

# Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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



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## Prizes awarded for billing promotions SmartHub, auto payment signups increase

Our promotional campaign to encourage members to register for SmartHub, and also automatic bill payment and paperless billing, ended on December 13 and six prize winners have been selected. We've encouraged members to register for our new SmartHub portal for the web or mobile apps, and we now have 1,498 accounts representing 1,248 members signed up. SmartHub offers a one-stop site to review your past electric use, billings and payment, view actual billing statements, and make payments online. You can also opt to receive alerts from RECC on your billing status, outage situations or other news items.

From the 1,248 registered members, the random drawing winner for a new iPad tablet was Suzanne Morris of Virden. The second-place prize winner for a \$100 bill credit was Lawrence Kane of Pawnee, and the third-place prize for a \$50 bill credit went to Darryl Drago of Rochester.

### Automatic payments

Another promotion was for automatic monthly payments of members' electric bills, through bank drafts from checking or savings accounts or by credit/debit card. This avoids worry about forgetting to send a payment, possible mail delivery delays or

paying late fees.

We had 880 accounts signed up for automatic payment of their electric bill in mid-December. We selected three winners from those accounts, for a holiday floral arrangement just in time for the Christmas season. The three winners of these arrangements were Don and Lynn Kupferschmid of Chatham, Steve and Dianne Sommer of Chatham, and Sharon Neal of Virden.

### Paperless billing

The ultimate in convenience and efficiency is our "paperless billing" option, which saves the mailing of a printed statement each month. Members using this option receive a text or e-mail notification when the billing statements are available online, which they can review or print at their convenience.

New users of the paperless billing plan received a one-time \$10 credit on their electric bill, and these credits have been applied over the past three months. A total of 391 mem-



*Suzanne Morris of Virden was presented with a new iPad by Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, in our SmartHub e-bill promotion. Nearly 1,500 accounts are now registered for the SmartHub web site or mobile app, providing access to usage and billing history, online bill payment and co-op information. Congratulations to Suzanne and her husband Charles for being selected as our Grand Prize winner!*

bers are now saving paper by choosing this option.

Congratulations to all of these winners, and everyone who has chosen to use our convenient billing and information systems! It's not too late to sign up for any of these programs – just too late to win a prize!

(More photos on page 3)

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Dana Smith, *editor*



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# Board report

## **Regular Board Meeting November 26, 2013**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on November 26, 2013, at 6 p.m., with all members present including newly-appointed District 7 Director Andy Goleman. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva; Manager of Office Services Dean Fuchs; Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby; Director of Member and Public Relations Dana Smith; Executive Assistant Sandy Lex; Senior Member Accounts Representative Shelley Crocks; Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

\* The minutes of the October 22 regular Board meeting and November 21 special meeting were approved as presented.

\* Dean Fuchs and Shelley Crocks presented a list of delinquent accounts that management recommended be written off by the cooperative for 2012. They noted that the total amount of \$15,027.45 represents 0.105% of total revenue for 2012.

\* CEO Stuva and Lou DeLaby reported on transmission line upgrade work completed in the Chatham area and progress on new construction projects. DeLaby noted that pole testing and tree trimming contractors will be working in sections of RECC's service area in the coming month.

\* CEO Stuva reviewed the Oct. 24 IMEA Board meeting.

\* Chairman Ayers reviewed the Executive Summary of the Nov. 21 AIEC Board Meeting.

\* There was no Attorney's Report.

## **Special Board Meeting November 21, 2013**

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on November 21, 2013, at 6 p.m. with eight members present. The purpose of the meeting was to interview two candidates for the Director District No. 7 vacancy and to take action upon the appointment of a director to the unexpired term in Director District No. 7 pursuant to Article IV, Section 6 of the Cooperative's bylaws. Also present were President/CEO David Stuva and Attorney Tice.

Chairman Ayers announced that the candidates for the vacancy in Director District No. 7 would be called in the order drawn by lot with

## **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 October 2013 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

\* Distributed copies of the RECC Form 990 tax return that was prepared for filing.

\* Reviewed the proposed 2014 Capital Expenditures Budget and compared it to budget totals for the previous five years.

\* 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 22 persons.

\* Approved Work Order Inspection 219's No. 923-928 totaling \$660,320.17, for the period April 2013 to September 2013, for submittal to RUS.

