

From the Manager

As autumn settles in and the crisp fall air brings a chill, it's time to embrace the joys of Halloween. The excitement of choosing costumes, gathering candy and watching the delight on our children's faces as they prepare for trick-or-treat night is truly special. **18001-492**

Yet, as we immerse ourselves in the festivities, it's crucial to stay vigilant about safety. At Clay Electric Co-operative, your safety is our top priority, and we want to share a few essential tips to ensure a fun and secure Halloween for everyone.

Halloween Safety Tips:

- **Enhance visibility:** Make costumes stand out by adding reflective materials, glow sticks or LED lights. This simple step makes sure children are easily visible to drivers.
- **Supervise young trick-or-treaters:** Always accompany young children while they are out. Keep them close and hold their hands to ensure their safety.
- **Plan your route:** Before heading out, map out your

trick-or-treating route and inform someone of your plans. Stick to well-lit streets and avoid shortcuts through dark or unfamiliar areas.

Continued on 18B ►



Matt Conklin
CEO

TRICK OR TREAT

Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. **To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:**

- Discard any decorations that have **cracked or frayed cords** or damaged plugs.
- **Do not** put any decorations on power poles, padmount transformers or any other electrical equipment.
- Use decorations that are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are **rated for outdoor use**.
- **Secure all cords** so they do not become tripping hazards.
- Plug all cords into circuits protected by **GFCIs** to prevent electrical shock.
- **Do not use nails or tacks** to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- Keep decorations **away from flammable items** like bales of hay, cornstalks or witch's brew.

Have a safe and festive Halloween complete with safe tricks and tasty treats.

Learn more at:



What is demand?

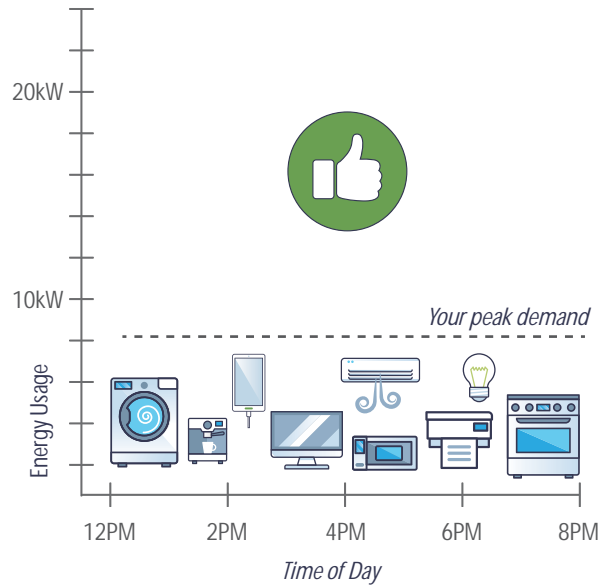
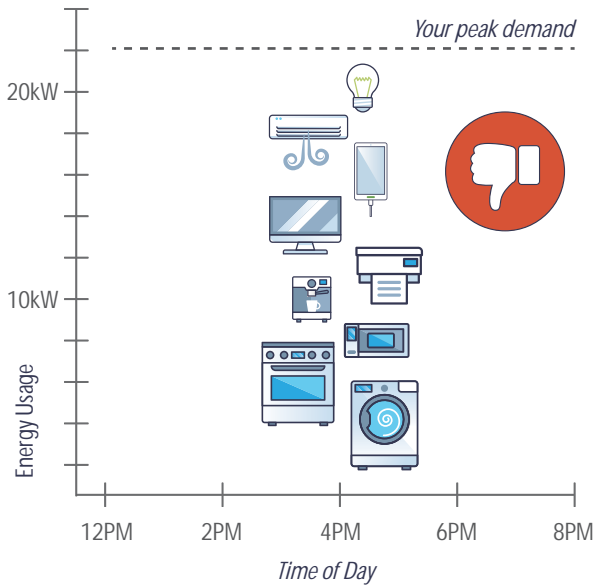
When we talk about the electric grid, you'll often see us mention "demand." But what does that mean?

Demand refers to the amount of electricity used in relation to a specific time. As electricity powers our homes and businesses, demand increases when more households use more electricity simultaneously. Peak demand can vary based on the time of day and season.

