yours all the best this holiday season. We hope you enjoy a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

2023 has been a year of economic hardship in many ways. Every American has experienced increased costs in every facet of modern life. Inflation has risen dramatically in the last year and, while recent reports have inflation slowing, the value of your hard-earned dollar isn't increasing. The power sector isn't immune to these economic factors. Stories continued through 2023 of volatile power markets, rate increases at investor-owned utilities, and a shortfall of energy production leading to power interruptions. This summer saw the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) announce Max Generation Events which had us ask our members

to conserve as much power as they were able to. Peak winter months may see similar calls from the regulatory agency. We will continue to keep our membership informed of these situations as they happen.

At Clay Electric Co-operative, we take our responsibility to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable power very seriously. This year saw us institute a modest \$6 increase on the facility charge to each of our members. Our goal is to keep any bill increases to the absolute minimum during these challenging financial times. Our power provider, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), is in the process of changing its rate structure charged to the cooperative. With these changes will come a rate study at Clay Electric. During this process, the cooperative will determine how best to meet its revenue requirements and allocate rates to cover costs associated

with power distribution. Be assured that your cooperative will continue to make every effort to minimize the financial burden on your electric bills. As costs continue to rise, we must continue to monitor our financial outlook to keep pace.

Lastly, be sure to keep an eye out for your member number in the center section of this magazine. There are three member numbers hidden within the pages of Clay Electric News. If you spot your number and give us a call, you'll win a \$5 discount on your next bill!



**Matt Conklin**  
CEO

# Happy Holidays!

Spark joy and light this holiday season. From our co-op family to yours, we wish you a safe and warm season with friends and loved ones.

# Seventeen 2024 IEC Memorial Scholarships available



Illinois electric cooperatives will award 17 scholarships in 2024 to financially assist deserving students in the electric cooperative family. The 17 scholarships, \$2,000 each, will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Ten scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors whose parent(s) are an Illinois electric co-op member. An eleventh scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. 6779-004 Five additional scholarships are reserved for high school seniors enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college whose parent(s) are an Illinois electric cooperative member, employee or director.

The seventeenth scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship, will help pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. Children of co-op members, relatives of co-op



employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for this scholarship.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says Matt Conklin. "Clay Electric Co-operative and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference

in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth and investing in them through programs like this one."

Deadline to apply is Dec. 31, 2023. The lineworker scholarship deadline is April 30, 2024. For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Adam McKnight at 618-662-2171. Information is also available online at <https://aiec.coop/iec-scholarship/>.

## BEWARE OF SCAM CALLS



Do not provide any information or agree to immediate payment; instead hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill.

## Safety Tip

Individuals attempting to steal copper from electrical equipment can lose their life over what they believed to be 'easy' money. If you see suspicious activity, contact your electric utility.



# Help prevent copper theft

**T**hieves sometimes think of it as a crime that won't hurt anybody. The truth is that tampering with electrical equipment or attempting to steal copper can harm many people. Those who steal copper (or power) are not only risking their own lives, but also the safety and well-being of others.

Common targets for copper theft include farm equipment, air conditioners, vacant buildings, construction sites and electric utility properties, including substations and power poles.

## How homeowners can help

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire and so on, contact your electric utility immediately.
- For empty homes, install lighting systems that operate using a timer to make the property a less likely target. For all homes, install motion-sensor lights on the outside of the house to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.

## How businesses can help

- Report suspicious activity.
- Eliminate or secure all external access to buildings and roofs.
- Remove items that allow for easy access to buildings, such as ladders, scaffolds, trees, dumpsters and accumulated materials, such as pallet piles.
- Install security cameras and alarm systems. The location and the type of object will determine what kind of surveillance is needed. For example, for heating and cooling units, there are alarms that are triggered if the unit stops working.
- In areas that contain valuable objects such as air conditioners, install fences and lighting fixtures around them. The amount of copper in most commercial air conditioners is never worth a great amount, but the real cost is paid by the owner of the unit.
- Most copper theft takes place during nights or weekends. Hiring staff or security personnel to monitor your facility during these periods can greatly reduce the chances of a serious loss.

Copper theft can affect more than the person stealing; in fact, it can cost a life. **14320-001** Detecting and reporting illegal activity could help save a life.

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**REPORT  
SUSPICIOUS  
ACTIVITY**



## STEALING COPPER HAS A HUGE COST

Thieves like to steal and sell the soft, reddish orange metal to make some quick cash. However, they may sacrifice more than they gain, since stealing copper can cause serious injuries or death. Copper thieves could also face hefty fines and prison time.

The FBI attributes copper theft to disruptions in the flow of the following: electricity, telecommunications, transportation, water supply, heating, security and emergency services. It presents a risk to both public safety and national security.

Common targets for copper theft include farm equipment, air conditioners, abandoned buildings, construction sites and electric utility equipment, including substations and power poles.

The majority of copper theft occurs at night or on the weekends. Detecting and reporting suspicious and illegal activity could help save a life.

Learn more:

 Safe  
Electricity.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.

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Oct. 23, 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 6:55 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 23, 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 was 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 Josh Schnepfer 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;

**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**, the CRC Report from the Board.

**APPROVED**, the requested retirement of capital credit accounts.

**REVIEWED**, the Federated Member Update regarding Open Lines.

**WERE INFORMED**, CRC rates are increasing.

**APPROVED**, CRC Rate Increase as presented.

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

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

**DISCUSSED**, upcoming Board training.

At 7:35 p.m. entered into Executive Session.

At 7:45 p.m. exited Executive Session and returned to the regular meeting.

**REVIEWED**, the 2024 proposed Budget including:

- SIPC Power Cost;
- Capital Credits;
- Advertising and Donations;
- Capital Items;
- 2024 Budget.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**WERE UPDATED**, on the Rapid 7 cost analysis.

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

- CFPC Certificate;
- Clay County CEO Program;
- Director Per Diem;
- Quorum Survey Results;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**WERE INFORMED**, Matt received his CFPC Certificate.

**DISCUSSED**, the Clay County CEO Program.

**APPROVED**, donating \$1,000 to the CEO Program.

**DISCUSSED**, director per diem.

**REVIEWED** and **DISCUSSED**,

Quorum survey for Annual Meeting.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report. **10827-003**

**DISCUSSED**, changing the November until February board meeting time.

**APPROVED**, changing the November until February board meeting time to 3:30 p.m. This measure was passed 4-3.


**APPROVED**, moving the December meeting to Dec. 19 for the holiday and moving the January meeting to Jan. 29 for the year-end closeout.

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on Nov. 27, 2023, Dec. 19, 2023, Jan. 29, 2024, and Feb. 26, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., and the Safety Committee Meeting will be Dec. 5.

**REVIEWED**, thank you notes.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Clay Electric  
Co-operative, Inc.

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