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# Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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



## Merry Christmas



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

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Jimmy Ayers  
John Beatty  
Clayton Bloome  
Ted Dowson  
Cassie Eigenmann

Thomas Hart  
Mel Repscher  
Lou Weitekamp  
Chris Wilcox

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Craig Costello  
Shelley Crocks  
Lou DeLaby  
Curt Fishburn  
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Bill Hart  
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Jeff Lancaster  
Sandy Lex  
Dave McCarty  
Jill Mortimer

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## Board Of Directors

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**Cassie L. Eigenmann**  
**Thomas Hart**  
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David Stuva

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Dana Smith, *editor*



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# Board report

## Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting October 23, 2012

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on October 23, 2012, at 7 p.m., with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor; and Attorney Kevin Tippey.

\* The minutes of the September 25 regular Board meeting were approved as corrected.

\* CEO Stuva presented the IMEA Report.

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

\* Attorney Kevin Tippey gave a brief report.

## 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,

Member and Public Relations, Cash Flows, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for September 2012 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

\* Noted that electricity purchases and sales were slightly above for the month of September, and operating margins were positive for the month.

\* Reported that a Cooperative Communicators dinner meeting is scheduled for November 13 at 6:30 p.m.

\* 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 24 persons.

\* After review of employee wages and salary trends, voted to approve changes in the employee wage package.

\* Approved an attorney retainer and hourly rate agreement for the coming year.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

## If the lights go out

You're sitting in your easy chair, in front of the TV, when suddenly the lights (and everything else) go out. Is it a problem in your wiring system, or a local power outage?

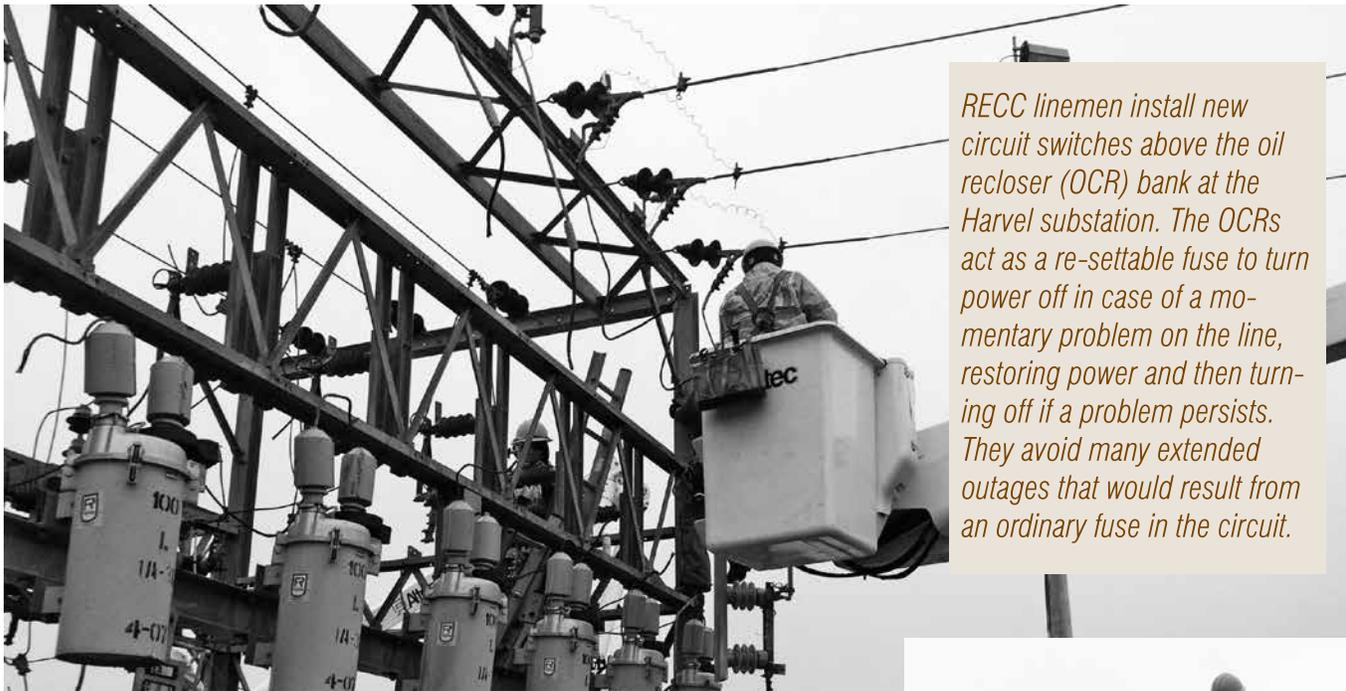
1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service panels. If you have breakers, make sure they are in the "ON" position. (Not tripped, and not OFF)
2. Look at your electric meter outside. If it has power, you will see a digital display on the face of the meter and you should have power to your main breaker. If there is no display, then call RECC to let us know you have an outage. Call (217) 438-6197 at any time of day for assistance.
3. If the meter has power, and your meter is on a pole or pedestal, check the main breaker panel just below

the meter socket. If the breaker is in the tripped position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position. (If you have an older fuse system, you can pull the main fuses and check to see if they are still good. If a fuse is blown, check the wiring as above and insert a new fuse.)

4. If you still do not have power in the house, you may have a wiring problem at the meter or feeding into the house. You can call RECC to report a problem. A cooperative employee may call you back to walk you through the troubleshooting process and determine whether the problem should be handled by RECC or by your electrician.

# Substation systems upgraded

## New wiring and equipment at Harvel and Farmersville



*RECC linemen install new circuit switches above the oil recloser (OCR) bank at the Harvel substation. The OCRs act as a re-settable fuse to turn power off in case of a momentary problem on the line, restoring power and then turning off if a problem persists. They avoid many extended outages that would result from an ordinary fuse in the circuit.*

RECC crews completed upgrade projects at two substations in November, increasing capacity of some wiring and updating switches and controls for more reliable operation.

New and larger transformers had been installed at both Harvel and Farmersville substations last year, and the new equipment brings them up to larger capacities for both normal operation and back feeding operation during outages at other substations.

Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby says November was a good time to have the substations out of service for a few days, since energy use was relatively light compared to peak air conditioning loads in summer months or electric heating in the winter. The work at the Harvel sub was done Nov. 5-7, and at Farmersville on Nov. 13-14, with little to no outage time for the members served on those substations.

The substations receive power from transmission lines at 34,500 volts, and send it through

transformers to reduce the voltage to 12,470 volts before it goes out on RECC's distribution system.

Besides the transformers, there are also fuses and circuit breakers at the substations to protect the wires from overloads and short circuits, along with metering equipment, switches, voltage regulators, and other equipment to keep the power flowing to our members. RECC owns nine substations located around our five-county service area.

"We've been building up our system over the years to allow more back feeding from one area to another when there is a transmission line problem or an equipment failure in a substation," says Lou DeLaby. "We can switch our circuits to back feed power to members whenever a substation is expected to be out of service for a significant period of time, to keep outage periods to a minimum." With homes and businesses relying on electricity for every part of their operation, reducing outage times is a goal that RECC is always pursuing, he adds.



*Kenny Williamson lifts a switch from Clark Bowman to be installed at the Harvel substation.*

# RECC helps after Hurricane Sandy

## Illinois electric cooperatives send crews to east coast

Some homes and businesses in the New York City area are still without electric power after Hurricane Sandy drove wind and seawater ashore in late October, despite the efforts of thousands of utility workers from across the country that have assisted the local power companies. RECC and ten other Illinois cooperatives also sent help to the region, responding to the request of New Hampshire Electric Cooperative.

While New Hampshire didn't take the brunt of Hurricane Sandy's damages, heavy rain and wind did take down a lot of trees and power lines there. The only co-op in the state serves a wide area and 83,000 consumers, with about 50,000 of those members out of power on October 30.

Rick Polley, who coordinates the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Emergency Work Plan in Springfield, said officials from New Hampshire Electric Cooperative called on October 26 to arrange for help ahead of the storm. Because all of the available crews from neighboring states had already been committed, the co-op was

asking for help from states west of Ohio.

RECC linemen Curt Nichelson and Bill Hart headed east on Monday on a two-day trek to reach southern New Hampshire. They were among the 50 Illinois workers who went to help a sister cooperative. The trip itself was a challenge as they drove through rain and snow in the eastern states.

Curt and Bill were put to work in the Raymond area, where downed trees pulled down power lines and broke off dozens of poles. Working long days from Wednesday to Friday, they were able to help the local co-op restore power to all members by Friday night.

Curt said the area they worked in was covered by pine forests, "and there wasn't a straight road anywhere" going through the hilly terrain. They had two men from the district office to guide them around the system, and separate tree cutting crews and pole setting crews to get new poles put in place. "We framed the poles after they were set, and got the wires strung," he said.

Some of the Illinois crews proceeded to Connecticut to

help a utility there with storm repairs, while RECC and other co-op linemen headed home on Saturday. New Hampshire Electric Cooperative was concerned when the Nor'easter storm threatened to drop heavy snow a few days later, but was spared of any additional significant damage.

The National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives has a mutual aid agreement signed by most U.S. electric co-ops. Rick Polley said, "This is the first time we've sent crews this far east. On many occasions we've sent crews south to help out with hurricane damage."

Storm damage from a hurricane or ice storm is often described as looking like a war zone, but every lineman knows it could happen in their home territory. Polley says, "They all know it could happen to them and it is better to be on the volunteer side and sending help than the receiving end and asking for help. We could have ice storms this winter and be asking for a return favor."



