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Rural HIGHLIGHTS

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

New home construction guide offered

This isn't your father's home insulation system. Or his heating system. And it's definitely not his energy audit equipment!

Rising energy costs have had a huge impact on how we build our homes, the technologies available for energy use and control, and what choices we have for home building or improvement projects. It's not just "business-as-usual" anymore! Special testing equipment is even used to make sure that air leakage is kept at minimal levels.

RECC and the Illinois electric cooperatives have updated our home construction guideline book to include the latest changes in equipment and practices, as well as requirements of the Illinois Energy Code which went into effect last year. The "Illinois Touchstone Energy® Home" booklet is the result of many hours of collaboration between co-op member service experts and energy trainers to identify the most cost-effective ways to build efficient, comfortable homes.

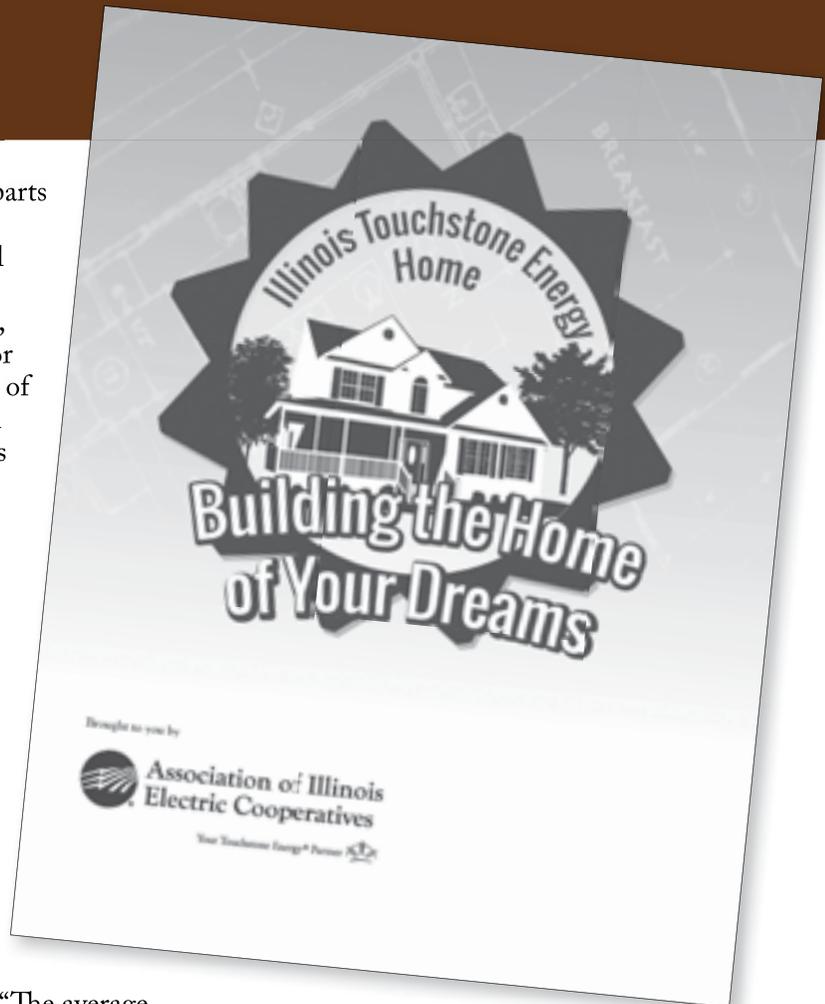
The booklet includes sections on insulation, air sealing, moisture control, and heating systems, with specific ideas on properly installing foundations, crawl spaces, walls, attics and access doors,

and other major parts of a home. While not trying to spell out every energy code requirement, it points out major items to be aware of and changes from common practices of the past.

"The Illinois Touchstone Energy Home book would be a great place for a member to start when they're thinking about a building or remodeling project," says Dana Smith, RECC's Director of Member and Public Relations. "The average person may have a lot of ideas on room layouts, colors, and floor coverings, but energy and efficiency are whole different aspects that haven't been considered as carefully in the past. And those details are

what's going to make a new house comfortable or not, and affordable or not for years to come."

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Dana Smith, *editor*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Board report

Regular Board Meeting December 19, 2013

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. was held at the cooperative headquarters on December 19, 2013, at 6 p.m., with eight members present and Director Goleman participating by video conference. 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; Computer Support Specialist Brandon Taylor; and Attorney Jerry Tice.

* The minutes of the November 26 regular Board meeting were approved as presented.

* CEO Stuva reviewed the cooperative's operating budgets for the past three years, and the 2013 budget through November. He pointed out that the proposed 2014 budget projects slightly lower sales, revenues and power costs compared to 2013 which had very strong sales for heating and grain drying. Dean Fuchs then reviewed the 2014 budget in detail with discussion of major items affecting expenses.

* CEO Stuva and Dean Fuchs reviewed the 2012 CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis report, noting the various areas in which the cooperative was high or low in relationship to other cooperatives of the same size as RECC.

* CEO Stuva reviewed the December 12 meeting of the IMEA Board.

* Chairman Ayers reviewed the Executive

Summary of the December 19 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 November 2013 were reviewed and accepted for placement in the cooperative's files.

