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Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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Christening a new era *First co-op lines brought excitement in 1937*

Firmly grasping the bottle of Champagne, she swung it sharply against the dark object outlined against the snowy February sky. As the bottle smashed, there was a burst of applause from the spectators.

For Mrs. E. C. Keplinger of Virden, it was an exciting moment in her life. For thousands of farm families, it signaled the start of a new era in rural progress.

Mrs. Keplinger had not christened a ship that winter day in 1937. Rather, she had officially started line construction work for the Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. Instead of smashing the bottle against the bow of a ship, she had broken it against a wooden pole, the first to be erected on the cooperative's new distribution lines.

The ceremony took place on Feb. 19, 1937, a mile northwest of Divernon, where the co-op had opened its office. Immediately afterward, linemen from the contractor company began setting poles and stringing wire.

Huddled against the biting cold that blustery afternoon, the co-op's board of directors had no idea of the mighty forces they had set in motion. It's doubtful they envisioned a day when their cooperative would be



A late winter snow still covered the ground on Feb. 19, 1937 when a small group celebrated the first pole set on RECC's distribution system. From left are Miss Mildred Masters, Mrs. Charles Masters, Mrs. Lester Miller, Mrs. E. C. Keplinger, Mrs. George Simon, Mrs. George Sloman, Willard Manning (a digger operator shown behind Mrs. Sloman), Joe Dowson, director, Charles Masters, superintendent, George Simon, director, George Sloman, secretary-treasurer, Alden Snyder, farm adviser for Montgomery County, and E. C. Keplinger, president.

servicing nearly 6,000 consumers through over 1,200 miles of lines.

George Simon of Farmersville summed it up succinctly: "We wanted electricity, and we wanted it so badly we were willing to do a lot of work for nothing in order to get it."

For the nine directors of the new cooperative, that little ceremony stood out in

sharp relief for many years. It was tangible evidence their dreams had been transformed into reality. When investor-owned utilities didn't see enough profit potential in the rural areas to build lines there, cooperative members built their own system that grew on the foundation of service and local control.

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Dana Smith, *editor*



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Board report

Regular Board Meeting December 27, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on December 27, 2011, at 6 p.m., with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; and Attorney Kevin Tippey.

* The minutes of the November 22 regular Board meeting and the December 22 special meeting were approved as presented.

* President/CEO Stuva presented the IMEA Report. He reviewed the December 8 IMEA Board meeting.

* The AIEC report was presented by Chairman Ayers. He reviewed the Executive Summary of the December 15 AIEC Board meeting.

* There was no Attorney's 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, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for November were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also reviewed plans for upcoming meetings and classes, including the Board's strategic planning meeting to be held Jan. 26-27, 2012.

Board Action

The Board acted on the following:

* Approved the application for, or reinstatement of, membership and electric service for 20 persons.

* Approved RUS 219 work orders 900 through 905 totaling \$1,058,695.20 for the months of May 2011 through October 2011 for submittal to RUS.

* Set the 2012 Nominating Committee meeting date for March 1, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. at the co-op office.

* Approved voting delegates and alternates for the NRECA Annual Meeting and associated meetings to be held in March.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Special Board Meeting December 22, 2011

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on December 22, 2011, at 6 p.m., with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Manager of Office Services Dean Fuchs; Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby; Field Engineer and Purchasing Agent Martin Hinton; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

President/CEO Stuva reviewed proposed rate increases, which he said are needed to provide an adequate operating margin and debt service coverage for 2012. Several of the co-op's residential and small commercial rates would have a change in the lowest block of energy, over 3,000 kWhs per month. Those higher-use kWhs will increase by a half-cent, or \$.005/kWh. The other change for all rate

schedules is an increase in the Purchased Cost Adjustment (PCA) that was implemented last May, from \$.003 to \$.0035 for all kWhs used. After discussion, the board voted to approve the rate changes as presented, effective January 1, 2012.

President/CEO Stuva then reviewed the proposed 2012 Operating Budget. After discussion the board approved the 2012 Operating Budget with the new rates included.

