

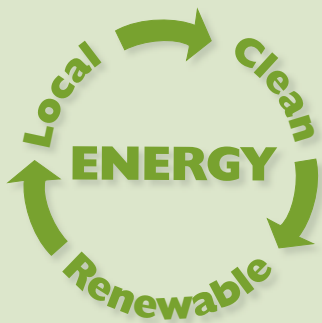
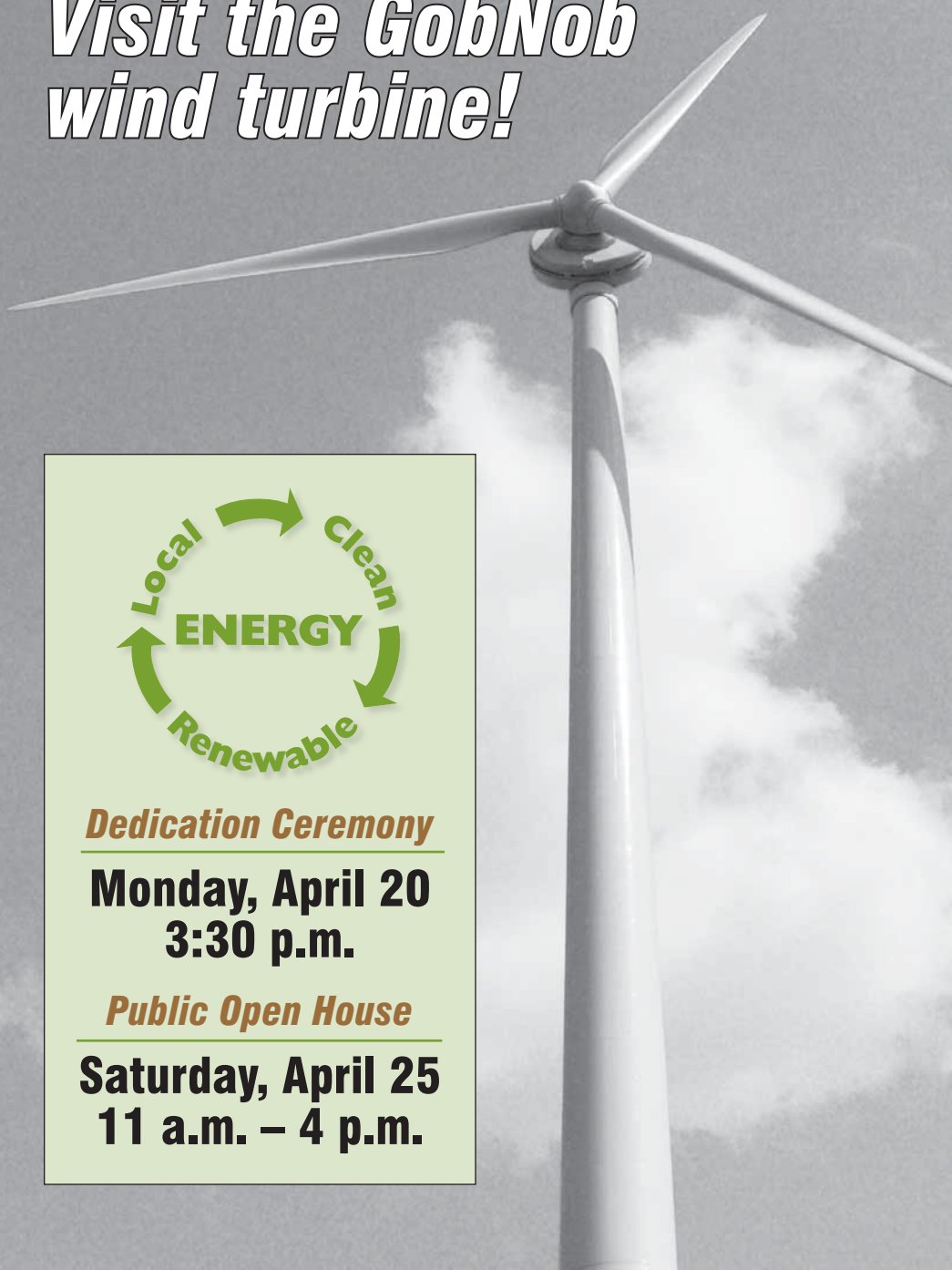


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Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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

Visit the GobNob wind turbine!



