

Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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



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Pioneer seed plant receives lighting rebate

Pioneer Hi-Bred's Litchfield Production Plant received an energy efficiency rebate check for \$1,571 for lighting improvements made in their warehouses. The rebate was presented by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, through the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency's (IMEA) Electric Efficiency Program. Rural Electric provides electric service to the Pioneer Hi-Bred facility, which processes soybean and wheat seed from local growers.

The company removed a total of 49 older fluorescent "T-12" light fixtures, replaced by newer "T-5" fluorescent lamps, with thinner tubes and electronic ballasts that use less electricity to give the same or even higher light levels than the older lights.

Making the rebate presentation was Lou Weitekamp of Raymond, board member for Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, to Location Manager Tony Herman. "Our plant is in operation 24 hours a day seven days a week 6-8 months of the year, so any improvement in efficiency will help us keep our costs down. We also have better visibility in the warehouse resulting in a safer workplace," Herman commented. The fixture changes were done by the plant's maintenance employees, and Herman says they hope to convert more lighting fixtures throughout the facility.



Plant Location Manager Tony Herman (right) receives a lighting rebate check for the Pioneer Hi-Bred seed plant at Litchfield from Lou Weitekamp, District 8 Director for Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative. The \$1,571 rebate was for high-efficiency fluorescent fixtures (seen in the background) installed in one of the Pioneer buildings.

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Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Board report

Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting June 28, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on June 28, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., with all members present except Clayton Bloome. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith; Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

* The minutes of the June 28 regular Board meeting were approved as presented.

* Lou DeLaby presented an update on the Farmersville substation transformer change out and some service upgrades for expanding member electrical needs. He also reported on two recent outages and their causes.

* Chairman Ayers distributed the RECC Board and President/CEO appraisal forms to each of the Directors to be completed.

* CEO Stuva presented the IMEA Report. He noted the refrigerator recycling program is anticipated to start August 1, with a budget of up to 660 refrigerators to be collected.

* There was no AIEC report because there had not been an AIEC Board meeting since the last RECC Board meeting.

* Attorney Tice reported on a right-of-way issue.

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 June were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

* Reported that a 75-Year Anniversary Open House is planned at the headquarters on September 6.

* 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 15 persons.

* Approved a vote in favor of a merger between CoBank (an RECC lender) and U.S. AgBank, FCB.

* Passed a Resolution to approve an amendment to the cooperative's ERC loan agreement with RUS and the extension of that agreement.

* Approved proposed amendments to Policy 100.8 entitled "Statement of Functions of Finance, Audit, Rate and Planning Committee" to authorize the oversight of the cooperative's ERC Conservation Loan Program.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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REA changed life in the country

Although nearly 90 percent of urban dwellers had electricity by the 1930s, only ten percent of rural dwellers did. Private utility companies, who supplied electric power to most of the nation's consumers, argued that it was too expensive to string electric lines to isolated rural farmsteads. Anyway, they said most farmers were too poor to be able to afford electricity. The Roosevelt Administration believed that if private enterprise could not supply electric power to the people, then it was the duty of the government to do so. Most of the court cases involving TVA during the 1930s concerned the government's involvement in the public utilities industry.

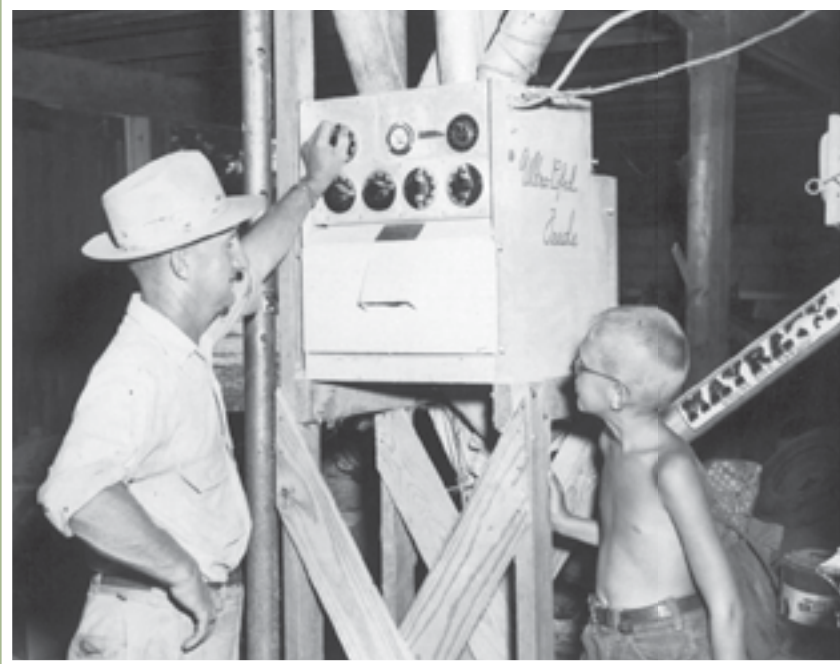
In 1935 the Rural Electric Administration (REA) was created to bring electricity to rural areas. In his 1935 article "Electrifying the Countryside," Morris Cooke, the head of the REA, stated that in addition to paying for the energy he used, the farmer was expected to advance to the power company most or all of the costs of construction. Since utility company ideas as to what constituted sound rural lines have been rather fancy, such costs were prohibitive for most farmers. Many groups opposed the federal government's involvement in developing and distributing electric power, especially utility companies, who believed that the government was unfairly competing with private enterprise. Other people thought that farmers simply did not have the skills needed to manage local electric companies.

