



Page 2	September Board report
Page 3	Scholarships offered for 2008
Page 4	Carbon monoxide detectors required in homes
Page 5	Attacks on Co-op Financing
Page 8	RECC at Lineman's Rodeo

Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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

Trailers are big business

If you think trailers are boring slabs of wood or metal on wheels, you need to take a drive on Interstate 55 to Exit 60, and head down the east frontage road toward Litchfield. You can't miss the new Midway Trailer Sales and Service store there, with acres of trailers on display along the highway.

From the smallest open trailer to the biggest horse/living quarters unit, you can probably find a trailer that suits your needs. And if not, Midway Trailer has three other locations in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky that have a total of \$6 million of trailers in inventory!

Dave Bormida, manager of trailer sales at the Litchfield store, says they serve customers in a 100-mile radius on a daily basis. "Midway's focus is on customer service – meeting the customer's needs," he says. Besides flatbeds, horse and livestock trailers and cargo trailers, Dave says they also have a truck parts and service department, and have recently added truck accessories such as spray-on bed liners, running boards and camper shells.

There's a six-bay shop staffed by experienced mechanics and technicians, among the 20-plus employees in Litchfield. Dave says that, including himself, there's over 30 years of industry experience among just five of the local employees.

The attractive building, which opened last year, includes 28,000 square feet of showroom space and truck/trailer parts.

Popular brands available at Midway include Doolittle, Kiefer Built, Bison



You can stroll through acres of cargo and livestock trailers at Midway Trailer Sales along Interstate 55.

and Sundowner. Dave says the equine business is one of the fastest growing areas, with combination horse trailer/living quarter units to meet the needs of horse owners traveling to shows. "We try to change with the industry," he says.

As a division of Midway Truck Parts and Service, the local shop can handle any aluminum and steel welding, engine overhauls and transmission work. The truck parts business is also growing, Dave says.

With the great location along Interstate 55, Midway pulls in customers from a wide area. They go even further with their Internet site, at www.midwaytrailersales.com. Their phone number is 217-324-4740.



Truck parts manager Larry Todt (left) and trailer sales manager Dave Bormida enjoy the new facilities and great highway visibility at their Litchfield store.

So whether you're in the market for a trailer of any type, or just like to look at the latest equipment trends, stop in at Midway Trailers and stroll through their lot and showroom. You'll see that today's trailers are anything but boring!

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

Board Of Directors

Jimmy L. Ayers
Chairman

Lee W. Marten,
Vice Chairman

John A. Beatty,
Secretary-Treasurer

Cassie L. Eigenmann
Asst. Sec.-Treasurer

Thomas "Ted" Dowson

Mel Repscher

Erv Shores

David E. White

Chris Wilcox

President/CEO

David Stuva

Rural Highlights

(USPS 473-140) is published monthly for \$3 per year by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. Publication Office, P.O. Box 19, Auburn, IL 62615. Periodical postage paid at Auburn, IL and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Rural Highlights, P.O. Box 19, Auburn, IL 62615.

Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Board report

Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting Sept. 24, 2007

The regular monthly meeting of the board of directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters at 7 p.m. on Sept. 24, with all members present except Cassie Eigenmann. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Director of Member and Public Relations, Dana Smith; Field Engineer and Purchasing Agent, Martin Hinton; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

* The minutes of the Aug. 23 regular board meeting were approved as presented.

* CEO Stuva introduced Martin Hinton, who reviewed the present Thayer municipal rate.

* CEO Stuva introduced Dana Smith who presented a program being prepared by management entitled "Operation Green-Up." The program would allow members to round-up their monthly utility bill to the nearest \$1 with the proceeds raised by the program to be used by the cooperative for renewable energy projects such as wind, solar thermal, photovoltaic or biomass.

* CEO Stuva and Smith discussed a conservation program to promote use of energy efficient compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs by RECC members. The Board agreed with the overall program and asked for more details to be developed.

* There was no AIEC report since there had been no AIEC board meeting since the last RECC board meeting.

* Director White provided the Prairie Power Report, noting that there would be a ground-breaking ceremony for the Prairie State Power Project on Oct. 1.

* There was no Attorney's report.

President/CEO's Report

CEO Stuva reviewed the following reports which had either been mailed or distributed to all directors and attorney: Member and Public Relations, Job Training and Safety, Meters and Outages, Operations and Maintenance, Engineering and Construction, Cash Disbursements Summary and Check Listing. The Board accepted the reports. Financial and statistical reports for August were reviewed and accepted.