\* Approved Special Equipment Summaries for January to September 2013 in the amount of \$204,892.00.

\* Approved the proposed 2014 Capital Expenditures Budget totaling \$118,186.00.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Andy Goleman being the first candidate to be interviewed and Ronald Roglis being the second candidate to be interviewed.

The Board of Directors interviewed each of the two candidates. After the interviews, discussion was held and the Directors cast a secret ballot. It was announced that candidate Andy Goleman had received a majority of the votes cast and Chairman Ayers announced that Andy Goleman would be the new Director for Director District No. 7 to complete the unexpired term of Ted Dawson.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.



## Prizes *(continued from page 1)*



*Don and Lynn Kupferschmid of Chatham won a Christmas arrangement from Floral Expressions in Auburn as part of the automatic monthly payment promotion conducted last fall. Dana Smith delivered the flowers to Lynn Kupferschmid at her home, adding to their holiday decorations.*



*Dana Smith, left, presented a Christmas arrangement to Steve and Dianne Sommer of Chatham. The flowers were arranged by Floral Expressions in Auburn.*



*Sharon Neal of Virden won a Christmas arrangement by Monica's Flowers and Gifts in Virden. She was presented with her prize by Dana Smith.*

## **Home Lite efficiency rebates total \$1 million State and federal funds support projects**

Home Lite, a partial continuation of the HomeE energy efficiency rebate program begun in 2011, brought one million dollars to co-op members across the state in 2013. It helped spur nearly nine million dollars spent for new heat pump and geothermal heating systems along with insulation and weatherization upgrades.

The program was coordinated through the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, which

obtained the grant funds from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and a federal program.

In total, the rebates helped pay for 491 geo systems, 151 heat pumps, 330 insulation projects, 42 heat pump water heaters, four commercial heating systems and 126 accredited home energy audits.

RECC strongly encouraged members to take advantage of the rebates, and eventually received

more than our initial allocation to pay \$69,655 to 57 homeowners.

“Energy efficiency is an investment that pays back every year in lower monthly bills” says RECC President/CEO David Stuva.

“This was a great program to push through more projects and help more members benefit from lower costs and better comfort in their homes.”

# Electricity helps protect water supply

## Otter Lake Water installs UV light treatment

The old adage that “electricity and water don’t mix” has been turned on its head at the Otter Lake Water Commission’s treatment plant on Emmerson Airline Road, east of Palmyra. In the pursuit of increased health protection for its consumers, the commission installed two banks of high-power ultraviolet (UV) light bulbs in its water treatment system this summer to neutralize any trace of a tiny parasite called cryptosporidium, or “crypto.”

The system was required by the Illinois EPA to meet new disinfection requirements, explained General Manager Dennis Ross, after 24 months of sampling of the raw water supply at Otter Lake showed four instances of crypto presence. While crypto was never found in the treated water the newest regulations required the commission to upgrade its treatment process. The old treatment was rated to remove 99.9 percent of crypto, and with the addition of UV disinfection the new treatment process is now rated at 99.99 percent removal. “The science is pushing technology to greater levels all the time,” Ross said.

The two banks of lights are installed in parallel pipes, with water pumped at 1,500 gallons a minute through one line at a time and the other serving as a backup. While there are 16 UV tubes in each bank, only six lights are turned on for normal treatment, running at partial power. More bulbs are operated when any taste or odor issues arise, along with other measures such as adding hydrogen peroxide or other treatments.

Automated cleaners scrape the outside of the quartz sleeves containing the UV lights three times a day during the plant’s operation

**The addition of UV disinfection treatment increased the removal rating to 99.99%.**



*Dennis Ross, General Manager of Otter Lake Water Commission, checks the bank of ultraviolet lights in one treatment stream at the water plant. The lights are part of a \$2.3 million upgrade project completed at the plant last fall.*

from 8 a.m. to midnight, and light sensors in the pipe monitor the penetration of the ultraviolet energy through the water flow.

Each bank of lights can use as much as 120 kilowatts of electricity, and has its own bank of electronic ballast equipment in an adjoining room. The commission also installed a new 800-KW backup generator to keep the new section in operation through any power interruptions. Along with two other generators, the entire plant can run off-grid.

The \$2.3 million project was funded through the IEPA’s Revolving Fund, as was a major upgrade at the plant in 2009. New filters

and treatment units at that time increased the plant capacity to 3.5 million gallons a day, Ross said. That project also took advantage of federal stimulus funds to reduce the loan costs.

The water commission, created in 1969, supplies six area municipal water systems and over 400 individual accounts. The plant is served by RECC, as well the business office at Virden. Dennis Ross says they invite school and adult groups to tour the lake facilities and treatment plant, and see the resource management efforts being carried out.

Water and electricity may not mix, but they can work together to provide our basic needs and promote good health!

# Rural Electric Youth Day set for April 2

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, April 2, 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 13-20, 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 an 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 3, and the ten students selected for the Illinois Youth Day program will be notified by March 7 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 written application, 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](mailto: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 3.*

## **Request for application – 2014 Rural Electric Youth Day/Youth to Washington Tour**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

High School Attended \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

# News & Notes

## ***Dampeners added to transmission line***

RECC crews completed a protective maintenance project on a short transmission line feeding the co-op's Palmyra substation on December 9. They wrapped vibration dampener wires along the spans to prevent excessive swaying or "galloping" during high winds. By decreasing the stress on the supporting insulators and avoiding contact between the wires, the life of the lines will be extended and future outages prevented, according to Manager of Operations Lou DeLaby. While the 1.5-mile transmission circuit was de-energized for the work, members were supplied from different substations through the day, DeLaby explained.



## ***Tune in to "Home Remedies"***



Doug Rye's "Home Remedies" radio show provides practical insight into home construction ideas and energy efficiency measures, every Saturday morning from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. on WSMI 1540AM. Doug Rye may be the best-known residential energy consultant in the nation. Since 1990, his weekly radio show has provided practical insight into home construction ideas and energy efficiency measures. Doug is known nationwide for his honest, down-to-earth and friendly style. His show airs live each Saturday morning, sponsored locally by RECC, M.J.M. Electric Cooperative and area heating contractors. Callers with energy efficiency, new construction and remodel questions are always welcome and encouraged to call the show. The call-in number is 1-800-477-1037.

## ***Co-op and employees donate to food pantry***



For the second year, RECC's employees have matched a donation by the cooperative to a local community organization to help those who are struggling at Christmas time. The matching funds totaled \$500 that's being given this year to the Girard Samaritan Corporation food pantry. RECC lineman Bill Hart, who also volunteers time for food pantry distributions in Girard, presented the donation check to Karen Sutton, president of Girard Samaritan. Karen said the food pantry, which is operated and staffed by church volunteers, served 722 people in the previous quarter. Several of RECC's employees were on hand to share their appreciation of the food pantry.

# 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 Heating Systems Rebate form must be completed. Please request a rebate form or download a form at [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop).

- 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 appliance or water heater, purchased within the past 12 months.  
Limit one rebate for each appliance type.

Clothes Dryer, Electric Replacement – \$25                       Water Heater, Standard Warranty – \$200  
 Clothes Dryer, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25                      (less than 10-yr warranty)  
 Electric Range, Electric Replacement – \$25                       Water Heater, Life-long Warranty – \$250  
 Electric Range, New Home or Gas Conversion – \$25                      (10-yr or longer warranty)

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.

## *Resolve to check your smoke alarms!*

Smoke alarms save lives. Almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

The New Year is a great time to do a check-up on your smoke detectors. (IF you have them!) Do they have good batteries? Are they old enough to need replacing? Do you have them in the right locations?



- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protec-

tion, both types of alarms or a combination alarm (photoelectric and ionization) should be installed in homes.

- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Smoke rises; install smoke alarms following manufacturer's instructions high on a wall or on a ceiling. Save manufacturer's instructions for testing and maintenance.
- Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps", warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly.
- Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Alarms that are hard-wired (and include battery backup) must be installed by a qualified electrician.
- An ionization alarm with a hush button or a photoelectric alarm should be used if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.

- Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These devices use strobe lights. Vibration devices can be added to these alarms.

### **Carbon monoxide alarms also required**

An Illinois statute passed in 2007 requires that every dwelling unit shall be equipped with at least one approved carbon monoxide alarm in an operating condition within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes. This law applies only to those dwellings that use fossil fuel to cook, heat or produce hot water, or are connected to an enclosed garage. Carbon monoxide is an odorless byproduct of combustion, and may build to dangerous levels if equipment or exhaust systems are not functioning properly.