CEO Stuva and Dean Fuchs reviewed the 2010 Key Ratio Trend Analysis report, comparing RECC to other co-ops in the state and nation in many statistical categories.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Healthy Savings discounts added

Seven years ago, RECC introduced the Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections® card to help our members save money when they dined out, made purchases, or stayed in hotels. In 2008, the program changed to include a prescription savings, which saved RECC members more than \$9,200 in 2011 alone on prescriptions.

Now, the Co-op Connections program is about to save our members even more. RECC's Co-op Connections card now offers members significant savings on lab and imaging services, vision, dental, hearing and chiropractic care.

The new **Healthy Savings package** is available at no cost to all RECC members. Examples of savings through the Healthy Savings program include 10 to 60 percent off eyeglasses, contact lenses, and eye exams; 20 to 40

percent discounts on a range of dental care services; and 30 percent off chiropractic treatments.

RECC members already have plastic Co-op Connections cards, but the Healthy Savings program requires additional numbers for the participating businesses. Our members have the choice of printing their own paper cards from www.healthysavings.coop, stopping by our Auburn office to get a special sticker put on their existing card, or requesting a sticker to be mailed to their homes.

This brand-new benefit is part of a commitment to helping RECC members save money during these challenging economic times. The discount program is NOT insurance and cannot be used in conjunction with insurance; however, for members who may not have insurance that covers prescriptions or certain health services, this could offer

significant savings.

To locate providers that participate in the Healthy Savings program, call 800-800-7616 with your card handy or visit www.healthysavings.coop. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call RECC at 800-245-7322, and we will assist you.

“Many insurance plans do not include provisions for dental, hearing, and vision care, which means many people do not receive these much-needed services. With the new Healthy Savings package, RECC members get no-cost access to discounted prices that make these services more affordable,” says President/CEO David Stuva.



RECC sponsors safety presentations for students

Over 600 Macoupin and Montgomery County 4th grade students learned how to stay safe around electricity at the recent Live Line demonstrations presented by Kyle Finley of Live Line Demo. Students learned the importance of having GFI outlets in areas where there is access to water, especially in kitchens, bathrooms and outdoors.

This two day event was held Jan. 9 at Carlinville Intermediate School and Jan. 10 at Lincoln Land Community College in Litchfield and was sponsored by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Lincoln Land

Community College and University of Illinois Extension in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties.

Through the Live Line Demo, students learned the danger of using mylar balloons, climbing trees and using equipment near power lines. In addition, Finley stressed the importance of staying in the car until help arrives if involved in an accident involving a power pole and wires.

Kyle Finley enlists the help of a student in explaining the danger of electrical shock during his Live Line Demo program for area fourth graders.



HomE program wins Impact Award

The Illinois Electric Cooperatives' highly successful HomE (pronounced "Home E") program helped 25 distribution cooperatives in Illinois perform nearly 3,500 home energy audits and deliver more than 3,000 energy efficiency rebates to Illinois homeowners. The program, one of the largest and most effective in Illinois history, was recognized with the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's (MEEA) 2012 Inspiring Efficiency Impact Award.

HomE's high success rate – more than 90 percent of participating homeowners followed through with at least some of the audits' recommended improvements – allowed the co-ops to use \$2.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding which spurred more than \$25 million in energy efficiency investments in just 15 months.

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative was able to obtain nearly \$65,000 in efficiency rebates for 62 of our members.

"Through HomE, we were able to encourage cooperative members to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, and also make them more aware of their everyday energy use," said John Freitag, vice president of operations for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, which coordinated the program between the distribution co-ops and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). "Additionally, for the first time in Illinois Electric Cooperatives' 70-year history, every cooperative in the state is now providing energy audits to homeowners."

The HomE program also eliminated an estimated 5,000 metric tons of CO₂ overall, and is projected to result in annual energy savings of nearly 500,000 kWhs of electricity and nearly 150,000 therms of natural gas.



Director of member and public relations Dana Smith presented a \$500 HomE rebate check to Jennifer Yelvington in November 2010 for insulation added in her restored cabin on Sunset Lake near Girard. This was one of 62 rebates made to RECC members, and more than 3,000 rebates statewide, to help electric co-op members make efficiency improvements that will save energy and money for many years in the future.



