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# Rural HIGHLIGHTS

A publication of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative • Auburn, Illinois • [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop)



*Season's Greetings*

*from the directors and employees of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative!*

## Directors

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Jimmy Ayers      | Melvin Repscher |
| John Beatty      | Erv Shores      |
| Ted Dowson       | Chris Wilcox    |
| Cassie Eigenmann | David White     |
| Lee Marten       |                 |

## Employees

- |                               |                |                |                |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| David Stuva,<br>President/CEO | Shelley Crocks | Carol Funk     | Tom Jones      | Matt Sheerin   |
| Clark Bowman                  | Lou DeLaby     | Becky Grossner | Jeff Lancaster | Dana Smith     |
| Travis Boylen                 | Curt Fishburn  | Bill Hart      | Dave McCarty   | Stefan Sporrer |
| Craig Costello                | Dave Flynn     | Tim Hemberger  | Curt Nichelson | Walt Wallace   |
|                               | Dean Fuchs     | Martin Hinton  | Jim Psaute     | Ken Williamson |



***Our office will be closed Tuesday, December 25 and Tuesday, January 1.***

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## 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

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Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# Board report

## Resume of Minutes Regular Board Report October 22, 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 October 22, with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Director of Member and Public Relations, Dana Smith; Manager of Operations and Maintenance, Lou DeLaby; Manager of Office Services, Dean Fuchs; Bill Duke of Allgeier Martin & Associates, Inc.; Aaron Johnson, General Field Representative for the Northern Regional Division Rural Development Electric Program (RDUP); and Attorney Jerry Tice.

\* The minutes of the September 24 Regular Board Meeting were approved as presented.

\* CEO Stuva introduced Lou DeLaby who reviewed the progress with the reconstruction and replacement of lines damaged by the December 2006 ice storm.

\* CEO Stuva introduced Bill Duke and Aaron Johnson, to review the cooperative's 2008 through 2011 construction work plan and RDUP loans for these projects. Johnson said the proposed \$6.5 million cost falls within approved guidelines.

\* CEO Stuva introduced Dana Smith who reviewed the monthly wind speed analysis based on test equipment installed on RECC's radio tower in Auburn. The consultant's report on the past year's data shows the average wind speeds were very close to the computer model that was done for the co-op's wind turbine project.

\* The AIEC Report was given by Chairman Ayers. He reviewed several strategic considerations rural electric cooperatives would need to consider in the coming years regarding the generation and use of electric energy.

\* Director White provided the Prairie Power Report. CEO Stuva and Directors

Ayers, White and Shores attended the Prairie State Energy Campus ground breaking on Oct. 1.

\* Jerry Tice gave the Attorney's Report noting that he and CEO Stuva would be meeting with staff from the AIEC regarding net metering policies for cooperatives.

## 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 September were reviewed and accepted.

CEO Stuva also:

\* Noted that energy sales for September were 19.9 percent higher than in September 2006, and year-to-date sales were 8 percent higher for 2007.

\* Reviewed rates and financial planning issues for the next five years and beyond.

\* 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 a Resolution to accept the Four-Year Construction Work Plan as presented.

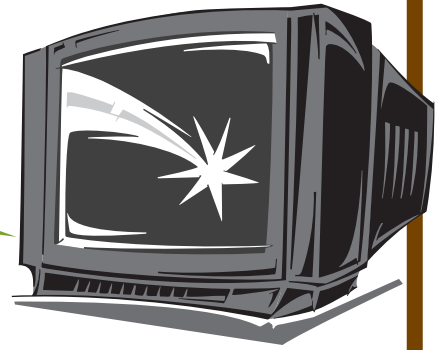
\* Approved an ongoing financial plan to balance equity levels, capital credit retirements and rate requirements.

\* Approved employee wage adjustments as recommended by the Board's Operations Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 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 and facts over the coming months to set you on the right path.



## **Myth: When my appliance is turned off, it's off.**

**Fact:** Most electronic devices continue to consume power when they're switched off, sometimes as much power as when they're on! A surprisingly large number of electrical products - from air conditioners to DVD players to phone chargers - cannot be switched completely off without unplugging the device. These products draw power 24 hours a day, often without the knowledge of the consumer. We call this power consumption "standby power" or "phantom power." Recognizing this waste of energy, some manufacturers are reducing the standby power of their devices and making power supplies more efficient.

# Scholarships deadline is January 1

Time is running out to apply for a college scholarship! The Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship program is offering seven scholarships of \$1,250 for 2008, and the deadline for scholarship applications is Jan. 1.

