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Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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

Sharing a hard message ***Auburn's Tom Dickey hopes others don't make a mistake around electricity***

“Put a face on the story” means connecting a real person with an article to help readers relate to the topic at hand. It’s an effective tool used in recent months by the Safe Electricity campaign featuring victims who have survived electrical accidents, including Auburn’s Tom Dickey.

Tom’s fateful day came at the end of a project at a construction site in 2002. A small job had been added to the day’s directional boring work—after Tom’s safety gear had already been sent back to the shop. He made a decision in favor of time and efficiency instead of safety to go ahead and dig a 40-foot section of conduit. This decision almost cost him his life. He suffered life-changing burns and injuries when he came into contact with underground power lines.

As an experienced professional contractor, Tom knew all of the correct procedures, but while adjusting the conduit’s path in the ground, he made a small slip and received a high-voltage shock. This kind of electric contact inflicts burns on a person—from the inside-out—that can continue to burn after contact. He survived, but he spent months in the hospital undergoing surgeries, including skin grafting. A flap surgery was particularly difficult because the hole in Tom’s hand was so deep that the bones were showing and the tendons had been severed as a result of electrical burns. They

sewed his hand into his abdomen to allow tissue to grow back over the bones.

The Safe Electricity “Teach Learn Care TLC” campaign includes public service announcements for TV, radio and newspapers, along with videos at their website www.SafeElectricity.org. Tom tells his own near-tragic story in hopes that others will learn from his mistake and avoid their own accidents. “You may get by with it a thousand times, but at some point it can happen to you. It can happen to anybody... you never suspect that today’s going to be the day,” he says.

According to his wife Bonnie, “It was watching him go through all the pain that was the hardest part. After the flap surgery it was really tough on him. He just had to lay in bed with his hand attached to his side for weeks. He asked me most days to just sit and read from the Bible to him. That brought him comfort because he was in so much pain.”

The long and painful recovery was only part of his ordeal. There was also the pain of “just watching my family and the suffering that they went through the anguish that I know they were going through freaking out about losing a dad or losing a husband,” reflects Tom. The accident made it impossible for Tom to work for many months as he had extremely limited mobility and had to undergo many surgeries.



Tom Dickey, a directional boring contractor from Auburn, tells his story in a Safe Electricity nationwide campaign this spring. You can hear about his near-fatal accident at www.SafeElectricity.org.

With strong faith, family, and friends, Tom persevered. Tom and his family are now working with Safe Electricity’s

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Dana Smith, *editor*



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Board report

Resume of Minutes Regular Board Meeting January 24, 2012

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on January 24, 2012, at 6 p.m., with all members present. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Manager of Finance and Office Services Dean Fuchs; Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby; Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith; Field Engineer and Purchasing Agent Martin Hinton; Journeyman Lineman Dave Flynn; Equipment Serviceman First Class Clark Bowman; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; Brent Corwin of Allgeier, Martin & Associates; AIEC Manager of Engineering Brian Adams; and Attorneys Jerry Tice and Kevin Tippey.

* The minutes of the December 27, 2011 regular Board were approved as presented.

* The Board entered into executive session to discuss a legal matter, and returned to open session.

* President/CEO Stuva introduced Brian Adams, who presented the RECC Load Forecast Summary prepared by the AIEC engineering department. The Load Forecast is a 15-year projection of the energy and capacity requirement for the cooperative.

* CEO Stuva introduced Brent Corwin from the co-op's consulting engineering firm, who reviewed the proposed 2012 to 2015 Construction Work Plan which is required by RUS to apply for financing of projects during that period. If all projects were completed, the total Work Plan expenditures would total \$7,662,000, he said.

* CEO Stuva introduced Dana Smith to review the new Healthy Savings program for members using their Co-op Connections® card to obtain discounts for health services including vision and dental from local providers.

* CEO Stuva presented the IMEA Report.

* The AIEC report was presented by Chairman Ayers. He reviewed the Executive Summary of the January 19 AIEC Board meeting.

* Attorney Jerry Tice 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, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for December 2011 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

* Presented the cooperative's Special Equipment Summary for transformers, OCRs, regulators, and meters purchased during 2011.

* 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 15 persons.

* Approved the Special Equipment Summary for eligible purchases for RUS financing during 2011 in the amount of \$237,632.91.

* Approved a Resolution to accept and submit to RUS the RECC Load Forecast as presented.

* Approved a Resolution to accept and submit the Construction Work Plan for 2012-2015, totaling \$7,662,000, to RUS.

* Appointed members to the 2012 Nominating Committee for Director Districts 7, 8 and 9:

District 7

Carl Ostermeier, Jr.
Sam Burtle
John Goleman

District 8

Lee Marten
Lester Crawford
Larry Ziegler

District 9

Richard "Mick" Bray
Sidney Colbrook
Karen Bottoms

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Your membership status matters for Annual Meeting

RECC's Annual Meeting will be here before you know it – June 7th, to be exact. If you are planning on attending the meeting and casting your vote for director elections or any other business that might come up at the meeting, now would be a good time to check on the type of membership that you have.

If the membership is in your name, is a single membership and you are the only one living in the residence, obviously you are the one entitled to vote.