Rural Electric Youth Day set for March 28

High school juniors, now is the time to apply for great trips to Springfield and Washington, D.C.! Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative is sponsoring area students again this year for the popular Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield and a chance to win a free trip to Washington.

Up to 10 students will be sponsored by RECC at the Illinois Youth Day program on Wednesday, March 28, touring the Capitol and other historic sites, and meeting with their state legislators. Two of those students will be selected to attend the Youth To Washington trip, June 15-22, with about 1,000 young people from around the country. RECC sponsors these trips to encourage students to learn more about our government's operation and about electric cooperatives.

Any junior attending a high school in RECC's service area is eligible for these expense-paid programs. Application request forms have been sent to our local schools, or students can contact our office. We will mail a full application kit and background information directly to the student.



The application form includes a summary of the student's school and civic activities and accomplishments, and a brief essay question pertaining to the rural electric program.

Applications must be returned to RECC by March 9, and the ten students selected for the Illinois Youth Day program will be notified by March 14 so that they can

arrange their school schedules around the trip. Transportation will be provided from Auburn to Springfield and back.

After the day's activities in Springfield, the students will have individual interviews to select two winners for the trip to Washington, D.C. They will be judged on their application information, personal poise and confidence, and demonstrated understanding of the rural electric program. The two winners will travel by bus from Springfield to Washington this summer, in one of the best-recognized youth programs in the nation's capital.

Tell your child, grandchild, neighbor or friend about these two super programs sponsored by your electric cooperative, and encourage them to apply. They can send in the request coupon below, call our office at (800) 245-7322 to ask for an application packet, or e-mail a request to recc@recc.coop. Don't let them miss this chance to meet new friends, learn about our government and co-ops, and have fun!

Cut out and return to RECC, or call for an application form. Completed applications are due by March 9.

Request for application – 2012 Rural Electric Youth Day/Youth to Washington Tour

Student's Name _____ Phone No. _____

High School Attended _____

Parent's Name _____

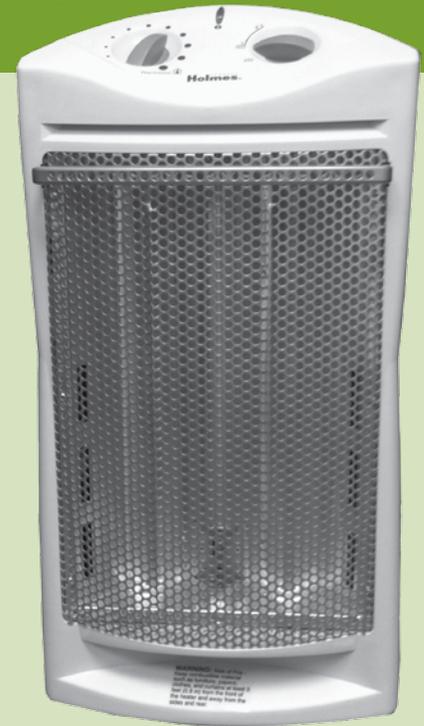
Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Winter often brings higher electric bills

Even if you don't have electric heat in your home, your electric bills may go higher during the cold winter months. Here are a few reasons this may happen:

- Most heating systems use a blower fan to distribute warm air through the house. These may run almost continuously when it's very cold.
- You may be using space heaters in a garage, basement, breezeway or other rooms that need more heat. A 1,500-watt heater that runs 12 hours a day for 30 days would cost about \$65 for the month.
- Engine block heaters on your vehicles or equipment, or heat tapes on exposed plumbing will increase your electricity use.
- Electric blankets and heating pads feel cozy, but will add to your electric bill. (Heated water beds are even bigger energy users.)
- Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer both inside and out.



Nominating Committee to meet March 1

The Board of Directors has selected nine co-op members to serve on the Nominating Committee, which will meet on March 1 at 6 p.m. at the co-op's office in Auburn. The committee will select candidates for Director elections in three districts, to be held at the RECC Annual Meeting on June 7, 2012 at Glenwood High School in Chatham.

Director positions up for election to three-year terms this year are District 7 (incumbent Ted Dowson of Auburn), District 8 (incumbent Lou Weitekamp of Raymond), and District 9 (incumbent Cassie Eigenmann of Modesto).

Members serving on the Nominating Committee are:

District 7:

Carl Ostermeier, Jr.
2775 Ostermeier Rd
Chatham, IL 62629

Sam Burtle
13507 N Comanche Rd
Divernon, IL 62530

John Goleman
1152 E Divernon Rd
Divernon, IL 62530

District 8:

Lee Marten
23103 W Frontage Rd
Waggoner, IL 62572

Lester Crawford
19207 W Frontage Rd
Raymond, IL 62560

Larry Ziegler
22153 E 5th Rd
Raymond, IL 62560

District 9:

Richard Bray
13641 Nine Mile Road
Modesto, IL 62667

Sidney Colbrook
30397 West Lake Drive
Girard, IL 62640

Karen Bottoms
32598 Otten Road
Modesto, IL 62667

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"/> Long Distance Saving Rates
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Meter Heating Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Surge Suppressor Lease	<input type="checkbox"/> AT&T Wireless Cellular Phone Savings
<input type="checkbox"/> Security Light Rental	<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Connections® Card	<input type="checkbox"/> 5% ERC Loans for Efficiency Improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> Convectair Heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> 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.

<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 (40 gallon minimum):

<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

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RECC helps Lincoln Land Community College go geo at Taylorville campus

Lincoln Land Community College students are enjoying geothermal comfort in the new classroom building at the Taylorville Regional Center, and the college is enjoying the \$40,167 GeoAlliance grant that Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative helped them obtain.

The grant was presented January 17 in Taylorville to State Representative Wayne Rosenthal, who is also a Lincoln Land Community College Trustee. The money will help pay for the installation of a highly energy efficient geothermal heat pump heating and cooling system in the 12,000-square foot classroom building served by RECC.

The GeoAlliance program is a collaboration between the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) in Chicago and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) in Springfield. The foundation funds the grants and the association administers the program. The funding is re-granted through the association's electric cooperatives, such as RECC. The cooperatives in turn award the funding to qualifying not-for-profit cooperative members such as schools, government entities and churches.

Geothermal heating and cooling systems take advantage of the constant year-round temperature of about 50°F that is just a few feet below the ground's surface. In the most common systems, environmentally friendly antifreeze liquid is pumped through pipes that are buried underground, and re-circulated into the building. In the summer, the liquid moves heat from the building into the ground. In the winter, it does the opposite, providing



Pictured during the GeoAlliance Grant check presentation at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC)-Taylorville were (L-R) Rich Vertrees, vice president for administrative services at LLCC; Mel Repscher, RECC director; LLCC Trustee and State Representative Wayne Rosenthal; Nancy Nixon, marketing administrator of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives; Dana Smith, RECC director of member and public relations; and Scott Stallman, executive director of LLCC-Taylorville.

pre-warmed air to the heating system of the building.

Accepting the grant check, Representative Rosenthal said, "Thank you very much to the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, for this GeoAlliance grant. We appreciate the financial support, and the recognition of the college's efforts to use energy efficient and sustainable operations in this building, on the Springfield campus, and throughout our district. The reduction of heating and cooling costs benefits students and taxpayers of the district, by allowing us to save operating costs while protecting the environment. Also, incorporating green aspects into our curriculum helps prepare students for the jobs of the future."

Dana Smith, director of member and

public relations at Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, said that the new classroom building is a great addition for Lincoln Land Community College, for Taylorville, and for the students attending the college. He added that the cooperative is very happy to serve this facility and especially satisfied to have played a part in helping the college use the most efficient heating and cooling system available today.

Since the program's inception in 2003, \$1.5 million in GeoAlliance Grant funding has been awarded for geothermal projects throughout the state. Funding will be available until April 30, 2013, or until the funding has been exhausted. Grants can pay for one-third of the incremental cost difference between geothermal systems and traditional heating and air conditioning systems up to \$50,000 per grant.