During times of high demand and volatile temperatures, the grid might struggle to keep up. By collectively leveling out demand and avoiding "towering your power," members can make a significant impact. **11964-002**

Understanding how demand works is key to making a difference, and education is crucial in accomplishing that.

PEAK DEMAND



DON'T Tower Your Power. DO Level Out Demand.



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.

From the Manager continued from 18A

- **Inspect candy:** Carefully check all candy and treats for any signs of tampering before consumption. Discard any items with damaged or suspicious packaging.
- **Follow traffic rules:** Use crosswalks and adhere to traffic signals when crossing streets. Teach children to look both ways before crossing and to avoid running into the street.

At Clay Electric Co-operative, we're dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. Let's work together this Halloween to keep the celebrations safe and enjoyable for everyone.

A safe Halloween is a memorable one. We hope you and your family have a fantastic, secure and joyful holiday season. Don't forget to check the center section of this magazine for your member number — there are three hidden numbers in Clay Electric News. Spot yours and give us a call to receive \$5 off your next bill! Illinois Country Living Magazine isn't the only place to get important information from your cooperative. Find us online at www.ceci.coop or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/ceci.coop](https://www.facebook.com/ceci.coop) for the latest news and updates from Clay Electric Co-operative.

Cybersecurity tips for a safer digital world

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

Clay Electric Co-operative is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. You can help, too.

When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

- **Learn how to spot and report phishing attempts.** Phishing

occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as soon as possible — and don't forget to block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages that are delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.)

- **Create strong, unique passwords.** When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online

account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.

- **Enable multifactor authentication when available.** Multifactor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.
- **Update software regularly.** Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit staysafeonline.org to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.



October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Let's work together to build a safer digital world. Whether at home, work or school, we can increase our online safety with the following tips.

- 🔒 Recognize and report phishing attempts.
- 🔒 Use strong, unique passwords.
- 🔒 Enable multi-factor authentication.
- 🔒 Update software regularly.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Aug. 26, 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 6:52 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 26, 2024.

Trustees present were Bob Pierson, Bill Croy, Frank Herman, Frank Czyzewski, Richard Rudolphi, Evan Smith, Neil Gould and Josh Schnepfer. Also present were Matt Conklin, CEO, and staff employees James Williams, Carrie Runnels and Adam McKnight. Present by call-in was Kevin Logan. Attorney Tyra Cycholl was absent. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided, and Neil Gould acted as secretary thereof. **13587-001**

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**, the 2023 Organizational Minutes;
- **APPROVED**, the 2024 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.

APPROVED, Action Items:

- IBEW LOA_CD/L;
- Maple Flats Service Agreement and Rate;
- Purchase Power for New Service.

APPROVED, Policy 800-5 revision, with adding medical clause to Employee Driving CDL, discussed section Policy 800-5 section I. Residence of Lineman. Agreed to have further discussions with legal counsel and Union.

REVIEWED, Federated Member Updates.

HEARD, a report by Bob Pierson regarding SIPC.

HEARD, a report by Kevin Logan regarding the AIEC updates.

WERE INFORMED, of upcoming events including:

- Region 5 Meeting;
- Quarterly Safety Committee Meeting, Sept. 10, 11:30 a.m.

HEARD and APPROVED, a financial report by Carrie Runnels as to the following:

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in June 2024;
- June 2024 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- June 2024 Form 7;
- June 2024 Balance Sheet.

HEARD, the Manager's Report on Safety presented by James Williams.

REVIEWED, Monday Morning Safety meeting held Aug. 26, 2024.

HEARD and REVIEWED, the Cybersecurity Report presented by Adam McKnight.

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

- CFC Leadership Certificate;
- PAC Achievement Award;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;

- Upcoming meetings.

WERE UPDATED, on Matt Conklin's completion of CFC CEO leadership training.

DISCUSSED, PAC Achievement Award.

REVIEWED, the Operations Report presented by James Williams.


REVIEWED, the Communications Report presented by Adam McKnight.

WERE REMINDED, of upcoming meetings on Sept. 23, 2024, at 7 p.m., Oct. 28, 2024, at 7 p.m., Nov. 25, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. and Dec. 30th, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



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