

Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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

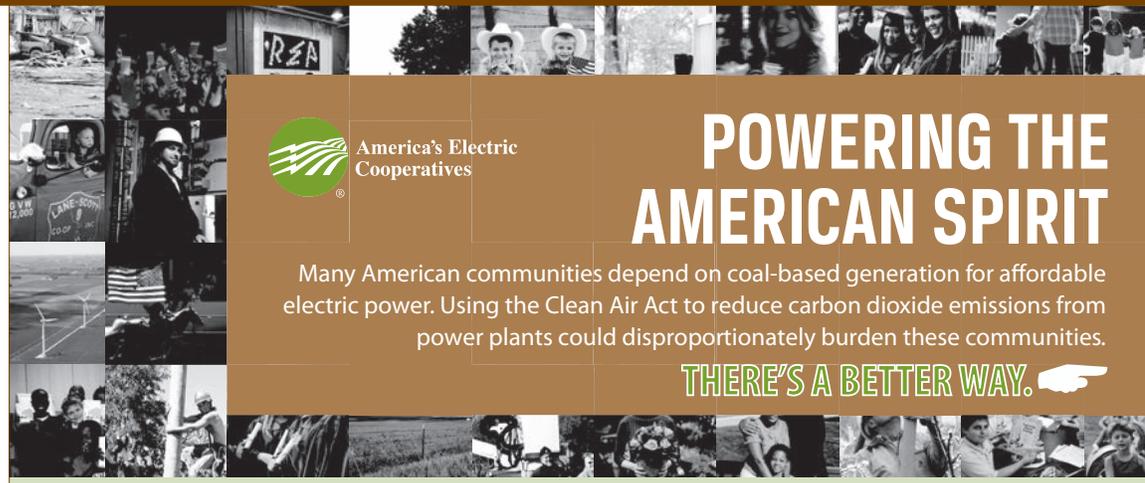
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Co-ops urge common sense on climate regulations

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) released a video last month that gives a voice to the 900-plus electric cooperatives and their 42 million consumer members that are concerned with the President's climate proposal using the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide during a fragile economic recovery.

"Rural communities have a great story to tell about how they are innovating, using new technologies and leading in energy efficiency. It's our responsibility to communicate the importance of affordable energy to the communities cooperatives serve and tell their story on how we are pursuing our energy future," said Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of NRECA. "The next few months are a critical time to unite behind that message and let policymakers know where we stand on the issues, as well as how important affordable energy is to us and the American economy."

The two-minute video is the first action in a coordinated campaign that underscores the dramatic impact new regulations could have on much of the country's electric generation and calls on consumers to join the united campaign. See the video and campaign announcement at www.action.coop.



America's Electric Cooperatives

POWERING THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

Many American communities depend on coal-based generation for affordable electric power. Using the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants could disproportionately burden these communities.

THERE'S A BETTER WAY. 

See the video and campaign announcement at www.action.coop.

The campaign is a response from the nation's electric co-ops to increasing pressure for more regulations from the President on the use of coal to generate electricity. On June 25, President Obama announced a broad new federal mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric power plants. He said he will instruct federal regulators to apply the Clean Air Act to carbon dioxide issued from power plants. This will effectively outlaw new coal-burning facilities, and result in a massive new climate tax upon all consumers.

Illinois' electric cooperatives are especially concerned about the President's proposal since rural and low-income Americans already spend disproportionately more on energy than others.

"Ultimately, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives are about keeping electric bills affordable and stable, and finding ways to improve our members' quality of life," says David Stuva, RECC's President/CEO. "The President's proposal will make electric power more expensive, causing our families and businesses to sacrifice, on top of all the other uncertainty in our national economy. Without question, electric bills will get bigger for the Americans who can least afford to pay them."

Stuva encourages RECC members to watch the new video, and ask our nation's leaders to make sure that keeping electric rates affordable for consumers is a high priority as we work to improve our nation's energy policy.

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Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Board report

Regular Board Meeting

July 23, 2013

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on July 23, 2013, at 7 p.m., with seven members present and Director Eigenmann participating by phone conference. The District 7 director's position is currently vacant. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva, Manager of Finance and Office Services Dean Fuchs, Manager of Operation and Maintenance Lou DeLaby, Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith, Executive Assistant Sandy Lex, Field Engineer & Purchasing Agent Martin Hinton, Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor, and Attorney Jerry Tice.

* The minutes of the June 20 regular Board meeting were approved as presented.

* The minutes of the Board meeting held immediately after the RECC Annual Meeting on June 13 were approved as presented.

* Chairman Ayers will e-mail a link to the Board of Directors evaluation form and President/CEO evaluation form and asked that they be completed and electronically submitted prior to the August 20 Board meeting. The Board decided to conduct the survey online using Survey Monkey.

* President/CEO Stuva and Brandon Taylor reviewed the operation of the co-op's new online Outage Map and SmartHub member communications site.