CEO Stuva also:

* Noted that energy sales for August were the highest on record, due mainly to the hot and humid weather during the month. Kilowatt hours sales were 19.1 percent higher than in August 2006.

* Reported that staff would be working with the co-op's engineer and RDUP on a new four-year work plan.

* Noted that work on a net metering policy is on hold while discussions of a possible statewide policy for co-ops are being held.

* Reviewed plans for upcoming meetings.

Board Action

The Board acted on the following:

* Approved the application for, or reinstatement of, membership and electric service for 28 persons.

* Approved an increase in the energy charge for the Thayer municipal rate schedule.

* Approved the Operation Green-Up program to be introduced in 2008, to encourage voluntary contributions from members for renewable energy projects.

* Approved Resolutions authorizing RECC to provide financial assurances to Prairie Power, CoBank and CFC for the purchase of a 6 megawatt share of the Prairie State Power Project.

* After a review by Attorney Tice, approved the revised wholesale power contract with Prairie Power, Inc.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Energy use: myths and facts

In the face of rising energy costs, consumers are looking for ways to reduce their energy use. Although there are a lot of good ideas out there, there also are a lot of misconceptions about what is really effective. We'll be looking at some of the most common myths, as well as the facts over the coming months to set you on the right path.

Myth: Insulating the ceiling will just cause more heat to leak out of the windows.

Fact: Adding insulation to one part of a home won't increase the "pressure" on heat losses through other parts. However, it is certainly true that poorly insulated areas will be the major loser of heat, and they often merit attention before improving already well-insulated parts of the home. And, the ceiling is usually the easiest part of the house to add insulation to, if there is an attic!



Scholarships offered for 2008

The Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship program is offering seven scholarships of \$1,250 for 2008, more than has ever been offered before. The Memorial Scholarship program's aim is to assist electric cooperative youths, while honoring past rural electric leaders through memorial gifts.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

Applicants must be a high school senior now, and planning



to attend full-time at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university in Illinois. The \$1,250 scholarships are for one year and are not renewable. Scholarships will be awarded based on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, biographical statement and knowledge of electric co-ops as demonstrated in a short essay.

The deadline for scholarship applications is Jan. 1, 2008, and winners will be announced by May 1, 2008. Application forms are available from the RECC office in Auburn. You can request an application and rules sheet by calling our office at 800-245-7322.

The IEC Memorial Scholarship program was established in 1994, and the number and amount of scholarships has been increased several times thanks to the generosity of many organizations and individuals.

Carbon monoxide detectors required in homes

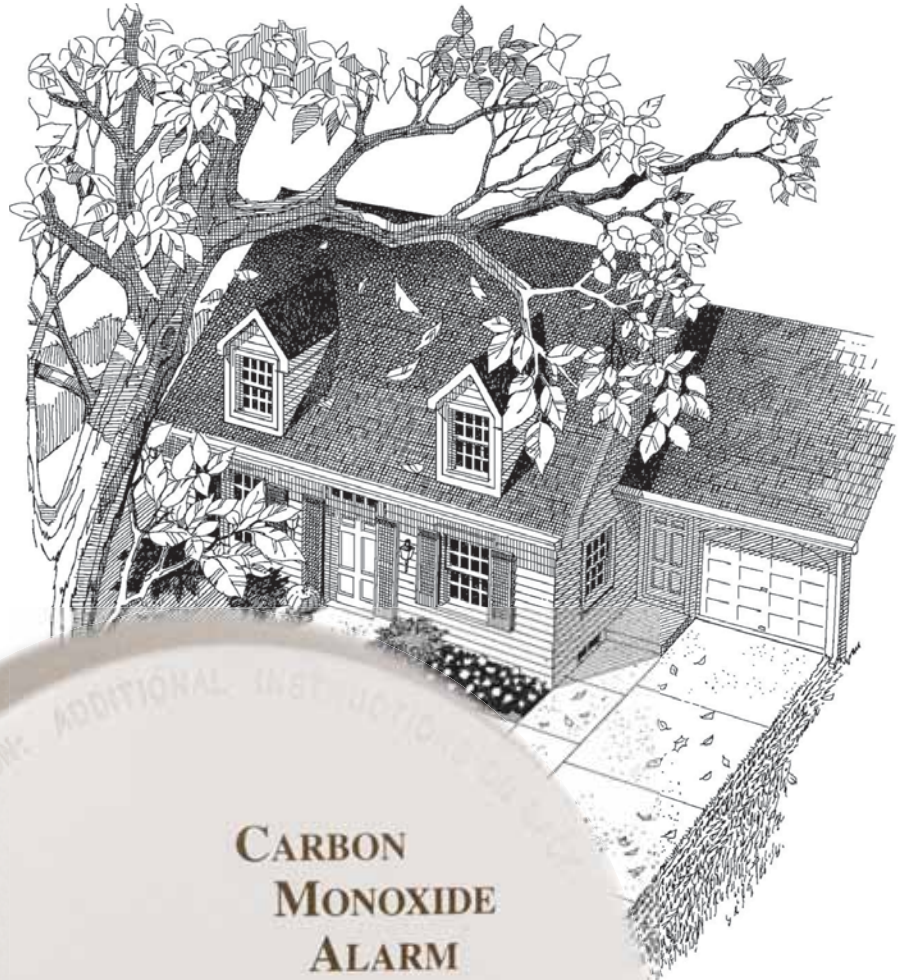
It's known as the "silent killer," because many victims are overcome in their sleep. You can't see it or smell it, but carbon monoxide (CO) can make you sick or kill you. And Illinois law requires that nearly all homes have a carbon monoxide detector to warn you of dangerous CO levels.

