



Rural HILIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

Damaged transformer replaced at Palmyra substation

Members served by RECC's Palmyra substation lost power on Saturday afternoon, July 22, when a substation transformer bushing failed and the transformer circuit shorted out. A bushing is the insulated connector coming out of the transformer to make connections with the high-voltage wires.

When crew members Ken Williamson and Andrew Boston arrived at the substation, they quickly saw the damaged connector on the top of the transformer and realized a repair was not going to be possible. They were able to back feed the two main circuits from the substation to get power from the co-op's Girard and Lowder substations and get everyone back on at around 7:30 Saturday evening.

Recovery plans started on Sunday, with calls to a mobile crane operator and trucking company to move a transformer at the co-op office in Auburn to Palmyra as quickly as possible. Fortunately, we had a spare substation transformer on hand after recent projects at two other substations last winter.

Working with state, county and township road officials, permits were obtained for routes

to Palmyra for the crane and heavy-duty trailer carrying the spare transformer. The trucks got to Palmyra Monday morning, and RECC crews were able to have the transformer replaced by Monday evening. President/CEO David Stuva thanked all of the contractors and employees involved who got the job done so quickly to maintain service during the hot July days.

Stuva said the failed transformer will not be repaired, but replaced with a new transformer. Bids were prepared to go out, but a new unit will probably take six months to arrive.

A substation transformer receives power from transmission lines, usually at 69,000 volts, and reduces it to 12,500 volts going out on the co-op's distribution system. It's part of the nationwide electrical grid that delivers power from generation plants to homes and businesses at the end of the line.

RECC owns and maintains nine substations to serve our members, and the cooperative will now have upgraded the transformers at seven of those substations on the past seven years to maintain reliability on our distribution system.



A close-up of the damaged transformer shows the bushing blown apart, with suspected damage also inside the transformer.



RECC crews prepare to unload the replacement transformer at the Palmyra substation on July 24, and completed the installation that afternoon.

Illinois co-ops present award to Rep. Davidsmeyer

At the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting, held July 28 in Springfield, State Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer, R-100th District, received the 2017 Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award. The award was made in recognition of Rep. Davidsmeyer's dedicated public service to all citizens of the state of Illinois and for outstanding contributions to the rural electrification program.

Representative Davidsmeyer has served in the Illinois House since 2012. He serves as Republican Spokesman on the Energy Committee and is on the Appropriations-Higher Education, Economic Justice & Equity, Financial Institutions, and Insurance Committees.



Presenting the Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award to Representative Davidsmeyer are (l-r): RECC Directors Lou Weitekamp and Cassie Eigenmann, President/CEO David Stuva, Rep. Davidsmeyer, and Directors Jimmy Ayers, John Beatty, Thom Hart and Mel Repscher.

He has been a great friend of the electric cooperative program and rural

electric members during his time in the legislature.

New business offers for Co-op Connections cards

We have more new offers to announce for RECC members showing their Co-op Connections cards at local businesses! All Rural Electric members should have the free cards, which can be used for local as well as national savings. If you need a replacement card, please contact us.

To see all of our local offers, go to Co-op Deals at www.connections.coop, and enter your ZIP code to find Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative's participating businesses. You can also find more information on pharmacy discounts and other benefits of the card program at this site.

Thanks to these new businesses for joining the Co-op Connections program!



Advanced Eyecare
Virden

\$15 off any optical purchase



Auburn Veterinary Service
Kristin McCullough, DVM
Kyle Schroeder, DVM

\$5 off any service, per visit



104 Store

Pawnee & Auburn

\$2 off regular propane fill

Electric co-ops at Farm Progress Show

If you're planning to attend the Farm Progress Show in Decatur at the end of August, be sure to visit the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Illinois in the Varied Industries Tent! You can stop by and charge up your cellphone at our charging station, and win a prize at the energy games.

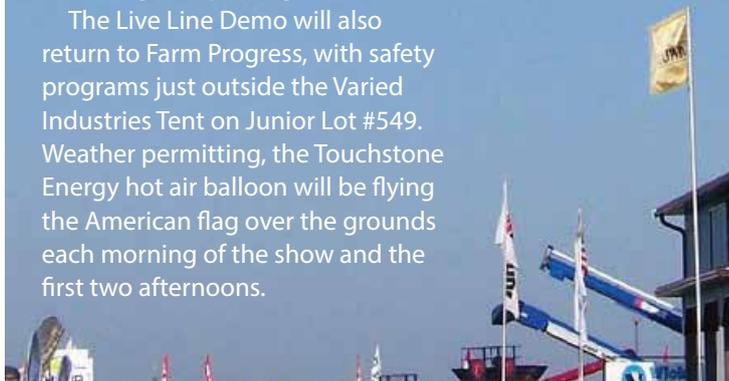
Cooperative members who show their Co-op Connections card will also get a special gift!