By 1939 the REA had helped to establish 417 rural electric cooperatives, which served 288,000 households. The actions of the REA encouraged private utilities to electrify the countryside as well. By 1939 rural households with electricity had risen to 25 percent. When farmers did receive electric



REA

Electric lights and appliances improved the quality of life for rural residents.



▲ *Electricity was the inexpensive "helping hand" for farmers, making equipment like this feed mixing station possible.*

power their purchase of electric appliances helped to increase sales for local merchants. Farmers required more energy than city dwellers, which helped to offset the extra cost involved in bringing

power lines to the country. Rural electrification was based on the belief that affordable electricity would improve the standard of living and the economic competitiveness of the family farm.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WATER HEATER AS FAITHFUL AS THE MARATHON.

Both of these water heaters run like clockwork... without a worry. And both are known for their longevity. One is located in Yellowstone National Park and the other is available through your nearby electric cooperative. Now you can have your own "Old Faithful" and get a lifetime of dependable hot water.

For the efficiency, For the durability,
For the planet...Choose Marathon!



The New Old Faithful

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative carries 50-gallon and 75-gallon Marathon water heaters, at special prices to co-op members. Plus, they qualify for the long-life water heater rebate of \$250! With the rebate applied toward the purchase price, your cost for a lifetime-warranted Marathon is:

50-gallon	\$450
75-gallon	\$575

Call RECC for more information on super-efficient Marathon water heaters!
(800) 245-7322

For more information, visit:
www.marathonheaters.com

Marathon heaters are proudly made in the USA.

“Power marketers” may cause confusion

Some RECC members contacted by companies seeking Ameren customers’ business

Several RECC members have received telephone calls or mailings recently that promise savings on the energy portion of their electric bill by switching their power supplier. The marketing campaign is intended for Ameren and Commonwealth Edison customers, *not* RECC members or municipal utility customers.

Apparently, mass marketing has not progressed beyond lists of residents in a given area, which may include customers of both electric co-ops and investor-owned companies like Ameren.

The new marketing efforts are the result of legislation passed over a decade ago, that allows investor-owned utility customers to choose who supplies the energy portion of their electric bill. It does not change who distributes the electricity to the consumer.

Deregulation was driven by and mainly benefited larger industrial loads in the past 14 years. In general, the savings for residential consumers and small businesses have been dismal or nonexistent. Some new rules put in place by the Illinois Commerce Commission have made it easier for competitive companies to coordinate billing and records with Ameren and ComEd, and now we’re seeing more activity from companies who want to sell power to residential customers.

Marketers make choice sound wonderful, but the risks for consumers can be high. Power generators and the electric utility industry are facing unprecedented levels of risk and uncertainty in today’s environment. With the economy in the doldrums, the

“open market” price for electricity has fallen, so competitors can offer slightly lower costs for power than Ameren or ComEd’s standard rates. That will change when the economy and electric demand start to recover.

Co-ops not included

The 1997 deregulation legislation recognized that cooperatives and municipal utilities are different and should have the right to make a local decision on whether or not to enter the deregulated market. As of now, no cooperatives have chosen to participate.

Their reasoning is that locally elected co-op board members (and city councils in municipal systems) already give consumers local control over their utilities. If those

consumers demand more options or a different direction in power supplies, than they can make that happen through election of co-op directors or city councils.

And really, co-ops and small municipal electric systems are already doing what the power marketers are trying to do... aggregate groups of consumers to get a better deal on power than an individual customer can find on their own.

So, if you receive a phone call or mailing from one of the power marketers, you can let them know that you already have someone looking out for your best interest on your electric bill. We’re your local source of power, as well as information and advice to help use electricity wisely and safely.

What’s a power marketer?

The competitors trying to sell power to Ameren customers are called Retail Electric Suppliers, and four companies are currently approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission to market power in central and southern Illinois. They are Integrys Energy Services, Constellation Energy, Blue Star Energy Solutions and Champion Energy. Even if a customer chooses to buy their electricity from an RES, their power is still delivered by Ameren, which collects its own transmission and delivery charges.

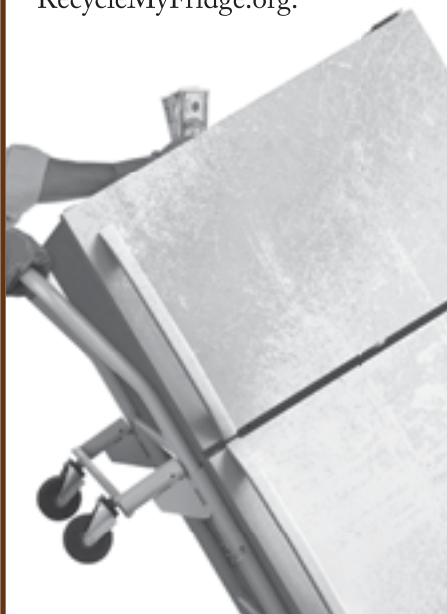
If you are solicited by one of these companies, they probably got your name from a ZIP code or telephone list for your area. You can simply ignore them or say “no thanks.” Other companies may try to take advantage of the “open market” confusion with misleading or even illegal claims and promises. As always, be careful what you share with any unknown company, and NEVER give your social security, credit card or bank account numbers unless you have a trusted relationship with the person you’re dealing with.