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.

Application forms are available from the RECC office in Auburn, and must be returned to our office by Jan. 1, 2008. Winners will be announced by May 1, 2008. You can request an application and rules sheet by calling our office at 800-245-7322.

# “E.P., Foam Home”

## Envelope Process uses foam to seal Gibbs’ home

Moe Gibbs hadn’t turned on the geothermal heating system in his new home yet in mid-November, to avoid pulling drywall dust into the ducts. But despite freezing temperatures at night outdoors, the inside temperature stayed around 60 degrees.

He credits the insulation systems on the walls and roof of the 1,650-square-foot house, nestled along the woods east of Palmyra. Foam block forms on the basement and main floor enclose solid concrete walls, and sprayed foam covers the underside of the roof.

“If cold air can’t get in, you don’t have to heat it,” explains Moe of his decision to use foam insulation throughout the house. As he leans against a pink insulation board on an unfinished basement wall, he says it actually feels warm instead of the typical cold concrete surface.

Moe and Jamie Gibbs worked with Tom Smith, with Best Systems Builders in Pittsfield, to plan and install the foam insulation. Best Systems put up the two-inch thick Fold Form panels to form an eight-inch concrete wall in the basement and four-inch concrete in the main story walls. Plastic ties and screw plates are secured behind the foam blocks, with steel rebar in the concrete.

Insulating concrete forms are becoming more common in our area, but sprayed foam insulation is more rare in homes, and the placement may be a first in our area. Instead of insulating on top of the ceiling, the foam is sprayed on the underside of the roof deck. This makes the attic a part of the conditioned space of the home, and no attic vents are installed.

Bob Smith says this is called the “envelope process,” and it’s the second one he’s done in central Illinois. Because the expanding

(Continued on page 5)



*Moe and Jamie Gibbs’ new home east of Palmyra has low-maintenance steel siding and roof panels. Foam insulation and a geothermal heating/cooling system will also help keep the energy bills low.*



*Moe Gibbs cuts a channel in the foam insulation board with a “hot knife” tool for installation of electric wiring circuits in a basement wall.*

## “E.P., Foam Home”

(Continued from page 4)

foam covers every crack and sticks to the wood surfaces, it has an equivalent R-value of 48 for a six inch foam layer, he says.

Moe liked the open-cell foam product because it's based on vegetable oils, and it doesn't have any odor when applied. “It doesn't look that great,” he says of the globs clinging to the roof trusses, “but it's even more than six inches in a lot of places.”

When Moe and Jamie and their family finally turn on the heat this winter, they'll also enjoy the savings of a Climate Master geothermal unit installed by Vanausdoll Heating and Air Conditioning from Jerseyville. The geothermal loops

are lying under 18 feet of water in a pond behind the Gibbs home. That saved some trenching compared to the underground loops that most homes use.

While the house project is going a little slower than Moe had hoped

for, he's involved with every step to make sure it's done right. “I plan to live here for a long time,” he says.

That should mean a lot of years of comfort and savings for the Gibbs family.



*The bottom of the roof deck is insulated, making the attic part of the conditioned space of the home. No insulation is installed directly over the ceilings.*

## A New Year's resolution that makes safety sense! Eliminate electrical hazards in your home

Tens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home, but most can be easily prevented with a few simple steps. Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards is a New Year's resolution that makes sense and is easy to keep!

“Electrical accidents and fires kill more than a thousand people, and result in tens of thousands of injuries each year,” says Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity. “Overloaded outlets, misused and faulty cords and electrical devices are leading causes of home electrical shocks and fires.”

Safe Electricity suggests using this electrical safety checklist to help protect your home and loved ones:

- **Electrical outlets** – Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, make sure unused outlets are covered.

- **Plugs** – Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

- **Extension cords** – Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.

- **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.

- **Circuit breakers/Fuses** – Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you

are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.

- **Appliances/Electronics** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.

- **Service capacity** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, you may need to increase electrical service and add new branch circuits. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

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

# News & Notes

## Be prepared for winter storms

Hopefully, this winter will send us fewer storms than last year, when three ice and snow storms caused extended electric outages. But we all need to be prepared for Mother Nature's worst, and the possibility of a power loss for multiple days. To make an outage easier to cope with, keep an adequate supply of the following on hand at all times. These should be kept in a cool, dry

place and all members of the family should know where to find them.

- Flashlights
- Battery-operated radio
- Extra supply of batteries
- Candles and matches
- Basic first-aid supplies
- A small supply of drinking water and food
- Baby supplies if an infant is in the home

If you use an alternate heat source, be sure and follow operating instructions. For example if you use a kerosene heater, adequate ventilation is a must. All fuels should be stored outside of the home for safety reasons. Wood stoves and fireplaces should be maintained properly throughout the year to prevent problems when they are needed in an emergency.

## Energy tax credits to expire

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provided federal tax credits of up to \$500 for homeowners who make certain energy efficient upgrades to their homes. To be eligible, the qualifying items must be installed by Dec. 31, 2007... that's this month! You may have time to take advantage of the tax credits on:

- Insulation, exterior doors, central air conditioners, heat pumps or water heaters: up to \$300 towards the full purchase price.
- Furnaces or boilers: up to \$150 towards the full purchase price, and/or \$50 for a furnace with an efficient air-circulating fan.
- Exterior windows (including skylights): 10 percent of the total cost, up to \$200.

For more details, check the Web site at [www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org).

## Warning signs installed

New warning signs with blinking lights went up this fall on Route 104 on the east side of Auburn, warning motorists of the dangerous intersection at Dixon Road and the truck entrance to Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative's headquarters. After a vehicular accident earlier this year in front of RECC's headquarters, Manager of Operations Lou DeLaby was instrumental in working with IDOT and the City of Auburn for the approval of the yellow flashing beacons.

Rural Electric offered to pay for the new signs, with yellow flashers powered by small solar panels, and the City of Auburn officially requested their installation from IDOT.

*Auburn Mayor Joe Powell, left, checks out the new warning sign on Route 104 on the city's east side with Lou DeLaby, RECC's Manager of Operations. Flashing lights on both sides of the Dixon Road intersection warn motorists to watch for crossing traffic and trucks entering or leaving the co-op headquarters.*

Several accidents have occurred at the corner over the past few years, where visibility is limited by a dip in the highway to the east. President/CEO David Stuva said "Safety is top priority for RECC, not only for our employees but for the members and the community, too. If installing these warning lights prevents just one accident, it was worth the investment."



# 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 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:  New Home  
 Gas Conversion  
 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.

# RECC becomes an ENERGY STAR Partner

Americans saved enough energy in 2006 to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 25 million cars – all while saving \$14 billion on their utility bills – thanks to the government’s popular ENERGY STAR program. RECC has been approved as a partner with Energy Star to make our members more aware of the energy and money savings available through better efficiency.

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy, helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. From product labeling and efficiency guidelines to consumer education, ENERGY STAR is a valuable tool for reducing our energy consumption.

## For the home

Energy efficient choices can save families about a third on their energy bill with similar savings of greenhouse gas emissions, without sacrificing features, style or comfort. ENERGY STAR helps you make the energy-efficient choice.

- If looking for new household products, look for ones that have earned the ENERGY STAR. They meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and Department of Energy.

- If looking for a new home, look for one that has earned the ENERGY STAR.
- If looking to make larger improvements to your home, EPA offers tools and resources to help you plan and undertake projects to reduce your energy bills and improve home comfort.

## For business

Because a strategic approach to energy management can produce twice the savings – for the bottom line and the environment – as typical approaches, EPA’s ENERGY STAR partnership offers a proven energy management strategy that helps in measuring current energy performance, setting goals, tracking savings and rewarding improvements.

EPA provides an innovative energy performance rating system, which businesses have already used for more than 30,000 buildings across the country. EPA also recognizes top performing buildings with the ENERGY STAR.

## The ENERGY STAR label

Probably the best-known part of the program is the ENERGY STAR label for high-efficiency appliances and products, with over 65 percent public awareness levels. The purpose of the label program is to develop performance-based specifications that determine

the most efficient products in a particular category.

Products in more than 50 categories that meet these specifications earn the ENERGY STAR label. They use less energy, save money and help protect the environment.

For instance, ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerator models use at least 15 percent less energy than required by current federal standards and 40 percent less energy than the conventional models sold in 2001.

RECC is planning to support one of the ENERGY STAR programs, Change A Light, in a big way in 2008, with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) give away program for our members. CFLs use 75 percent less energy than comparable incandescent bulbs, and last 10 times longer. Look for details in the January 2008 *Rural Highlights!*

## More information online



Look for information on RECC’s energy-saving programs on our Web site at [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop). We offer efficiency tips, an online energy audit, and links to many other useful sites including ENERGY STAR.

Rural  
**HIGHLIGHTS**

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