* Dana Smith and Dean Fuchs discussed a potential pre-paid metering program that has been adopted by some co-ops in the state. The Board took no action at this time and will review the options again in the future.

* CEO Stuva reported the next IMEA Board meeting will be held August 15. Several

Directors and employees will be attending a tour of the Prairie State power plant and coal mine on Aug. 22.

* There was no AIEC Report since there had not been an AIEC Board meeting since June 20.

* Jerry Tice and Lou DeLaby reviewed a proposed agreement to amend the cooperative's transmission line easement for a residential lot in Chatham.

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 Flow, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for June 2013 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

* Explained an adjustment in power purchases and line loss for the previous month after a correction of Ameren metering data at the Honey Bend substation.

* 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 19 persons.

* Approved changes in the Directors Policy 110.3 on Directors fees and expenses.

* Approved the proposed amendment in the transmission line easement for a residential property on Chatham.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Follow us on Facebook

Link from our web page at www.recc.coop

The GobNob Wind Turbine can now be viewed on webcam! View the GobNob Webcam...

Home Energy Audit

Follow Us > twitter

fb

YouTube

SmartHub communications to be introduced soon

The new SmartHub communications tool will soon be ready for our members' use, providing more information than ever before on your smart phone, tablet or computer. SmartHub will replace the e-bill system now offered, and also the My Energy Tracker energy use reports.

Some of the features include:

- View your hourly, daily and monthly electric use
- Quickly pay your bill
- Review past payments
- Receive bill reminders
- Update your account or contact information
- Get outage information
- Receive alerts from RECC
- Connect with social media

You will be able to use SmartHub online, and download a free app for both Apple and Android mobile devices. Members registered for our present e-bill site will use

the same sign-on information that they now use.

Watch for download information in next month's *Rural Highlights*, and incentives for using SmartHub!



2012 capital credit allocation notification

On your July electric bill, which was mailed on August 7, there was a message on the left hand side of the bill indicating the amount of capital credits allocated to you for electricity purchased in 2012. This message only appears on your master account and only appears if you were a customer in 2012.

As a member-owner of your cooperative, you share in any annual

margins. Your share of these margins is called "capital credits." At the end of each year, these net margins are allocated to each member on a basis of the dollar amount of energy used during that year. We are providing you with the amount of the allocation for the year, shown on your electric billing statement.

These allocations are not available as cash nor can they be ap-

plied as payments on your electric bill. These monies are used by your cooperative for long-term debt retirement, reserves, emergencies, system improvements and other contingencies. Capital credits may be paid to members as the board of directors deems appropriate and as the financial condition of the cooperative permits.

Home energy audits can lead to savings

You've probably had a check-up done on your car in the past year, to make sure it's running properly or maybe to prepare for a big trip. Have you had your home checked out to see if it's ready for another grueling Midwest winter?

A home energy audit determines how much energy your home consumes and assesses what measures you can take to make your home more efficient. Just because "nothing's broken" doesn't mean your home may not have a serious energy problem, or several small areas where you could be saving energy every month.

Several RECC members had their homes checked out in the past year, under the Home program that offered insulation and heating system rebates with funding from the State Energy Office. They often found that their attic insulation was below today's construction standards, along with installation deficiencies and obvious air leakage paths.

Audits were performed by RECC and local contractors, and efficiency projects included fiberglass, cellulose and spray foam insulations along with rigid foam board, in addition to caulking and sealing materials.

While RECC does not have insulation rebates available at this time, you can still take advantage of federal tax credits for qualifying insulation and high-efficiency heating system projects completed before Dec. 31, 2013.

Members saving money

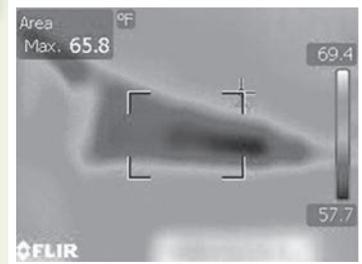
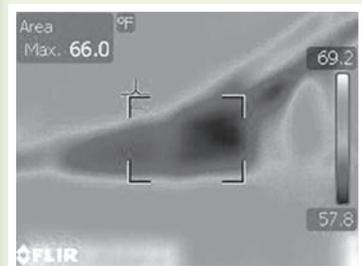
One of the RECC members who added insulation to his attic space last spring was Marvin Mathis of Pawnee. He says he appreciated the thermal images taken by RECC Member Service Electrician Jeff Lancaster that showed the weak points in his attic insulation. This summer the house seems to "hold the cool" better, he says. His electric bills have also stayed under \$200 this summer, which is lower than

Many members' homes do not have the levels of insulation recommended today in their attic.



Jeff Lancaster, Member Service Electrician, has done many blower door tests in members' homes to find air leakage problems, and also uses an infrared camera to evaluate insulation effectiveness.

An infrared camera shows colder areas (shown as darker) where the insulation allows cold air to contact the wall or ceiling surface in the winter.



past years. (June was close to normal temperatures, although July was cooler than average and August may be cooler yet – editor.)

Another member who made some energy improvements was Shawn Butler of Morrisonville. He added 100 bags of cellulose insulation over his existing ceiling insulation, and sealed a couple of air bypasses that let air go from the attic to the lower floors. He says he can feel the difference in the second floor bedroom on a hot day, even if the air conditioner isn't running.

If you'd like to have a thorough ef-

iciency check of your home, including a blower door infiltration test and infrared camera scan, you can request an audit by RECC at a cost of \$100. If you take a recommended action within 90 days, your \$100 will be rebated back to you.

Or, you can contact a local insulation contractor to test your home and possibly complete any efficiency work that's needed. For a list of area contractors, go to RECC's website and click on the "Home Energy Audit" article under the large photos.

Get a start now on saving energy and money this winter!



**TRUTH BE TOLD, YOUR ELECTRICITY
COMES FROM PEOPLE POWER.**

Thankfully, there's one energy source that co-op members can always depend on – the hard-working dedication and efficiency of your electric co-op linemen. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.



Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

News & Notes

Budget Billing program

September is the best time to sign up for RECC's Budget Billing program, to even out your electric bills throughout the year. A new budget cycle will begin in November, with 11 level payments based on estimated annual costs. The 12th month is your "catch-up" month, when any remaining balance is due or credit is refunded. If you have a credit remaining, the cooperative will issue a check after the October billing has been prepared. A new Budget Billing amount is then calculated for the next year.

To join the Budget Billing program, you must have a good payment record for the past year, and at least six months' history (preferably 12 months) to establish an estimated monthly payment. Your monthly billing statement will show your actual usage and billing amount, along with the budget billing payment and balance for the year. Call our office to get started on Budget Billing!

Member surveys being conducted

Some RECC members will be asked to participate in a statewide survey in the coming month, to help us evaluate and plan our operations and communications programs. The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives is coordinating the surveys, which will include both telephone interviews and written questionnaires.

We encourage RECC members to complete this survey if contacted. Any responses or comments will remain anonymous, and the actual surveys are handled by a third-party company. If you participate in the survey, you could win one of five \$100 bill credits. Thanks for your help!

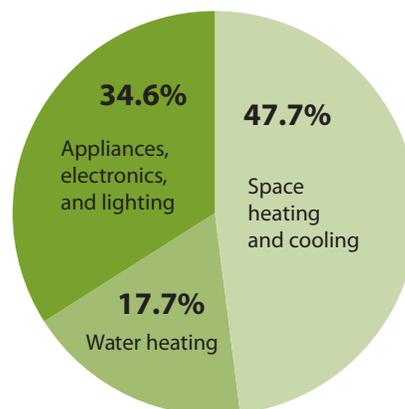
Do we have your phone number?

As part of our on-going effort for excellent customer service, there are times we will need to call our members. Please take the time to look at your bill and see if we have your correct phone number. If we don't, please write it on your bill stub and return it, so we can add it to your account information.

NUMBER	BILL DATE	LOCATION PHONE	CELL PHONE
793	08/06/20	794	---
NUMBER	NUMBER	SERVICE DESCRIPTION	HOUSE
013	013	HOUSE	
\$ AMOUNT			\$ AMOUNT
-224.81	FACILITY CHARGE		35.00
-130.00	ENERGY CHARGE	124000	98.46
0.00	*** TOTAL KWH CHG	794	133.46
	POWER COST ADJ		6.75
	BILL PUB UTIL REV TAX		2.54
	BALANCE FORWARD		-354.81
	*** TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		-212.06

How Americans Use Energy

New data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that heating and cooling still accounts for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes. But as we use more and more electronic gadgets, that segment is closing the gap.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administ

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

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

Keep your harvest season safe

Corn and soybean crops will be maturing late this fall, and may require extra handling if moisture levels require the grain to be dried before putting it into storage. When harvest starts, farmers have only a window of time—between weather events, equipment breakdowns, and life events—to get the best quality crop out of the field. Farm workers will be trying to get as much work done as possible as the daylight hours wane. RECC and Safe Elec-

tricity offers safety tips for farmers to help keep them safe during this time.

One of the biggest hazards for farm workers is posed by power lines. To stay safe around overhead power lines, Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call the local utility immediately.

If contact is made with a power line, remember, it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment.

If contact is made with a power line, remember, it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay

away, and call the utility provider immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away. Don’t let anyone touch the equipment if power lines are in contact with it.

RECC provides “Caution-Look Up” stickers to members on request, to be placed on tall equipment that may come near overhead power lines. These are a reminder to operators to be aware of potential hazards at all times.

It’s very important for farmers, employees and seasonal workers to be informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury. For more information on farm and home electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