Dedication Ceremony

**Monday, April 20
3:30 p.m.**

Public Open House

**Saturday, April 25
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

The GobNob wind turbine has been turning out emissions-free electricity since March 5, for RECC members' use on the Farmersville substation. Here's your chance to stand under the 230-foot tower, and watch the massive blades turn the wind generator (wind conditions permitting)!

On April 20, Governor Pat Quinn and other dignitaries are scheduled to officially dedicate the wind turbine and celebrate the addition of 900 Kilowatts of renewable energy to our electrical system. RECC members are invited to attend this proud moment for our cooperative.

Members are also invited, along with the general public, to an Open House on April 25. RECC representatives will be on hand to answer your questions about wind energy and the GobNob project. Bring your family to see renewable energy in action!

The GobNob wind turbine is on Mine Avenue, just east of Farmersville. From Interstate 55, take Exit 72, and go east 1/2 mile.



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Cassie L. Eigenmann
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Lee W. Marten

Mel Repscher

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David E. White

President/CEO

David Stuva

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Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Board report

Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting February 23, 2009

The regular monthly meeting of the board of directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters at 6 p.m. on Feb. 23, with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva, Manager of Office Services Dean Fuchs, Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith, Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby, Field Engineer/Purchasing Agent Martin Hinton, and Attorney Kevin Tippey.

* The minutes of the Jan. 26 regular board meeting were approved as presented.

* CEO Stuva introduced Lou DeLaby, who presented an update on maintenance work in progress and planned at the Farmersville, Taylorville, Harvel and Lowder substations.

* CEO Stuva introduced Martin Hinton who presented an update on the startup process at the GobNob wind turbine, where technicians have replaced some electronic components and worked on the control system. Martin also reported on a meeting in Iowa with other owners of the EWT turbines.

* The IMEA report was given by CEO Stuva. Directors White and Eigenmann also attended the IMEA Board meeting on Feb. 19, and while RECC is not a voting member, the co-op representatives are welcomed participants in the board meetings.

* There was no AIEC report, as there was no AIEC board meeting in February.

* The Attorney's report was given by Attorney Tippey. He reported that a complaint to the Illinois Department of Labor on the GobNob construction project was being rectified by a subcontractor.

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 January 2009 were reviewed and accepted.

CEO Stuva also:

* Reviewed the higher sales for January because of colder-than-normal weather, and the first wholesale power bill from IMEA for January purchases.

* Reported that Andrew Goleman, who was named to the 2009 Nominating Committee for District 7, could not attend the March 5 committee meeting and requested to be replaced by John Goleman.

* 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 12 persons.

* Approved a reduction of \$25 per day in Directors' per diem payments, effective March 1, 2009.

* Appointed John Goleman to replace Andrew Goleman as District 7 representative on the 2009 Nominating Committee.

* Moved the location for the March 23 board meeting to the IMEA office in Springfield, with a tour of the building to precede the meeting.

* Changed the date of the May Board meeting from May 25 to May 28, due to the Memorial Day holiday.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Director candidates to run for re-election

A committee of RECC members has nominated candidates for director positions in Districts 7, 8 and 9 that are up for election at this year's Annual Meeting. Directors are elected for three-year terms. The Nominating Committee met on March 5 at the RECC office, and named the following candidates:

District 7

Ted T. Dowson
13750 Dowson Rd.
Auburn, IL

District 8

Lee M. Marten
23103 W. Frontage Rd.
Waggoner, IL

District 9

Cassie L. Eigenmann
11767 Hurricane Timber Ln.
Modesto, IL

The nominations have been posted at the Auburn office, as stipulated in the co-op's bylaws. Other candidates may be named by petition for a district, signed by 15 or more members in that district. Petition forms are available from the co-op office in Auburn, and must be returned by May 12 (30 days before the annual meeting, which is on June 11 in Chatham). Any persons nominated by petition will be included in the 2009 Annual Meeting Notice booklet to be mailed to the membership on May 29. Biographical information and a statement from each candidate will also be printed in the booklet.

Serving on this year's Nominating Committee were: District 7 – Samuel Burtle and John Goleman from Divernon, Carl Kessler of Auburn; District 8 – Paul Beeler, Terry Goby and Melvin Wempen, all from Raymond; District 9 – Teri Flowers, Shirley Lomelino and John Welch, all from Modesto. Teri Flowers was elected as chairman of the nominating committee, and Carl Kessler as secretary.

Thank you to these members for your time and interest in the cooperative's business operation, and to the candidates who are willing to work for the benefit of all RECC member-owners!

**Plan to attend
your co-op's
Annual Meeting!**

**Thursday, June 11
Glenwood High School,
Chatham**

**Registration
and Dinner - 5 p.m.
Business meeting - 7 p.m.**

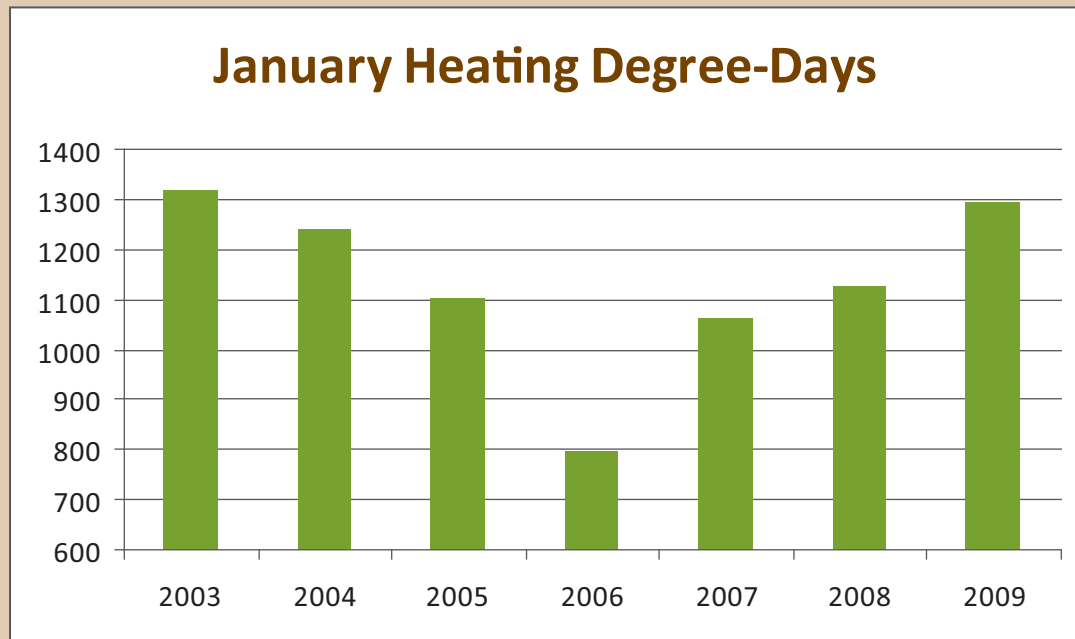


Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee met on March 5 to name candidates for Board Districts 7, 8 and 9. From left in front row are Melvin Wempen and Terry Goby; middle row, Shirley Lomelino, Teri Flowers, John Welch; back row, Carl Kessler, Paul Beeler, John Goleman, Sam Burtle.

The weather does matter!

Colder temperatures lead to higher electric use



January 2009 was the coldest since 2003, and much colder than recent years, as shown in the heating degree-day totals for January of each year shown.

We received a lot of calls this winter from members with higher bills than usual. We knew the billing amounts would be up significantly after the Jan. 1 rate increase, but most members' consumption levels were also higher this winter. The main explanation is the colder weather we had in December and January, and the statistics back this up.

We track weather information through the National Weather Service, from their Springfield airport monitoring station. The monthly data is available on their Web site.

There are a couple of ways of comparing temperatures; the simplest is the average temperature for the month. In December 2009, the average temperature was 28.5 degrees Fahrenheit, which was 1.8 degrees colder than average. January 2009 had an average temperature of 23.1 degrees, 2.0 degrees below normal. In the winter of 2007-08, those two months were slightly warmer than normal.

Another common way to compare temperatures over a period of time is "degree-days." This measurement compares the average daily temperature to a standard 65 degrees, where no heating or cooling should be needed in most buildings. If the high temperature for a winter day is 40, and the low temp is 20, the average is 30 degrees. Subtract this from 65, and you have 35 heating degree-days for that day. Do this for each day of the month, and you'll find the total heating degree-days for that month.

Obviously, the colder the weather, the more heating degree-days you'll have.

So how many heating degree-days did we have this winter? In December, the total was 1,122 compared to 1,042 in December 2007. For January 2009, heating degree-days totaled 1,293 compared to 1,124 in January 2008. That's a 15 percent increase this year compared to 2008. It's also the highest heating degree-day total for January since 2003.

For those with short memories (which is most of us), January 2009 had 10 nights with low temperatures under ten degrees, including three nights below zero. That's not been typical in recent winters, either!

The colder temperatures have an obvious effect on the 1,400 RECC members on our special Dual Meter rate for electric heating. But homes with gas or propane furnaces often used more electricity as well. More run time on the furnace fan is the most direct result of colder weather. Members may also use portable space heaters, heat tapes, heat lamps, or engine block heaters when the temperatures dip. Just staying inside more tends to increase energy use, with more lights, computer systems and TVs turned on during the month.

Thankfully, February and March were a little warmer than usual this year, and now spring is chasing away the frigid air. But your heating budget may have a big bulge for the winter, and there's a very good explanation. It's all in the numbers!

Uncle Sam wants to help you save energy!

Editor's Note: We want to alert our members of the opportunities to receive tax credits for many different home energy efficiency improvements. Tax regulations are never simple, and we're not tax experts! Check with your own tax advisor, or visit the Web sites included in this article for details on eligibility.

To change an old bit of wisdom, "It takes money to save money." To trim significant amounts off your energy bills, you'll probably need some up-front investment for new equipment or home weatherization measures.

Fortunately, the recent federal stimulus bill (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) extended and improved several earlier incentive packages for homeowners and businesses, providing tax credits to help pay for energy improvement projects!

One substantial area included is the purchase and installation of high-efficiency heating systems, including electric geothermal systems and heat pumps that meet minimum requirements. Geothermal systems were rightly recognized as using renewable energy resources, since they use

solar energy stored by the earth to provide heating, cooling and water heating energy in a home. Geothermal installations completed in 2009 through 2016 qualify for a 30 percent tax credit, with no upper limit! Both new and existing homes are included in this program.

Heat pumps are included in the home improvement tax credits, for existing homes. Minimum efficiency levels must be met, for the 30 percent tax credits up to \$1,500. Your contractor should provide a statement that your system meets the efficiency requirements for the credits.

Other home improvements such as exterior windows and skylights, storm windows, exterior doors and storm doors, and insulation also qualify for the 30 percent tax credit. The total credit claimed for all energy improvements is limited to \$1,500.

Tax credits are also available for small wind and solar systems, biomass furnaces, fuel cells and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Commercial energy projects placed in service between Jan. 1, 2006 and Dec. 31, 2013 are also eligible for tax deductions.

For more information, you can visit the Energy Star Web site at www.energystar.gov, or the Department of Energy's Database for State Incentives for renewable and Efficiency at www.dsireusa.org.

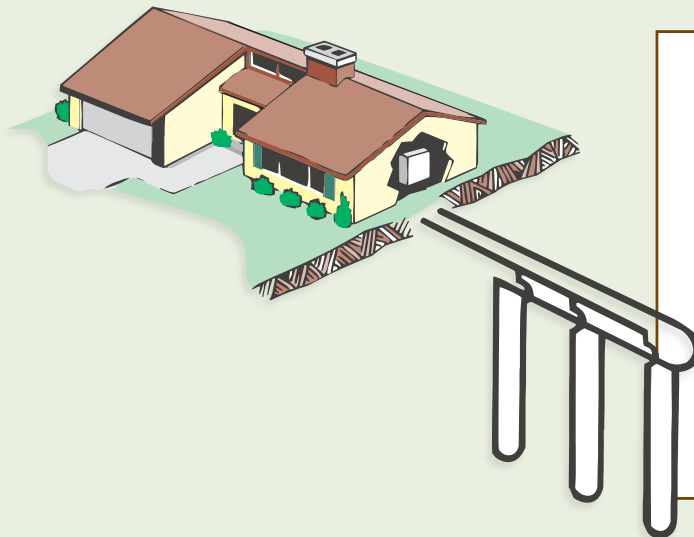
Appliance replacements also save

New appliances pay for themselves over time. By replacing a 10-year-old dishwasher you can save up to \$30 a year in energy costs and use six fewer gallons of water per load. Replacing a pre-1994 clothes washer can save a family \$110 a year on utility bills. Energy Star® washers use 50 percent less energy than standard models, and around



half as much water for a full-size load. And today's Energy Star refrigerators use about half the energy of pre-1993 models, which could mean a savings of over \$100 a year.

Source: Department of Energy



Under the Renewable Energy section of the federal stimulus bill, residential geothermal installations completed between Jan. 1, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2016 qualify for a tax credit of 30 percent of the project cost.

News & Notes

Tree planting cautions

If you're planning to plant a tree in your yard this spring, double-check the location before you start! First, make sure there are no underground wires, pipes or tile near your excavation spot. To have all utility lines marked in the area, call the free JULIE locating service at 800-892-0123 at least two days before you dig. They'll notify all utilities with underground facilities nearby, to locate and mark their lines with paint or flags.

Also, be sure to look above your intended planting spot for overhead power lines. That small tree may be 20, 30 or 40 feet tall in a few years, creating problems with branches in the wires that may affect you or your whole neighborhood. And, you'll be unhappy when a tree trimming crew comes to cut back the offending limbs on your lovely specimen. If you're planting within 20 feet of an overhead line, choose a shrub or dwarf tree that won't grow into the line. For larger trees, move further from the line to avoid future problems. For a suggested list of small- and medium-height trees, call our office at 800-245-7322.



1 balloon, 7,000 homes out of power

A single Mylar balloon caused nearly 7,000 Commonwealth Edison customers on the south side of Chicago to lose power for more than an hour on March 19. The balloon flew into the utility's Crest Hill substation and caused the outage at 10 a.m., ComEd spokesman Jeff Burdick said.



The shiny Mylar balloons conduct electricity, and when they contact power lines or electrical equipment, it causes a surge of electricity and the equipment short-circuits. That's why RECC and other utilities ask you to keep Mylar or other metallic balloons on a string, and poke a hole in them when you're done celebrating. Never release Mylar balloons outdoors!

March 8 storms hit area



This three-phase line southwest of Kincaid was brought down by high winds on March 8.

Most members experienced just strong winds on Sunday, March 8, but a few in the Loami area had eerie nightmares as a tornado tore through in almost the same path as a bigger tornado almost exactly three years ago. No one was seriously injured, but several homes and barns were destroyed in the morning storm. Wind damage in the Kincaid and Taylorville areas knocked out power to more RECC members, and our crews worked to restore most services by midnight Sunday. An Ameren 138,000-volt transmission line fell across the co-op's line south of the Kincaid power plant, but fortunately it did not feed high voltage into our wires.

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: <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.

Cell Phone Information Day **Tuesday, April 14 • 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

- *Are you getting the best calling plan for your needs?*
- *Which cell phone has the best reception?*
- *Should you use the extra features on your phone?*
- *Can you make your mobile phone your home phone number?*

Find the answers to these and many other questions, with representatives of AT&T Wireless and Verizon Wireless at the

RECC office! Stop in any time on April 14, visit with the experts, and look over the latest cell phones and accessories! There will be no hard sell, just a chance to discuss your needs and questions. We'll even provide the refreshments!

We're offering this informal meeting time to our members to help you get the most for your dollars spent on telecommunications. We're not in the phone business, but we want to improve services to our rural consumers. (You may want to bring a recent wireless

phone bill with you to review your monthly minutes and features used.)

We'll also be on hand to talk about your electrical questions!