If the membership is a joint membership in your name, along

with your spouse or someone else, and both of you are living in the residence, then only one of you is entitled to vote. Either name on the membership can vote, but the membership is only entitled to one vote. Our bylaws stipulate: one membership (single or joint), one vote.

This is no change from the past as to how memberships can vote, but just a reminder to check your membership and see how it is listed. For incorporated businesses, a representative must be named who can officially register and vote at the Annual Meeting. Again, that

business has only one vote.

You can call our office at (800) 245-7322 to find out how your membership is listed or you can look at your bill when you receive it. If there is only one name on it, it is a single membership. If two names are listed, the membership is a joint membership in those two names. If you want to change the membership type, we will send a new membership agreement for you to sign. If you are widowed or divorced, you might also need to update your membership!

Tom Dickey

(continued from page 1)

“Teach Learn Care TLC” campaign to share his story and his message, “Please, safety first,” to help prevent others from having accidents with underground utilities.

Tom stresses that even a homeowner who puts a shovel in the ground risks his well-being and damage to underground utilities if he has not gotten these lines marked. The first step in safe digging is to call 8-1-1, the national “Call Before You Dig” number, to get connected to your area’s locating service to have underground utility lines marked.

Safe Electricity® is an award-winning, multi-media public awareness program created in 2001. Its safety education activities are developed by the Energy Education Council (EEC), an internationally



Tom Dickey was photographed and filmed for Safe Electricity messages with RECC crews during underground installations in our area.

recognized leader in providing a wealth of safety, efficiency, and renewable energy information.

The EEC, based in Springfield, was created and is supported by a diverse group of organizations united by mutually important consumer issues. Its mission is to provide life-saving, energy-saving, and cost-saving information and resources. Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative is a

member and supporter of the EEC and Safe Electricity, helping to spread their messages of efficiency and safety.

“We’re grateful to Tom and his family for their willingness to help prevent other tragic accidents with underground utilities by sharing the lessons learned from their difficult experience,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Safe Electricity program.

IN 1752, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
DISCOVERED ELECTRICITY IN A FIELD.



IN 1935, WE WERE CALLED UPON
TO GET IT THERE.



Supplying electricity to rural America didn't happen overnight. It took vision, cooperation and determination. Today, as a member of an electric co-op, it's your turn to influence the future by saving energy. Learn how at TogetherWeSave.com.



TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Kickin' it up a notch ***with text message notifications to members***



RECC started a new effort nearly a year ago to notify members about important developments, in a program called Notify 24. We've been using automated telephone calls to let members in specific areas know about planned outages, as well as the cause of unexpected outages. It's a way to help members understand what's going on with their electric system.

The phone calls have worked pretty well, but they can take some time with the limited number of phone lines available. When dozens or hundreds of members are

affected, it's impossible to get the word out to everyone quickly.

So, Notify 24 has been upgraded to include text messages to members who prefer to be contacted by that method. Text messages can be sent very quickly, and read at a phone owner's choice of time and location. With texting, we can often send out a notice while an outage is still happening, and give members an idea of the severity and expected recovery time.

To make text messaging work, we need two things from a member:

1. Your phone number

2. Permission to text to that number

We will not send text messages unless a member has requested to be included in this service. We realize some members do not have texting plans or do not want to receive texts on their phone. Those members can choose to receive telephone voice messages, or no notifications at all. Just let our office know what you prefer.

For those who want the freshest news, as soon as it's available, please fill in the form below or call our office at (217) 438-6197!

Please add my phone number to receive RECC text message alerts:

Name _____

Account number or service address _____

Cell Phone _____



Catherine Sloman recalls early use of electricity

What was it like to move from St. Louis to rural Illinois in 1941? Not that different in some ways, according to Catherine Sloman, who married Wheeler Sloman in 1941 and moved into the hired hand's house on the family farm south of Pawnee.

"The farm just got electricity from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, and we bought an electric stove first, and a refrigerator. But, we didn't have running water!" Catherine recalls. The electric stove was actually a step up from her home in St. Louis, where she had a coal stove.

"We had no kitchen sink when we moved into the farm house," says Catherine. Even after installing a sink, she says they still used a hand pump when her first daughter, Maude, was born.

Electricity was also a welcome helper on the farm, when the Slomans went from milking seven cows by hand to using an electric milking machine. They were able to milk more

cows, up to about 40 at one point, Catherine says. Reliable electric service helped the Slomans progress from using milk

cans to a bulk tank to keep up with the milk production of their expanding dairy herd.

They also used electricity for heat lamps for newborn pigs, she says, keeping more of them alive and healthy in the winter. She recalls one frigid night before the heat lamps were installed, when temperatures plunged to minus 22 degrees. Despite staying up all night with the pigs, they lost four litters, she says.

Electricity made it possible to increase the Slomans' dairy herd from seven cows to as many as 40

Catherine's father-in-law, George Sloman, was a founding board member of RECC, and he served on the board until 1955, when he moved into Pawnee. Catherine and Wheeler were outage reporters for the co-op for 40 years, until that program was phased out in the 1990s. When an outage occurred, members were encouraged to call their local outage reporter, who then relayed the message to RECC's office.