Carbon monoxide is a gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas or propane burn incompletely. Home heating equipment and cooking appliances that burn fuels can create dangerous levels of CO in a home, as can vehicles or generators running in an attached garage.

The law says that any home that uses fossil fuel must have an approved, operating CO detector installed within 15 feet of any sleeping area. It became effective Jan. 1 of this year. The law also includes detectors for any home with an attached garage, so even most all-electric homes are included in the requirement.

It's up to local jurisdictions to enforce the law, which states that failure to install a detector is a Class B misdemeanor. Tampering with or removing an alarm is a Class A misdemeanor.

As many as 600 Americans die each year from carbon monoxide



concentration and time of exposure to the odorless gas. Dizziness, nausea, headache, coughing, irregular heartbeat, and pale skin with cherry red lips and ear tips are possible symptoms.

Carbon monoxide detectors are very reasonable in cost, and can be purchased as a combination with a smoke alarm. Look for the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) standard's seal.

By complying with the state law, you'll protect yourself and your loved ones from an unnecessary risk. For more information on the carbon monoxide detector law, visit the Illinois State Fire Marshal Web site at www.state.il.us/osfm.

poisoning, and the number of people becoming ill from the gas is unknown since the symptoms are similar to other ailments such as flu or food poisoning.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning vary with the

Attacks on co-op financing may raise costs

At a time when electric co-ops are working to meet increased demand from our members, our traditional financing source for new power plants is in jeopardy.

Even with today's emphasis on energy efficiency and conservation, we're going to need more electric generation plants. Some energy will come from wind and other renewable energy sources, but we also need conventional baseload power plants, with coal as the least-cost fuel source.

The cost of construction and rising fuel prices will be seen by all consumers in the coming years, but costs could go even higher if traditional federal loans are not available as a financing option. New restrictions have eliminated federal loans for baseload power plants, and further restrictions are proposed for the 2008 budget.

The Agriculture Department's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), once known as the REA, is under fire from some groups that call for elimination of all RUS loans to electric co-ops. The critics claim that the RUS loan program is a Depression-era relic.

The Depression did spur the creation of co-ops like RECC, utilizing government loans to build electric systems to serve the rural areas. By borrowing from REA at rates comparable to the government's cost of money, co-ops were able to keep their rates reasonable despite the sparse populations they served.

While some people say that the federal program's job is done, now that nearly everyone has reliable electric service across the country, the cost to maintain high-quality service never ends. The system built over the past 70 years needs constant maintenance and routine replacement, and more sources of dependable power must be developed. Co-ops are willing to do their part to address growing energy needs, but they need the tools to build.

Power plant financing is a real issue for RECC and the 10 other Illinois co-ops that purchase



RECC and the other 10 members of Prairie Power, Inc. will own 130 megawatts of the new coal-fired Prairie State power station in Washington County, when it's completed in 2011.

wholesale power through Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI). PPI will own a share of the new Prairie State coal-fired power plant under construction in Washington County, Ill.

If RUS loans aren't available for PPI's share of the generating station, then higher-cost financing will have to be obtained. The higher interest rates could cost the 11 PPI member-cooperatives an extra \$120 million over the life of the loan. It would mean an extra \$5.5 million in expenses for RECC's members in the next 30 years.