*RECC lineman Bill Hart goes to work on a broken pole near Raymond, New Hampshire after Hurricane Sandy caused extensive damage for the electric cooperative there.*

# Scholarship applications due December 31

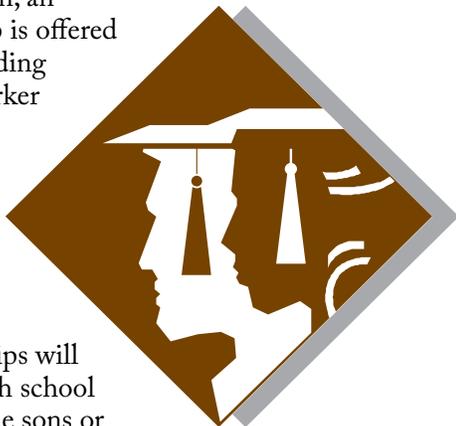
College-bound students have a little time left to apply for the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Illinois electric cooperatives will award seven academic scholarships to high school seniors through the memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the “electric cooperative family.” In addition, an eighth scholarship is offered for students attending an electric lineworker school.

Winners of the eight scholarships of \$1,500 each will be announced by May 1, 2013.

Four scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors 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.

An eighth annual scholarship, the “LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship,” was awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$1,500 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker’s school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives



in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. Sons and daughters of co-op members; relatives of co-op employees or directors; individuals enrolled in the Lincoln Land lineworker’s school; and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for the lineworker’s scholarship.

“We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships,” says President/CEO David Stuva. “RECC and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker’s scholarship.

It will benefit not only electric cooperative youth but also those fine men and women who have served their country through their military service and may now be wanting to become a trained lineworker.”

For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations at 438-6197.

**Informational brochures, rules and applications are available for download at the cooperative’s website at [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop) (under “Our Community” menu). Applications can be filled out and submitted online.**

# News & Notes

## Co-op and employees donate

To help those in need during the holiday season and beyond, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative has made a contribution to the Auburn Food Pantry of \$250 for their ongoing operation. In addition, the 25 co-op employees are matching that contribution with another \$250 through the Employee Club. “We’re headquartered in Auburn, and the majority of our employees live in the Auburn area, so we chose to support the Food Pantry as a way to help those who may be struggling to keep healthy food on the table,” said Matt Sheerin, RECC’s Accountant and president of the Employee Club. Matt is shown presenting the \$500 contribution total to Ann Voyles, coordinator of the Auburn Food Pantry program.



## Give the gift of energy

Gift certificates for electricity are available in any amount, and are applied to a member’s bill. Or, you can give a gift of security with RECC’s dusk-to-dawn lighting program. High-pressure sodium lights start at \$9.00/month for a 100-watt light. We’ll supply a gift card that you can send the recipient, to let them know about your unique Christmas present.

## Winter brings more electric use

Even if you don’t have electric heating in your home, your electric use will probably increase this winter compared to the fall months. There are many variables of course but here are some small, common reasons for the change.

- Non-electric heating systems require electricity to power blowers or pumps. As temperatures decrease, these circulation devices could run almost continuously.
- Early sunsets mean lights come on earlier too.
- Cool nights could mean snuggling up with an electric blanket, heating pad or electric fireplace; or heating the garage to finish up that car repair.
- Using livestock tank heaters and engine heaters for vehicles and tractors.
- Holiday visitors will mean more hot water for showers, dishes and laundry.
- Your favorite Christmas cookies, that big turkey dinner, and your light display each adds a bit. Cold weather brings your family inside for movie nights. Did you get a new big-screen TV? They’ll use more electricity than your old 27-inch model.

# MEMBER RESPONSE PAGE

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

Peak Switch                       New Home Energy Guidelines                       Long Distance Saving Rates  
 Dual Meter Heating Rate                       Surge Suppressor Lease                       5% ERC Loans for Efficiency  
 Security Light Rental                       Co-op Connections® Card                      Improvements  
 Air Evac Memberships                       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.

Clothes Dryer, Electric Replacement – \$25                       Water Heater, Standard Warranty – \$200  
(less than 10-yr warranty)  
 Clothes Dryer, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25                       Water Heater, Life-long Warranty – \$250  
(10-yr or longer warranty)  
 Electric Range, Electric Replacement – \$25  
 Electric Range, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25

This water heater is for (40 gallon minimum):  
 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 closed for holidays***

RECC's offices will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Crews will be on standby for any outages or emergencies.

# 12 Days of Holiday Safety

It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!



**Day 1** **What's that noise?** Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.



**Day 2** **What a shocker!** Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.



**Day 3** **Two's company, three's a crowd.** Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.



**Day 4** **Is it working?** Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.



**Day 5** **Ouch!** Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.



**Day 6** **Kids eat the darndest things!** Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.



**Day 7** **Thirsty?** Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.



**Day 8** **Make a wish!** Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.



**Day 9** **Nice and warm.** Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.



**Day 10** **Can't touch this!** Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.



**Day 11** **Escape Route:** Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.



**Day 12** **Hot stuff!** Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at [holidaysafety.org](http://holidaysafety.org).