

## From the Manager

As February arrives, we find ourselves in the heart of winter, a time when warmth and comfort are most cherished. It is also the perfect opportunity, with Valentine's Day approaching, to reflect on the relationships we have built with you, our valued members.

Caring for our membership is not just a seasonal sentiment; it is the foundation of everything we do. Guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, we strive to serve you with integrity, commitment and care. These principles remind us that you are more than customers; you are member owners of this cooperative. Our focus is on providing you with reliable, affordable and sustainable energy every day.

As February brings some of the coldest days of the year, staying warm becomes a priority, and so does staying safe. Here are a few tips to help you and your family:

- **Stay warm efficiently:** Set your thermostat to 68 degrees when you are home and lower it when you are away. Use ceiling fans on their lowest setting to circulate warm air downward. Fans should turn clockwise when viewed from below in the winter.
- **Seal and insulate:** Check doors, windows and attics for drafts, and seal any gaps. Proper insulation can significantly reduce energy loss. 14984-001
- **Layer up:** Wearing warm clothing and using blankets allows you to stay comfortable even at lower thermostat settings.
- **Use space heaters wisely:** Space heaters can provide targeted



warmth but are deceptively high users of electricity, typically consuming 1,500 watts. For comparison, a refrigerator uses 150 to 500 watts. That little space heater may use as much power as 10 refrigerators! Always place space heaters on a level surface, keep them away from flammable materials, and turn them off when unattended.

- **Be prepared for outages:** Keep flashlights, batteries and a backup plan ready for unexpected power outages. Avoid using candles for safety reasons.

Additionally, if you or someone in your household relies on electric medical devices like oxygen machines or breathing equipment, we encourage you to take extra precautions during this time of year. Ensure backup batteries are fully charged, have a generator or alternative power source available if possible, and create a plan for safe shelter in case of extended outages. Please notify the cooperative about your medical needs so we can prioritize storm restorations whenever possible.

Our linemen and staff work tirelessly through snow, ice and frigid temperatures to ensure your power remains on, but extreme conditions can sometimes lead to interruptions. When they do, please know that restoring your service is always our highest priority.

This February, as we celebrate the love and warmth of the season, we want you to know how much we appreciate the trust you place in us. Thank you for being part of the Clay Electric Co-operative family.

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 will win a \$5 discount on your next bill!



**Matt Conklin**  
CEO

# Horses gallop and so can power lines

**H**ow can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution?

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

There is not much a power company can do to alleviate galloping lines, since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, many power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- \* When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- \* Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines.
- \* Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- \* Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- \* Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
- \* If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car. **12826-001**
- \* Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.

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

**Normal power line**      **Lines weighed down by ice**      **Top line melted after bottom line**

## ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

### ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

### ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

### WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

### OTHER ICE FACTS


- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

**SafeElectricity.org**

Source: Jerri Ingarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative



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## 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](mailto:admin@ceci.coop) or by mail to Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc.— Community Spotlight, PO Box 517, Flora, IL 62839



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.

# WHAT IS backfeed?

Avoid deadly backfeed and help keep lineworkers safe.

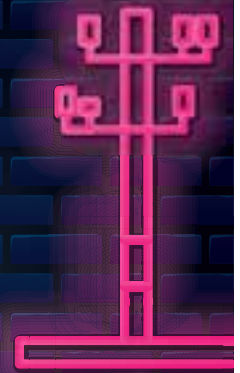
Backfeed happens when a person connects their portable generator to a wall outlet, which allows power to flow in reverse – that is, the alternate power source feeds energy back through their home's electrical system, their meter and back into the power lines.

Potentially deadly backfeed can also happen with permanently installed generators that are not used or installed correctly. They should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician, who will install either an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator. The job of this switch is to transfer a power source safely from its primary source to a backup source.

To keep utility crews safe, never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system, and ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly. Electric lineworkers thank you in advance.

Learn more at:

 Safe  
Electricity.org



# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Dec. 20, 2024

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 Friday, Dec. 20, 2024.

Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Bill Croy, Kevin Logan Frank Herman, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi (arrived 3:40 p.m.), Evan Smith, Josh Schnepfer and Neil Gould. 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 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.

**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 IRS mileage increase to \$.70/mile and meal allowance of \$68 per day.

**REVIEWED**, the director per diem.

**APPROVED**, increasing the director per diem \$5 for a total of \$230 commencing Jan. 1, 2025.

**APPROVED**, write-offs of \$97.46 for the year.

At 3:56 p.m. **APPROVED**, entering into executive session, and Matt Conklin left the meeting.

At 4:15 p.m. **APPROVED**, exiting executive session and returning to regular session, and Matt Conklin returned to the meeting.

**APPROVED**, the Resolution as attached hereto regarding CEO compensation.

**APPROVED**, Rate Updates to line up with SIPC energy increases for Policies 1000-1, 1000-3, 1000-4, 1000-15, 1000-16, 1000-41, 1000-44 and 1000-45.

**REVIEWED**, NRECA letter to President Trump.

**REVIEWED AND DISCUSSED**, the 2025 Budget including:

- SIPC Power Cost;
- Capital Credits;
- Advertising and Donations;
- Capital Items;
- 2025 Budget.

**APPROVED**, Kevin Logan as the alternate to the NRECA and NRTC Annual Meeting and all other voting delegates as presented.

**APPROVED**, the 2025 Budget as presented including:

- SIPC Power Cost;
- Capital Credits;
- Advertising and Donations;
- Capital Items including the Skid Steer from John Deere and authorizing Matt Conklin to enter into the contract to secure the 0% interest rate;
- 2025 Budget.

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

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

**WERE INFORMED**, of upcoming training opportunities and the NRECA Power Exchange meeting in Atlanta.

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

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in November 2024;

- November 2024 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- November 2024 Form 7;
- November 2024 Balance Sheet;

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

**HEARD**, the Quarterly Safety Committee Meeting Report.

**REVIEWED**, Monday Morning Safety meeting held Dec. 16, 2024.

**REVIEWED**, the Cybersecurity Report.

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

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

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.


**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report. **10639-002**

**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on Jan. 27, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., Feb. 24, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., March 24, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. and April 28, 2025, at 3:30 or 7 p.m.

**REVIEWED**, thank you note from Jefferson Electric regarding assistance with the hurricane relief.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Clay Electric  
Co-operative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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