

# Rural HIGHLIGHTS



- Page 2** August Board report
- Page 3** Portable generator safety
- Page 4** RECC open house (continued)
- Page 6** News & Notes
- Page 8** Dual Meter rate changes

A publication of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative • Auburn, Illinois • www.recc.coop

## *The past meets the future* *RECC open house features old and new displays*

RECC's open house on September 6 was held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our incorporation in 1936. We did that with old photos, newsletters and equipment, including cars, tractors and trucks.

But, the open house was also a celebration of our present and future, with tours of our newly-remodeled front office, demonstrations of our newest line trucks, and even the all-electric car built in a member's home near Divernon!

About 200 members and guests stopped in to see the displays, munch on hot dogs and kettle corn, and reminisce about their own experiences with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative. Some of our earliest employees and members were on hand to talk about the people who made RECC a success during those giddy days of fast growth and new uses of "the electric."

Two of the co-op's aerial trucks were kept busy giving "bucket rides" during the event, and it wasn't just the youngsters who were drawn to the thrill of going up 50 feet in the air. Members of all ages gave it a try, and even some RECC employees who don't normally get to work around the big trucks.

Another modern truck on display was a digger/derrick with remote



*Scott Mottershaw (left) was the \$75 prize drawing winner at the open house. Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, presented Scott with 75 dollar coins (and a can cooler!) at his home, which is located directly behind the RECC headquarters!*

control that can dig a hole, pick up a pole and place it into the hole while the operator stands at a safe distance with a small control unit.

Office technology was also highlighted with a demonstration of online bill viewing and payment. Daily and even hourly electric usage can be tracked with the co-

op's automated meter reading system.

"Seven," the electric car that made it to the finals of the Automotive X-Prize competition last year, was on

**(Continued on page 4)**

*(See more photos of the open house on page 4!)*

Rural Electric  
Convenience Cooperative  
3973 W. State Route 104  
P.O. Box 19  
Auburn, IL 62615  
217/438-6197  
Fax: 217/438-3212  
e-mail: recc@recc.coop

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David Stuva

### Rural Highlights

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Dana Smith, *editor*



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# Board report

## Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting August 30, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on August 30, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith; Manager of Office Services Dean Fuchs; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; Field Engineer and Purchasing Agent Martin Hinton; Electrician Jeff Lancaster; Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

\* The minutes of the July 26 regular Board meeting were approved as presented.

\* Sandy Lex and Brandon Taylor reviewed the Apple Tablet Computing Device (iPad) to discuss the possible use of iPads by Directors in their duties for the cooperative.

\* Dana Smith, Jeff Lancaster and Martin Hinton discussed proposed changes in the Dual Meter Rate for electric heating, cooling and water heating, and adjustments in the minimum heating requirements to promote the use of installed electric heating equipment in the winter months. A small increase was recommended in the rate to meet the wholesale power cost for electricity used on the Dual Meter.

\* The Board entered executive session to discuss power supply issues, then returned to open session.

\* Chairman Ayers asked staff to leave the boardroom, and then led a discussion of RECC Board and President/CEO appraisals. President/CEO Stuva then returned for a review of his appraisal.

\* Chairman Ayers presented the IMEA Report. He noted the Prairie State coal-fired power plant was 88 percent completed and its anticipated start-up date is in mid-January 2012.

\* The AIEC report was presented by Chairman Ayers.

\* Chairman Ayers made appointments to Board Committees for 2011-2012.

\* The Attorney's report was provided by Attorney Tice.

## President/CEO's Report

CEO Stuva reviewed the following reports which had either been mailed or distributed to all directors and attorney: Job Training and Safety, Meters and Outages, Operations and Maintenance, Engineering and Construction, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for July were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

\* Reported that electricity sales for July were well above budget due to the hot temperatures, and the co-op's load factor was also high.

\* Reported that RECC members have been receiving solicitations regarding the purchase of electricity from a different source other than the cooperative. He reviewed the history of deregulation and legislation authorizing customers of investor-owned utilities in Illinois to purchase their energy from an alternative provider. He pointed out that co-ops and municipal systems can make their own decisions on allowing alternate providers to sell power to their consumers.

\* Reviewed plans for upcoming meetings and classes.

## Board Action

The Board acted on the following:

\* Approved the application for, or reinstatement of, membership and electric service for 17 persons.

\* Authorized the purchase of iPad tablet devices for each Director with a monthly data connection plan.

\* Approved proposed rate changes in the Dual Meter Rate, from \$.07/kWh to \$.075/kWh, effective Jan. 1, 2012. Also approved minimum-use provisions for the heating months and a seasonal total of 5,000 kWhs.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

# Portable Generator Safety

Winter storm season will be here soon, and many members have portable generators for use during any long-term power outages. These generators need to be installed and operated correctly to be safe and effective. If you have or are installing a standby generator, remember these safety precautions:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- Maintain adequate ventilation. Generators emit carbon monoxide. It is against fire code to operate a generator in your home, garage or other enclosed building. Place the generator in a dry location outdoors.
- Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring. This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed can also damage the generator and home electrical equipment.
- Turn off the generator and allow cooling before refueling. Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electrical spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location away from the generator or other fuel-burning appliances, such as water heaters. Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located nearby.
- Protect your appliances. Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the

unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage, prioritize your needs.

- Generators pose electrical risks especially when operated in wet conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times. Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.
- Use proper extension cords. Use only safety-tested, shop-

type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.

- Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- Remember maintenance between uses. Drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

## Generator safety brochure available

### How to Operate A Portable Generator

# Safely



You can use a portable generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But if used improperly, they can kill you and the people who are restoring power to your building. They also can damage the appliances you connect.

Generator sizes vary. Common units can be from 8 to 14 horsepower and capable of handling from 4,000 to 8,400 watts (including starting surge requirements). Prices may range from \$800 to \$3,000.

Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, qualified electrician. Installing the connection and switch (as explained inside) can cost \$600 to \$1,000.

Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your electric cooperative.

*These tips will keep your family and linemen safe*

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative has brochures available on portable generator safety. You can pick one up in our office, call us at (217) 438-6197, or e-mail a request to [recc@recc.coop](mailto:recc@recc.coop) to receive a free brochure.



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*For additional electrical generator and safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).*

## RECC open house (Continued from page 1)

hand with one of its owners, Jen Danzinger of Divernon. Jen and her husband, Kevin Smith, are part of the Illuminati Motor Works team that designed and built the battery-powered vehicle that tested at a mileage equivalent of 207 miles per gallon.

Thanks to the many people who helped make our anniversary open house a success, and to those who visited to see what their cooperative is doing today. We're looking forward to many more years of helping our rural communities grow and be a better place to live!



Journeyman lineman Curt Fishburn (second from right) demonstrated the remote control of a digger/derrick truck during the open house.



Jim Ketchum of Auburn brought his 1939 Chevy Coupe to the open house, as well as a 1950 Farmall "C" tractor. "Ketch" retired from RECC as work order/purchasing clerk in 1999.

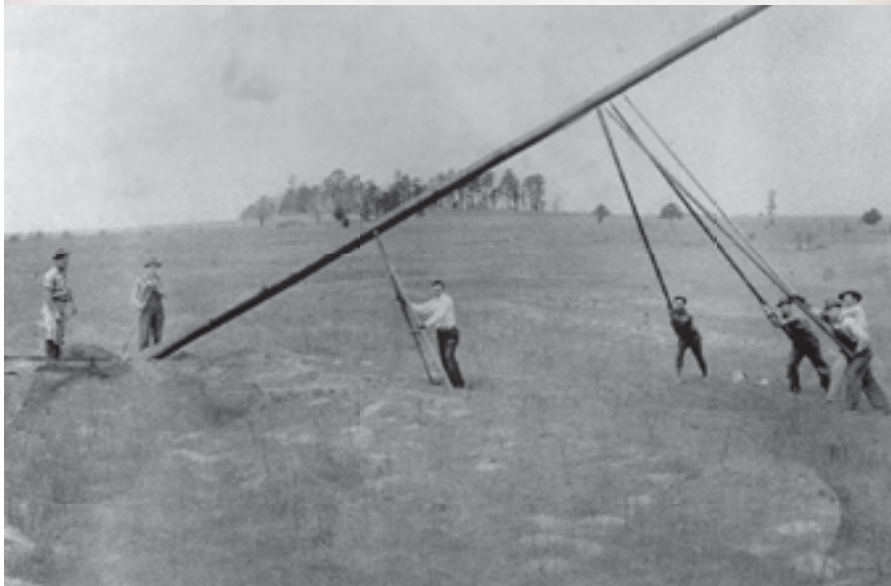


Jesse Ayers of New City checked out the electric car built in Divernon by a dedicated group called Illuminati Motor Works.