The outage reporters avoided a lot of long distance phone calls for members, which used to be more expensive than they are today. The reporters also took a burden off of the limited co-op staff, with just a few phone lines coming into the office. Reporters could condense the information from their area, and get a pretty good idea of how widespread an outage problem might be. RECC held an annual

appreciation dinner for these faithful assistants for many years.

"I took most of the outage calls, because Wheeler didn't like talking on the phone," Catherine explains. One of the toughest experiences was the terrible ice storm in April 1978, when power was out for several days in most areas and even the towns had no electricity.

Catherine spent many hours on the phone with neighbors who



Catherine Sloman is 98 years old, but still remembers moving into a farmhouse with electricity but no running water in 1941.

were anxious to have their lines repaired and put back in service. She said Wheeler was sick because his heart was failing, and she went out to the shed every day to cook on the gas stove in their motor home.

Catherine's second daughter, Rachel Broughton, now lives near Pawnee and is an RECC member. Maude lives in Kansas, and Catherine's son John lives in Kentucky.

Catherine recently moved from the farm to an assisted living facility in Rochester. Maude and Rachel are sorting the many possessions and memories at the farm house, such as quilting materials and various collections. Despite suffering a stroke a couple of years ago, Catherine is still going strong at age 98, and hasn't given up on possibly attending another RECC Annual Meeting!

News & Notes

Youth Tour entries due March 9

Applications for the Rural Electric Youth Day and Youth To Washington contest must be returned to RECC by March 9, which is coming fast! Up to ten students will be selected for the Illinois Youth Day program in Springfield on March 28. Two of those participants will be selected for a free Youth To Washington trip in June. Application forms have been mailed to juniors at several area high schools, and they are encouraged to return their applications. There may be time for a last-minute application to be downloaded from the RECC website and turned in before the deadline. Good luck to all our entrants!

Refrigerator recycling continues

The Illinois Recycle My Fridge program is nearing its end, with a goal of recycling 660 refrigerators and freezers by April 30. Residents of owner-occupied homes served by RECC can schedule an appointment to have their refrigerator or freezer picked up from inside their homes, free of charge, by calling (toll free) 877-341-2313 or visiting the program's website (www.RecycleMyFridge.org). The unit will be properly recycled and, in return, each participant will receive a \$35 gift card.



On pick up day, ARCA will collect each fridge or freezer from inside your home, as long as it is a qualifying appliance, plugged in and cooling, with a clear pathway available. The appliance will then be taken to ARCA's local recycling center to be responsibly dismantled and recycled. Within four weeks after the collection of your appliance, you will receive your \$35 pre-paid card.

Stop air leaks to save energy

Air is drawn into your home from low areas, so inspect your foundation for potential air-infiltration points. Fixing these leaks makes a bigger impact on your electric bill than sealing doors and windows! Caulk all cracks and gaps around your home including spaces around wires for telephone, electrical, cable, and gas lines, water spigots, and dryer vents. Close and seal vents in crawl spaces to keep cold air out. (You may need to open those vents in the spring if your crawl space tends to become damp.) Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Cooperatives helped electrify American farms

Percentage of U.S. farms receiving electric service



This graph shows the small percentage of American farms that had access to central electric power in 1935, and the rapid spread of availability in the next 20 years, thanks in large part to the many local electric cooperatives that were formed to build power lines in the rural areas. Electricity was often called "the farmer's hired hand" because of the huge amount of work that could be done with electric energy.

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

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Normal office hours 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

What's new in the Cellular world?

If you're amazed and/or confused about the many cell phone advertisements you're seeing on TV or hearing on the radio, it's probably for good reason! New technologies, more phone models, faster speeds, thousands of "apps"... where do you start?

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative and many of our employees have relied on an experienced hand in the wireless phone business for several years, who helps cut through the clutter and identify the real needs along with potential solutions. That expert is Jim McAfee, now known as The Phone Guy in Springfield.

Jim says the line between phones and computers is disappearing, thanks to increased processing power, faster connections and improved graphics. If you use an air card Jim suggests that you look at upgrading it to a mifi, allowing 5 devices to use it at one time. A mifi is a device that works like a wireless router. You can connect laptops and desk top computers to it and reduce your monthly connection costs.

Smart phones can also be set up as their own mobile hot spot so you can connect a computer to it with no wires, or provide wi-fi to other

cell phones.

The gap between cell phones and PCs is also being bridged by tablets or pads, which feature bigger screens and easier website navigation than a pocket-sized phone. There are a lot more brands out there than the fruit-named icon, if you haven't noticed! Jim says there are even waterproof pads available, along with tough cases to protect your pad or phone.

Rugged jobs

For workers in rough or dirty jobs, there are still simple, rugged phones available. Jim reminds construction workers, farmers and others in seasonal jobs that it's a good time now to review your monthly calling plans, before things get hectic. You don't want to overpay for services you don't use, he says, but you also don't want to miss the helpful tools your phone might offer.



Jim McAfee is available to meet with RECC members about their phone equipment and calling plans. Just give him a call at (217) 741-0405.