



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

Youth Day offers insights to state government

This year's Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day introduced high school students to an exciting mix of experienced and brand-new leaders, along with learning about local electric and telephone cooperatives.

Youth Day was sponsored on March 25 by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, with 26 co-ops from across the state represented by over 250 students. Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative sponsored six students from area schools at the day-long event.

At the State Capitol, the RECC group was able to meet Senators Sam McCann and Andy Manar and Representatives Avery Bourne and C.D. Davidsmeyer. Representative Bourne is the youngest member of the Illinois House, after being selected to fill the vacancy created when Rep. Wayne Rosenthal was named as the new Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Later in the morning the entire group heard from the energetic Jesse White, Secretary of State, who has taken time for several years to address the annual Youth Day group.

New Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti challenged students to be active in their communities, pointing out her own experience of being a young mother and being elected to the city council in her town because she cared about the families in her neighborhoods.

Students visited the Old State Capitol and Abraham Lincoln Presi-



Shown (L-R) are: Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations; Alexandria Hemberger and Kyler Clark from Auburn; Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer; Rep. Avery Bourne; Rebecca Bloome from Pawnee; Emily Slightom from Farmersville; Tucker Launer from Modesto; and Brandi Wright from Alexander.



dential Museum in the afternoon, taking in more history of our state government and its leaders.

RECC's group included Kyler Clark and Alexandria Hemberger from Auburn; Brandi Wright from Franklin, Tucker Launer from Modesto (Northwestern High School), Rebecca Bloome from Pawnee, and Emily Slightom from Farmersville (Lincolnwood High School). Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, was their RECC chaperone for the day.

At the end of the tours, four of the high school juniors had a short interview to compete for two free Youth To Washington trips in June to see the nation's capital. (Alexandrea Hemberger's father is a lineman at RECC, and Rebecca Bloome's father is a co-op director, so they were not eligible to win the free trip.) Winners of the week-long trip were Tucker Launer and Emily Slightom.

Watch for news on the Washington trip in this summer's issues of Rural Highlights!

Putting safety first this month – and throughout the year

It's May – and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is a top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity is the cause of over 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and 1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Use these helpful tips from ESFI to safeguard your home.

In the kitchen

- Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- Ensure all countertop appliances are located away from the sink.
- All appliance cords should be placed away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- The top and the area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as potholders and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Light the way to safety

- The wattage of the bulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the light fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.
- Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition – not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any



ESFI has launched the second edition of its National Electrical Safety Month publication, *Electrical Safety Illustrated*. This year's theme is *That Old House, This New Update*. This 12-page magazine informs readers about common hazards posed by America's aging housing stock and features a variety of updates that can be made to all homes.

You can visit the website, www.esfi.org, to find this useful publication. ESFI also offers kids' safety activities, educational materials for teachers, and much more on their site!

- item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.
- Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or

permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

RECC directors call on legislators

RECC's board of directors stepped up its efforts this spring to stay informed and involved in energy issues by meeting with state senators and representatives for the areas served by the cooperative. Board members and staff visited the State Capitol in March to get acquainted with our legislators and make sure they are aware of the electric co-ops' role in rural Illinois.

It was the first time for several board members to see the legislative offices at the Capitol Building and the Stratton Office Building, and see how they are organized. The Illinois Association of Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) stays in regular contact with the legislature on behalf of the local co-ops, but Board Chairman Jimmy Ayers said the directors felt the need to become more personally involved with our area legislators.

Two contingents from RECC and AIEC visited the capitol on March 10 and March 17, to hold short meetings with State Senators Andy Manar and Sam McCann and Representatives Avery Bourne, C.D. Davidsmeyer, and Raymond Poe. A meeting with Rep. Sue Scherer had to be canceled at the last minute due to changes in her schedule.

While all of the sessions were a bit of a learning process, the freshest information flow was with the brand-new representative for House District 95, Avery Bourne from Pawnee. Rep. Bourne was selected to fill the vacancy created by Wayne Rosenthal's appointment to Director of the Department of Natural Resources in January. The 22-year old representative, whose family home is served by RECC, has been active in the political process at the state and national level for several years already.

RECC will continue to watch leg-



State Senator Sam McCann (foreground) speaks with RECC Director John Beatty, AIEC President/CEO Duane Noland, Board Chairman Jimmy Ayers, President/CEO David Stuva, and Director Cassie Eigenmann.



State Senator Andy Manar welcomed the RECC staff and directors to his office at the Capitol on March 17. Pictured is Manar (left) with President/CEO David Stuva, Director Cassie Eigenmann and Director John Beatty.

islative issues on the state and national level that will affect rural residents and businesses. It's part of our long-term

commitment to improve the quality of life in our communities and to serve our members' needs!



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See our web page for monthly Board meeting reports.

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Director candidates to run for re-election

The RECC Nominating Committee met on March 5, and has named candidates for director positions in Districts 7, 8 and 9 that are up for election at this year's Annual Meeting. All three incumbent directors are seeking re-election for three-year terms. They are:

District 7 Andy Goleman
1248 E. Divernon Rd., Divernon, IL 62530

District 8 Lou Weitekamp
3253 Illinois Rt. 48, Raymond, IL 62560

District 9 Cassie L. Eigenmann
11767 Hurricane Timber Ln.
Modesto, IL 62667

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 scheduled for June 11). Any persons nominated by petition will be included on the official ballot at the Annual Meeting.

Serving on this year's Nominating Committee were: District 7 – C. Clark Germann (Chatham), Denise McCrady

(Divernon) and Jan Cimarossa (Pawnee – unable to attend meeting); District 8 – Dennis Rosenthal, Melvin Wempen and Larry Ziegler (all from Raymond); District 9 – James Launer, Deanna Lee and Tangy Steinacher (all from Modesto). Thank-you to these members for your time and interest in the cooperative's election process, and to the candidates who are willing to work for the benefit of all RECC member-owners!



Nominating Committee members who met on March 5 were (front row, from left): Tangy Steinacher, Denise McCrady, and Deanna Lee; (back row) Dennis Rosenthal, James Launer, Larry Ziegler, Melvin Wempen, and Clark Germann.

Annual Meeting planned for June 11

Returning to Glenwood Elementary School

RECC's 78th Annual meeting will be held Thursday, June 11 at the Glenwood Elementary School in Chatham. That's the same location as last year's meeting, on Plummer Avenue next to Glenwood High School. A pork chop dinner will begin in the cafeteria at 5 p.m., with the business meeting at 7 p.m. in the multi-purpose room. Local vendor displays and kids' activities will be offered, along with displays of the newest LED lighting equipment and other energy efficiency tools from your cooperative. We hope to see you there!



Calling all crafters

RECC members are invited to display their craft or hobby items at the Annual Meeting, during the registration/dinner period of 5-7 p.m. Spaces for 8-foot tables or displays are available at no cost! Contact Dana Smith at our office at (217) 438-6197, or email dana.smith@recc.coop to reserve a space.