Shelby Electric Cooperative employees restored this 1950 Dodge truck with a digger attached. It took two men to operate the auger and controls!

# ELECTRIC CO-OPS WERE CONSTRUCTED WITH LINES, POLES AND THE FOOLHARDY NOTION




## THAT WE ALL PROSPER BY HELPING EACH OTHER.

Today, the spirit of community that co-ops were built upon continues to thrive. And as members we can all lend a hand to one another by saving energy. Learn how at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



 **Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative**

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions and/or civil sanctions.

/s/ Dana Smith, Editor

# News & Notes

## Member photos identified



We printed two photos last month in an article about the early days of electricity in rural areas. They were among the hundreds of old photos stored in boxes in our office that, unfortunately, include no identifications, dates or descriptions. As soon as the newsletter issue hit members' mailboxes, however, we learned more about the two photos. Jim Walch of Raymond sent an e-mail note that the young boy in the grain mixer photo was him with his father, Vincent Walch. Then Mary Himstedt of Morrisonville called to tell us that the lady at the kitchen stove was her mother, Juanita Dunkirk. While no one can pin down the dates, we're guessing that both photos are from around 1960.



## Budget Billing catch-up time

October bills are time for catch-up on Budget Billing accounts, to zero out any balance due or credited. If a member has underpaid for the year (based on the monthly payment amount estimated), the shortfall will be due on the October billing statement. If payments made exceeded the actual cost for the

past year, RECC will refund the excess amount to the member. New Budget Billing amounts will be calculated to begin in November. Any member with at least a year of billing history, and a good payment record, can start on the Budget Billing plan in November.



## Touchstone Energy® Balloon coming to Shelbyville

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative and ten other Illinois Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have teamed up to bring in the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon team to Shelbyville on October 7-9. Come see hot air balloon pilots from Chicago, Iowa, Missouri and Central Illinois fly Lake Shelbyville with flights Friday night, Saturday & Sunday mornings and enjoy a night

glow Saturday night (weather permitting). The Saturday night glow will be held on the dam off Route 16 in Shelbyville. Call the Shelbyville Tourism office for more details at 217-774-2244 or go online at [www.lakeshelbyville.com](http://www.lakeshelbyville.com). You can follow the Balloon Team on their Facebook page, search Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon Team.

# MEMBER RESPONSE PAGE

**Please send me information on services from RECC:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Peak Switch	<input type="checkbox"/> New Home Energy Guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance Saving Rates
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Meter Heating Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Surge Suppressor Lease	<input type="checkbox"/> AT&T Wireless Cellular Phone Savings
<input type="checkbox"/> Security Light Rental	<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Power Plus™ Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> 5% ERC Loans for Efficiency Improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> Convectair Heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> Marathon Lifetime-Warranty Water Heaters	

## Electric heating equipment rebates

**An electric heat rebate form must be completed. Minimum system sizes apply.**

- Geothermal System – \$250/home
- Air Source Heat Pumps – \$250/home (with electric back-up)
- Air Source Heat Pumps – \$100/home (with gas back-up)

## Electric equipment rebate request

Please include a copy of your sales receipt for your new electric equipment, purchased and installed within the past 12 months.

<input type="checkbox"/> Clothes Dryer, Electric Replacement – \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Heater, Standard Warranty – \$200 (less than 10-yr warranty)
<input type="checkbox"/> Clothes Dryer, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Heater, Life-long Warranty – \$250 (10-yr or longer warranty)
<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Range, Electric Replacement – \$25	
<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Range, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25	
	This water heater is for: <input type="checkbox"/> New Home
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gas Conversion
	<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Replacement

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account No. \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

P.O. Box 19, Auburn IL 62615

Telephone: (800) 245-7322 (RECC) or (217) 438-6197 • [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop)