The Live Line Demo will also return to Farm Progress, with safety programs just outside the Varied Industries Tent on Junior Lot #549. Weather permitting, the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon will be flying the American flag over the grounds each morning of the show and the first two afternoons.



FARM PROGRESS SHOW 2017

August 29-30-31



Dana Smith retiring from RECC

The "Circle of Life" is taking on a new meaning for Dana Smith, who has served as Manager of Member and Public Relations at Rural Electric since 1996. After growing up on an Ohio farm, graduating from Ohio State University, working for a large utility in eastern Ohio, then spending 10 years at a co-op in Iowa, Dana got a little closer to home when he came to Auburn. Now, he's completing the circle to his home area in northwest Ohio, after 40 years of working in the electric business.

Farm and residential consumers have been his main focus for that entire time, talking about efficient applications of electric energy, new technology and safety. "From school groups to contractors to retiree gatherings, I've enjoyed helping people learn about electricity and how it helps improve our lives," says Dana.

One technology that was just starting to be introduced for residential consumers in his early career in the 1970s was the geothermal heat pump system, he said. "The first models I helped promote were open-well systems,



with water pumped from a well, through the heat pump exchanger, and then dumped into a drainage line. In Iowa in the 1980s, we had a lot of closed loops trenched at rural properties and some well drillers adapting to vertical loop installations. Now in our area it's almost all vertical loops, installed by specialized contractors with relatively little mess."

Better and more insulation has been the trend in house construction, he says, along with an emphasis on air sealing. "With technologies like blower door testing and infrared cameras, we can see the areas of energy losses in a house and fix or prevent a lot of energy waste!" he says.

A lot of energy thoughtfulness went

into an Energy Demonstration Home project that Dana oversaw soon after he came to Rural Electric. "We didn't try to build an ultra-efficient house that went overboard on expenses," he says. "We wanted to show our members what could be reasonably done in every house to keep their energy bills down."

That included spray-on cellulose insulation in the walls, raised-heel trusses in the attic to allow full insulation levels, a lot of tubes of caulking to seal up any potential air leaks, and of course a geothermal heating and cooling system.

"Ironically, that's the only home building project I was ever in charge of, and I didn't even get to live in it!"

Dana will be leaving RECC on September 29, and moving shortly after to Ohio. He and his wife, Linda, have purchased a home that is powered by North Western Electric, the same co-op that served his boyhood farm home. And, it just happens to have a geothermal heating and cooling system. A coincidence? Dana says, "Maybe it's fate!"

Congratulations to Dana and Linda, and good luck in your "new" setting!

**Retirement
Open House
Dana Smith**

**Friday, Sept. 29 from
2:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative
(3973 W. State Route 104, Auburn).**

Please join us to congratulate Dana, who has spent 21 years working for RECC members, and is now retiring!



Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative

3973 W. State Route 104
P.O. Box 19 • Auburn, IL 62615
(217) 438-6197
e-mail: recc@recc.coop
www.recc.coop



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See our web page for monthly Board meeting reports.

RECC offering \$2,000 grants for two schools Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

RECC is sponsoring the Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants Program again this year, and with the assistance of the lending institution CoBank, two grants will be awarded for \$2,000 each. The classroom grants will enable teachers in local school districts to carry out education enhancement projects that are not included in the school budgets.

Rural Electric is putting \$2,000 into the program for the 2017-18 school year, and CoBank is adding another \$2,000 from their Sharing Success matching program for a total of \$4,000. Public and private schools in the general service area of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative can receive a grant of \$2,000 for grades K-8.

Application forms are available on our website at www.recc.coop, and are due by November 3. Winners will be announced on December 1, and the project must be completed by May 20, 2018. While electricity and energy are not required to be the central topics of any project, entries that do include energy education will be weighted more favorably.

All applications should include the following details:

- A description of the project and what it will accomplish
- The estimated cost of the project
- An explanation of why outside funds are necessary to carry out the project



Dana Smith presented Morrisonville Grade School teacher Sarah Jennings with posters for the historical novels and theater show that were included in the school's project award in 2016, through RECC's Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants Program.

- When the project would be completed
- The number of people affected by the project
- If the project's goals are measurable, and how
- How the project ties in with Touchstone Energy's four core values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

For more information, please contact Sandy Lex, Executive Assistant, at sandy.lex@recc.coop, or 217-438-6198.

Our office will be closed on Monday, September 4th in observation of **Labor Day.**



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner