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# Rural HIGHLIGHTS

A publication of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative • Auburn, Illinois • [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop)

## Merry Christmas



*from the directors and employees of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative!*

### Directors

Jimmy Ayers	Thomas Hart
John Beatty	Mel Repscher
Clayton Bloome	Lou Weitekamp
Cassie Eigenmann	Chris Wilcox
Andy Goleman	

### Employees

David Stuva, Pres/CEO	Becky Grossner	Curt Nichelson
Clark Bowman	Bill Hart	Matt Sheerin
Travis Boylen	Tim Hemberger	Dana Smith
Craig Costello	Martin Hinton	Stefan Sporrer
Shelley Crocks	Tom Jones	Brandon Taylor
Lou DeLaby	Jeff Lancaster	Walter Wallace
Curt Fishburn	Sandy Lex	Ken Williamson
Dave Flynn	Dave McCarty	
Dean Fuchs	Jill Mortimer	



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**Board Of Directors**

**Jimmy L. Ayers**  
*Chairman*

**Chris Wilcox**  
*Vice Chairman*

**Mel Repscher**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

**John A. Beatty**  
*Asst. Sec.-Treasurer*

**Clayton Bloome**  
**Cassie L. Eigenmann**  
**Andy Goleman**  
**Thomas Hart**  
**Lou Weitekamp**

**President/CEO**

David Stuva

**Rural Highlights**

(USPS 473-140) is published monthly for \$4 per year by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. Publication Office, P.O. Box 19, Auburn, IL 62615. Periodical postage paid at Auburn, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Rural Highlights, P.O. Box 19, Auburn, IL 62615.

Dana Smith, *editor*



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# Board report

## Regular Board Meeting October 22, 2013

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on October 22, 2013, at 7 p.m., with eight members present. The District 7 director's position is currently vacant. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

\* The minutes of the September 24 regular Board meeting were approved as presented.

\* Chairman Ayers and CEO Stuva reviewed the process for appointing a Director to fill the vacant position in District 7. Letters were mailed to all co-op members in District 7 on Oct. 3, requesting applications for the vacant position. The application deadline is Nov. 1, with interviews scheduled for Nov. 21 at the RECC office.

\* CEO Stuva reported the next IMEA Board meeting is scheduled for October 24.

\* Director Beatty presented the AIEC Report. He reviewed the Executive Summary of the October 17 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, Member and Public Relations, Cash Flow, Cash Disbursements Summary, and Check Listing. The financial and statistical reports for September 2013 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also 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 20 persons.

\* Approved wage and salary adjustments for RECC employees, and for President/CEO Stuva.

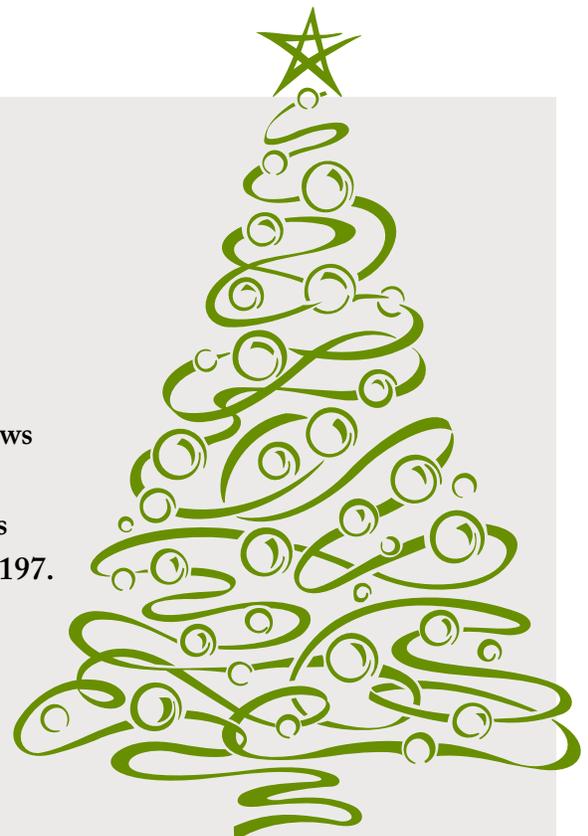
\* Appointed voting delegates to the annual meeting of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

# RECC closed for holidays

RECC's office will be closed for the Christmas and New Year holidays. Crews will be on standby for any outages or emergencies, and the dispatch service is available 24-hours a day at (217) 438-6197.

Christmas Day	Dec. 25
New Year's Day	Jan. 1



# Andy Goleman named to RECC Board

## Filling vacant position in District 7

RECC's Board of Directors met on November 21 to interview two candidates for the vacant position in District 7. Applicants were Andy Goleman of Divernon and Ron Roglis of Glenarm. After the interviews the eight Board members voted to appoint Andy Goleman to serve until the next District 7 election in June 2015. He replaces Ted Dowson, who resigned from the Board in June due to health concerns.

Andy farms with his brother in the Divernon/Pawnee area, and has been active in school, civic, county government and other organizations. He is a graduate of Lincoln Land Community Col-

lege and Western Illinois University. Andy presently serves on the Sangamon County Board, where he is Finance Committee Chairman and a member of several other committees and boards.

Board Chairman Jimmy Ayers thanked both candidates for their interest in serving on the Board of Directors, and said that both would be a strong asset for the cooperative. Andy officially joined the Board at its Nov. 26 regular meeting.



*Board Chairman Jimmy Ayers welcomed Andy Goleman (left) to his first meeting as a Director on November 26.*

# Efficient cooking for the holidays

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that cooking accounts for four percent of total home energy use, and that number might be higher in many homes preparing for holiday meals! As you prepare your special casseroles, desserts and candies, keep these tips in mind to control energy costs:

- Keep the oven door closed; opening it reduces the temperature up to 25 degrees and causes the oven to use more energy.
- Don't preheat the oven for recipes that will bake for longer than an hour.
- Turn off the oven/stove top during the last 5-10 minutes of cooking time.
- Lower the temperature 25 degrees for ceramic or glass dishes; they hold heat better.
- Use your slow cooker, microwave toaster oven or warming plate when you can.

- Cover pans when boiling water or other liquids, to speed the heating process.
- Keep the metal reflectors under your electric stove burners free of dirt and grime.
- Your pans need good contact with the electric burner; replace any warped-bottom pans that take longer to heat up.
- At your next party or family gathering, turn down your home heating system and let the heat from your oven and guests keep the temperature comfortable.

*Source: U.S. Department of Energy*



# Co-op Connections® adds extra value to online shopping

## Cash Back Mall gives you money back from 5,000 retailers

You still have time to use the newest program from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative to save on your holiday shopping! A new benefit from your Co-op Connections® Card gives RECC members cash back when online purchases are made from more than 5,000 of your favorite stores.

With Co-op Connections' Cash Back Mall, you can earn cash back on purchases of more than 300 million products. To start earning your cash back visit [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop) and click on the "Cash Back Mall" link on the Co-op Connections Card page.

Cash Back Mall includes the same sites you're already shopping at today, but now you get more for your money. Download and use the

free Shopping Assistant for your browser to make it even easier. This new benefit costs you nothing, but pays you tax-free income for doing what you're already doing.

With our new Cash Back Mall, you can:

- Download a free "Shopping Assistant" to quickly access cash back deals
- Shop directly from popular search engines like Yahoo, Google, and Bing
- Shop without needing to log in
- Access more than 5,000 participating retailers
- Access 20,000 discounts every day in addition to earning cash back

Whether you are buying gifts for loved ones, booking a trip or treat-

ing yourself, Cash Back Mall can put money back in your pocket. If you've used the previous online discount program (My VIP Savings) in Co-op Connections, you'll see even bigger refunds and more retailers available with Cash Back Mall.

When you go to the Cash Back Mall site, you'll find a helpful video describing the program and a Frequently Asked Questions page that will help you set up and use your account.



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# Need help paying your electric bill?

For members who qualify, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a one-time lump sum payment directly to the cooperative on your behalf. The payment is based on the number of people in the household and the combined 30-day gross monthly income. For instance, a single-occupant household could have a monthly income up to \$1,436, while a four-person household qualifies if total income is under \$2,944.

LIHEAP funding is channeled through local Community Action Offices in Illinois, and RECC's service area includes five county offices that would serve our membership. Contact information is shown below for those offices. Some funding may

also be available for efficiency or safety improvements in a qualifying home's heating system or weatherization.

## **Sangamon:**

Sangamon County Community Development  
200 S. Ninth St., Room 311  
Springfield, IL 62701  
(217) 535-3120

## **Macoupin:**

Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.  
223 S. Macoupin, PO Box 88  
Gillespie, IL 62033  
(217) 839-4431

## **Montgomery:**

Montgomery County CAC  
City Hall – Box 128  
Taylor Springs, IL 62089  
(217) 532-5971

309 S. State St.  
Litchfield, IL 62056  
(217) 324-2367

## **Christian:**

C.E.F.S. Christian Co. Outreach  
311 S. Main St.  
Taylorville, IL 62568  
(217) 824-4712

## **Morgan:**

MCS Community Services  
345 West State  
Jacksonville, IL 62650  
(217) 243-9404

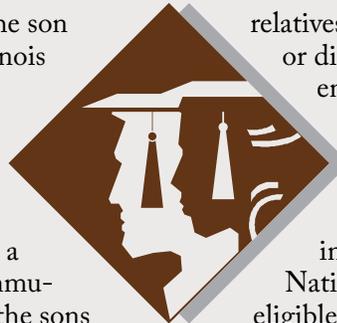
## Memorial Scholarship applications due Dec. 31

Illinois electric cooperatives will award eight academic scholarships in 2014 to high school seniors through a memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the "electric cooperative family." The \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. Applications are encouraged to be submitted online, and are due by December 31, 2013.

Four scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded

to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

An eighth annual scholarship, the "LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship," will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. Sons and daughters of co-op members;



relatives of co-op employees or directors; individuals enrolled in the Lincoln Land lineworker's school; and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for the lineworker's scholarship.

For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, at 438-6197 or e-mail [dana.smith@recc.coop](mailto:dana.smith@recc.coop). Informational brochures, rules and applications are available for download at the cooperative's website at [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop).

# News & Notes

## Don't take the merry out of your Christmas

Before your family puts up a tree or hangs the stockings this holiday season, start a new tradition. Put safety at the top of your list. Too often the twinkling lights people see are on top of a fire truck or ambulance—the result of holiday accidents that could have been prevented.

Trees and lights are danger-prone holiday decorations. According to the United States Fire Administration, Christmas trees start an average of 260 house fires each season,



*Don't overload outlets during the holidays.*

resulting in more than \$16 million in property damage. Another 150 house fires are sparked by holiday lights and decorative lighting, costing \$8.9 million in damage. Typically, all of these fires are more severe and damaging, resulting in twice the injuries and five times the fatalities per blaze compared to average winter home fires.

When it is time to deck your halls with holiday lights, take these precautions to ensure the safety of you, your family, and holiday guests:

- Do not overload electrical outlets.

Most lights are designed to con-

nect no more than three strands. Inspect the wires periodically to make sure they are intact and not warm to the touch.

- Never leave lights on overnight or when no one is home.
- Only use lights that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory.
- Replace any strands that show signs of damage, such as bare or frayed wires, broken bulbs, or loose connections. Faulty lights can send an electrical charge through a tree and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with a branch.

*Source: Sara Peterson*

## Tree trimming, pole testing continue

Contract crews are working for RECC in December to do line maintenance projects that will help assure continued service reliability for our members. Foiles Tree Service is patrolling and clearing trees and brush on the northeast feeder circuit from the Sicily Substation (next to the Kincaid power plant), which runs east to Kincaid and then north toward Edinburg. Landowners should be alerted to plans for any trimming or treating before the work is started, but when there are clearance problems around the co-op's overhead lines the trees or shrubs must be trimmed to prevent contact with the lines. In cases where a tree creates an ongoing hazard, RECC's Trade-A-Tree may be available to help pay for a replacement tree in a safer location.

Crews from Osmost Services will also be working on circuits from the Farmersville and Palmyra Substations, testing line poles. Director of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby says the pole inspection program identifies any poles showing signs of damage or decay. Any substandard poles will be scheduled for replacement by RECC crews.

## Last chance for efficiency tax credits

The federal government's Residential Energy Efficiency Tax Credit program is set to expire at the end of this year, with credits up to \$500. (The \$500 limit applies to total efficiency credits claimed since 2006.) Qualifying efficiency measures must be "placed in service" by Dec. 31, 2013. The maximum amount does not apply to geothermal heat pumps, or solar or wind energy systems which qualify for renewable energy tax credits available through 2016. The efficiency tax credits include:

- Furnaces, boilers, heat pumps and air conditioners: \$150-\$300
- Insulation, windows, doors – 10% of material cost
- Electric heat pump water heaters - \$300
- Gas water heaters – \$300
- Reflective roofing – 10% of cost

Your contractor or retailer should provide a certification that the product or installation meets the minimum requirements for the tax credit. This certificate is needed in case your return is questioned by the Internal Revenue Service. For more details go to [www.energystar.gov/taxcredits](http://www.energystar.gov/taxcredits).

# 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](http://www.recc.coop)

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

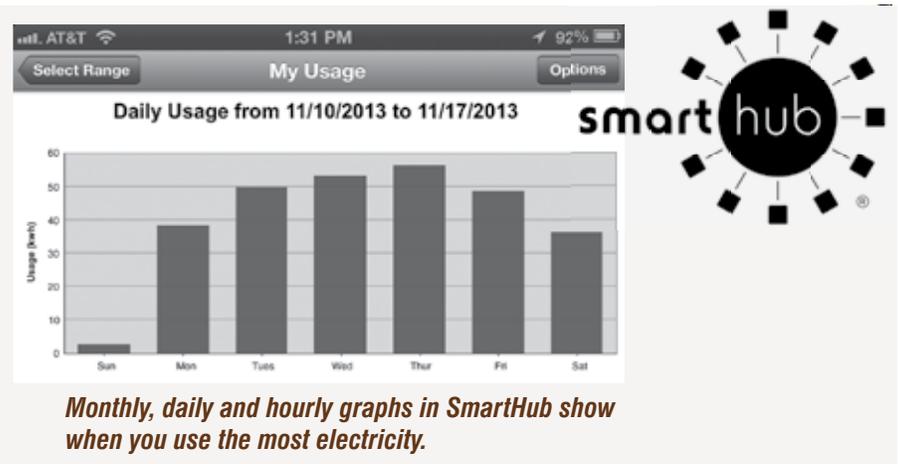
# *Have you registered for SmartHub?*

## *Sign-up incentives end December 13*

The new SmartHub communications tool brings bill presentment, payment and review together along with other co-op information for convenient use at any time. SmartHub can be viewed on your computer or a mobile device with our free mobile app.

Our promotional campaign to encourage members to register for SmartHub, and also automatic bill payment and paperless billing, ends on December 13! We will hold drawings on Monday, Dec. 16 for all those signed up for the SmartHub site and for automatic payment of their electric bill. Those incentives are described below. Those who started into the paperless billing option in October should have already received their \$10 bill credits in November, and those signing up later will be receiving their \$10 credits on their monthly statements.

The three promotions we're conducting are for initial sign-ups for SmartHub, switching to the automatic monthly payment procedure, and the "paperless billing" option where statements are made available for online viewing. You can qualify



for any or all three of the incentives, so take advantage of the convenience and increase your chance of winning a great prize!

### **1. SmartHub Registration**

Anyone registered for SmartHub (or previous e-bill) by December 13, 2013 will be eligible for a drawing :

- Grand Prize – iPad Wi-Fi Tablet
- Second Prize – \$100 Bill Credit
- Third Prize – \$50 Bill Credit

### **2. Automatic Payment Plan**

Anyone signed up for automatic bill payment, by credit card or from your bank account by December 13 will be eligible for a drawing for one of 3 Christmas Arrangements from area florists (\$40 value).

### **3. Paperless Billing**

All new users of paperless bills between Oct. 1 - Dec. 13 will receive a \$10 bill credit.