Normal office hours 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

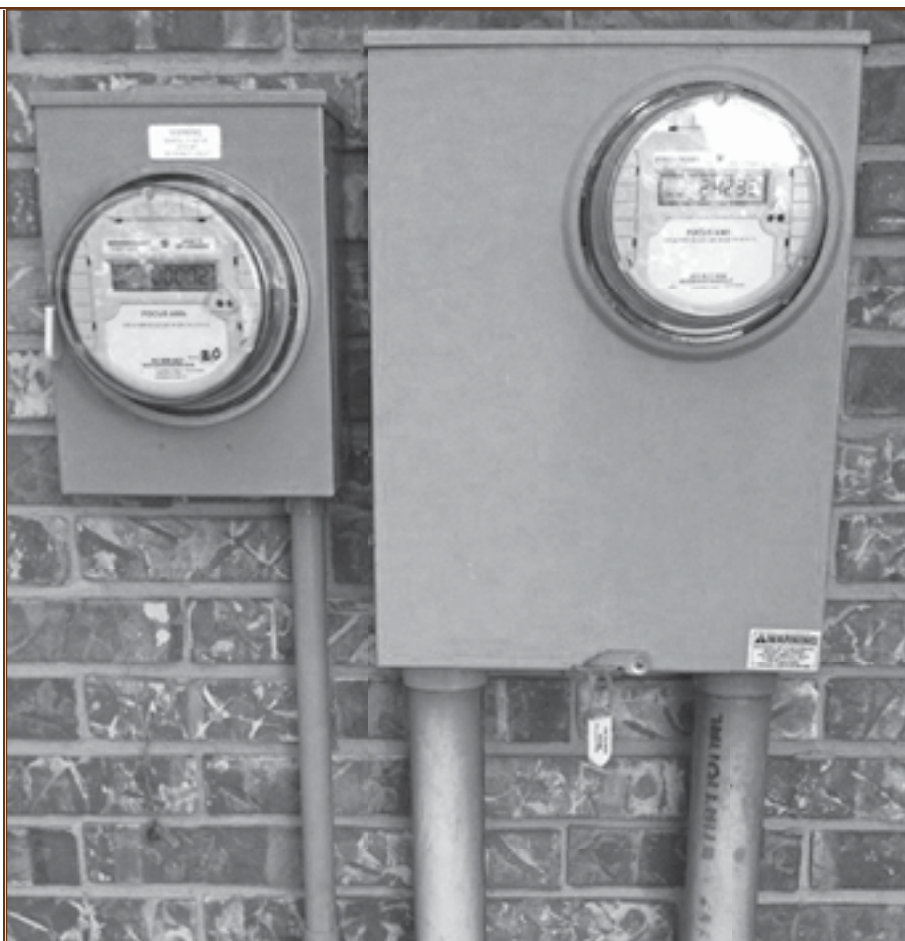
## *Dual Meter rate changes coming*

RECC's Board of Directors approved changes in the co-op's Dual Meter rate schedule at their August meeting, with a small rate increase to take effect January 1, 2012. The Dual Meter program provides a submeter with a lower rate for electric heating, water heating and air conditioning, and includes a Peak Switch for load control of the air conditioning and water heater.

The Dual Meter rate will increase from 7¢ per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to 7.5¢/kWh in January, which is about a 3-cent savings from the main rate for most of the 1,400 Dual Meter accounts. The increase was necessary to maintain a small margin over our wholesale power cost each month.

Besides the small rate increase, the minimum-use provisions in the rate schedule were also changed. "The Dual Meter rate was introduced 25 years ago to encourage efficient energy use year-round," says Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith. "By increasing our electric heat load in the winter time, we balance the summer air conditioning peak and make better use of our distribution system. That helps lower the average costs for all members. The Peak Switches help reduce our costs as well by lowering our monthly peak demand, which is one factor in our wholesale power bill."

The minimums included in the Dual Meter rate schedule are meant to insure that members are actually using their electric heating systems



in the winter months, Smith says. "There is a minimum bill during the winter heating months that any active system should meet easily, and also a total for the heating season that shows us that the electric heat is being used," he explains.

If a home doesn't use the minimum of 5,000 kWhs during the heating season, then the savings during the air conditioning season

are reduced. "We're trying to make sure the intent of this rate is being followed, so that everyone benefits," Smith says. Homeowners who are not using their electric heat may be better off on another program, he adds.

If you have any questions about the Dual Meter rate, please give our office a call at 438-6197.