Government assists all utilities

All electric utilities receive financial assistance in one form or another. Investor-owned utilities receive tax breaks including

accelerated depreciation and investment tax credits. Municipal utilities sell tax-exempt bonds.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates federal subsidies in 2005 amounted to \$55 per customer for municipal systems, \$35 per customer for investor-owned utilities, and only \$1 per member-consumer for electric co-ops.

The movement to stop new cooperative-owned coal generation plants is a misguided attempt by special interest groups trying to score victories in the climate change debate, says the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. While co-op funding is an easy target, the energy production from cooperatives amounts to less than 5 percent of power generated nationwide.

Federal Assistance per Consumer



The Department of Energy's estimate of federal subsidies per consumer in 2005 shows that investor-owned and municipal utilities receive much larger subsidies than co-ops due to their tax benefits.

News & Notes

Cellular phones at home

More consumers are using their cell phones as their only phone service at home, and recent developments make it even easier. In most cases you can now move your home number to a cellular carrier, get rid of your home phone bill and keep your home number. With a dock-n-talk device you can plug your cell phone into a docking station and your in-home phones ring.

Times are changing quickly for phone service so call our AT&T Cingular representative, Jim McAfee, at 217-741-0405 and check out your options. Jim also says that high speed Internet is now available in Auburn, Pawnee, Springfield and other towns with speeds up to 700 kps, with the installation of new cellular equipment in those areas.

Goodbye to mercury vapor lights!

According to the Federal Energy Act of 2005, no more mercury vapor light ballasts can be manufactured or imported as of Jan. 1, 2008. Mercury vapor lights are the blue-tinted bulbs often seen in outdoor lighting, which are less efficient than high-pressure sodium (HPS) and other lighting sources. RECC replaced virtually all of its mercury security lights years ago with the more-yellow HPS fixtures. As old mercury vapor lights wear out, they will have to be replaced with a different type of light as the supply of repair parts are exhausted. On the good news side, a 100-watt HPS fixture puts out nearly the equivalent light of a 175-watt mercury vapor, and the HPS bulb maintains its light output much better as it ages.

We have a winner!

At the end of our promotion for automatic payments on members' electric bills, we held a drawing from the 615 members who are now using auto pay from their bank accounts or credit cards. The lucky winner of a Kodak digital camera was Mike Samonds of Glenarm, who has used the auto pay option since last November. Mike and his wife, Brenda, are shown in their "Kodak Moment" with Dana Smith (right), RECC's Director of Public and Member Relations. During the summer promotion, 118 members were added to the auto pay plans,



saving time and expenses while assuring that their electric bills are always paid on time. For more information about our automatic payment plans, and the new e-bill option, visit our Web site at www.recc.coop.



Air Evac Kickoff

The weather wasn't ideal, but the Air Evac Lifeteam helicopters were making work runs on Oct. 13 during the Air Evac/RECC Open House held to kick off the new monthly billing option for RECC members. We can now add the Air Evac membership charge of \$5 to your electric bill each month, which could save you thousands of dollars if you ever need emergency air transport from the company. Several members signed up for the new billing plan at the open house, including Eugene and Lois Beckey of Edinburg, shown at the Air Evac base near Pawnee with Tom Ling (right), local membership coordinator.

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 – \$500/home
- Air Source Heat Pumps – \$500/home (with electric back-up)
- Air Source Heat Pumps – \$200/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 Conversation – \$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 Conversation |
| | <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.

RECC team lassoes award at Lineman's Rodeo

RECC linemen Craig Costello, Dave Flynn and Bill Hart (pictured from left), received third place overall in the statewide Lineman's Safety Rodeo. The team placed first in the written test of lineman knowledge and the single phase insulator changeout events.

The 10th Annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo, held at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield on Friday, Sept. 21, coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Several electric suppliers joined the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and LLCC in co-sponsoring the event.

Line personnel from 10 Illinois electric cooperatives competed in five team events and two individual



events. Team events included hurt man rescue, egg climb (linemen climbing a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouths), single-

phase insulator change, overhead line switching and written test of lineman knowledge.

November Holidays

RECC's office will be closed in observance of **Veterans Day** on **Monday, Nov. 12**. For **Thanksgiving**, the office will be closed **Nov. 22 and 23**. As always, the dispatch office will be available 24 hours at 800-245-7322, and line crews are on call to respond to any emergencies.



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

P.O. Box 19
Auburn, IL 62615