News & Notes

Refrigerator recycling off to good start

RECC and the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (which supplies our wholesale electricity) have removed 17 old refrigerators and two freezers from co-op members' homes since August 1, under the Illinois Recycle My Fridge program. By recycling an extra refrigerator, members can save as much as \$100 a year while assuring that almost all of the parts are being re-used in some way. The Appliance Recycling Centers of America (ARCA), Inc. is handling the pickup and handling of the old refrigerators and freezers, and sending a \$35 gift card to each participant.

Residents of owner-occupied homes served by RECC can schedule an appointment to have their refrigerator or freezer picked up from inside their homes, free of charge, by calling (877) 341-2313 or visiting the program's website, www.RecycleMyFridge.org.



Electricity at the State Fair

Taking 4-H projects to the State Fair is a longstanding tradition, and it's not just livestock and sewing work on display. About 90 electricity projects were entered from around the state for conference judging, where the young 4-Hers explain their project and what they've learned to the judge. Several of this year's State Fair judges were volunteers from electric co-ops, including Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations at RECC. He is pictured reviewing wiring and switches with the young man who built a

circuit project. Smith also serves on the State 4-H Electricity Committee, which makes recommendations for projects and judging guidelines.



RECC employees earn Certificates

Two employees have earned Supervisory Certificates from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) for completing a series of training courses to develop knowledge of co-op and organizational operations. Executive Assistant Sandy Lex (left) and Accountant Matt Sheerin received their Certificates for the NRECA Supervisory Program. Sandy has worked at RECC since



June 2008, and Matt joined the co-op in June 2002.

"Home Remedies" on the radio

Doug Rye's "Home Remedies" radio show provides practical insight into home construction ideas and energy efficiency measures every Saturday morning from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. on WSMI 1540AM. Doug Rye may be the best-known residential energy consultant in the nation. Since 1990, his weekly radio show has provided practical insight into home construction ideas

and energy efficiency measures. Doug is known nationwide for his honest, down-to-earth and friendly style. His show airs live each Saturday morning, sponsored locally by RECC, M.J.M. Electric Cooperative and area heating contractors. Callers with energy efficiency, new construction and remodel questions are always welcome and encouraged to call the show. The station number is 1-800-477-1037.

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"/> Marathon Lifetime-Warranty Water Heaters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Meter Heating Rate | <input type="checkbox"/> Surge Suppressor Lease | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance Saving Rates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security Light Rental | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Power Plus™ Visa | <input type="checkbox"/> AT&T Wireless Cellular Phone Savings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convectair Heaters | <input type="checkbox"/> DTN Wireless Internet | |

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

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

Avoiding electrical hazards during harvest

Harvest season is one of the busiest times of year for farmers—and among the most dangerous. Before taking to the fields, we urge farm workers to be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment far away from them.

The simple movement of a portable grain auger from one bin to another can have tragic results if the individuals involved are not extremely careful. The use of tractors with large cabs and antennas and the use of oversized grain wagons can also result in preventable electrocution incidents.

“Electrical equipment, such as power lines near the end rows, may get overlooked during such a hectic time of year as harvest,” says Lou DeLaby, Manager of Operations and Maintenance. “However, failure to notice overhead power lines can be a deadly oversight.”

Most farmsteads could use a very careful visual inspection of overhead electric lines. The service may no longer meet the proper height codes because of age and/or damage to poles and pole guy wires. The sag may have increased over the years, while the height of the machinery being used today may be much higher.

Utility regulators require power lines to be 18.5 feet or more above the ground to provide adequate clearance. However, today’s farm equipment has a long reach when extended. Even when collapsed for roadway transport, many pieces of equipment may exceed that 18.5 foot height. A daily check of where equipment will be moving should be



Large farm equipment should be kept away from overhead power lines to avoid possible contact.

conducted to ensure that it will clear power lines.

Don’t take matters into your own hands if there is a potential problem. Wires may not be as high as they look. Never undertake the height measurement of the lines without the on-site help of utility company officials.

Always maintain a 10-foot separation from a power line—above, below, and on the sides—whether you are driving underneath or passing a grain auger near it. Large equipment can quickly make wide swings when turning or maneuvering on a farmstead or in the field.

In addition to a field survey of power lines farmers should obtain safety information for the benefit

of their workers and make sure everyone knows how to stay safe. Where possible, install electrical safety warning signage to prevent contact with power lines. Always keep in mind that electricity doesn’t allow mistakes, and neither should you.

For more information and videos on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency, and supported by RECC and a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators, and other entities committed to promoting safe use of electricity.