CEO Stuva also:

- * Noted that sales were over budget for November due mainly to crop drying, and year-to-date sales are also over budget.
- * 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 proposed operating budget for 2014.
- * Set the meeting date for the RECC Nominating Committee for March 12 at 6:30 p.m., at the co-op office.
- * Appointed voting delegates for the upcoming NRECA Annual Meeting and for affiliated organization meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



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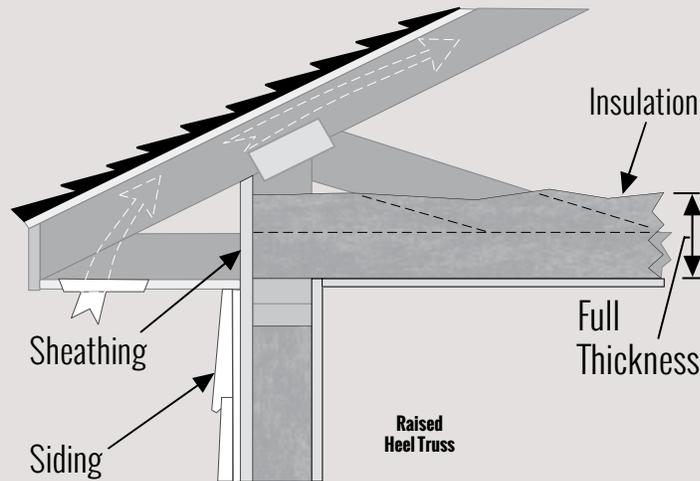


New home construction guide

(Continued from page 1)

Smith suggests that a member planning a construction project should sit down with their contractor and go through the guidelines book, to make sure energy-wise practices will be followed.

RECC is offering the Touchstone Energy Home booklets at no charge to our members and allied contractors. It's also available for reading or downloading from our website at www.recc.coop. We welcome any questions you might have regarding your new project or existing home problem.



Drawings throughout the Illinois Touchstone Energy Home book show details such as the Raised Heel Truss, which allows the full thickness of attic insulation all the way to the outside wall.

Nominating Committee to meet March 12

A Nominating Committee will meet on March 12, to select candidates for Director elections at the RECC 2014 Annual Meeting on June 12 in Chatham. The nine committee members will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the co-op's office in Auburn.

Director positions up for election to three-year terms this year are District 4 (incumbent Thomas Hart of Atwater), District 5 (incumbent John Beatty of Waverly), and District 6 (incumbent Melvin Repscher of Taylorville).

Members serving on the Nominating Committee are:

District 4

Susan Fuchs-Holt
3250 Morrisonville Ave
Farmersville, IL 62533

Brett Slightom
26257 W Frontage Rd
Farmersville, IL 62533

Curt Hays
28162 Cambridge Rd
Girard, IL 62640

District 5

David Ray
12958 Lead Line Rd
Auburn, IL 62615

John Megginson
13950 Lead Line Rd
Auburn, IL 62615

Fred Reichert
16560 Hunley Rd
Auburn, IL 62615

District 6

Steven Elam
1047 N 900 East Rd
Palmer, IL 62556

Gary Norville
694 E 1350 North Rd
Taylorville, IL 62568

Thomas Vail
1913 W. Vandever St
Taylorville, IL 62568

A rough winter (so far!)

Cold temps, snow and ice create challenges

Bone-jarring cold. Drift-covered roads. Sagging tree limbs weighted down by ice and snow. And that was all in the first week of January!

Yes, it's a real, old-fashioned winter season, which we haven't seen for a while in central Illinois. Fortunately, it hasn't really created a lot of outages for RECC members, but it's brought driving challenges, closed schools and workplaces, and yes, higher electric bills.

No matter how you compare it, this winter's been cold. November temperatures were lower than average, and December was closer to our typical January weather than to "normal" Decembers. December 2012 saw a delightful 41 degree average temperature (well above normal), but in 2013 the December average temp was 30 degrees. There were nine days when temperatures dipped into the single digits.

January wasn't finished as we prepared to print this newsletter, but it roared in with icy snow on New Year's Day, dumped at least eight inches of snow on Jan. 5 and then dropped to minus 15 degrees. On Jan. 6, the high temperature was minus two!

The frigid temperatures can add to consumers' electric use in many ways. Obviously, homes with electric heating systems use more power when the weather is colder. But gas furnaces also run more hours on cold days, with their electric blowers circulating heat through the home. People use more plug-in space heaters to add warmth in drafty rooms, or to keep pipes



The good news for this winter is that the weather has not caused any widespread outages for our members. Even when a truck slid into and broke this electric pole in early January near Glenarm, no outage resulted.

from freezing in garages and barns. Stock waterers often have electric heaters to keep a ready supply for livestock or even pets.

Did you or your kids stay home during a cold or snowy period? If so, there were undoubtedly more lights and appliances (and maybe electronic toys!) used on those days spent at home.

We know that average electric use by our members was up for the month of December, and bills will probably be up even more for January. We can't change the weather's effect on our homes and

our lifestyles. But, we do encourage members to consider the many potential ways to save energy in their homes. We've offered basic energy audits for years to help members understand where their electricity is used and how to use it more efficiently.

Recently our Member Service department was certified by Building Performance Institute (BPI) to conduct thorough home audits using blower door testing and infrared camera imaging. For a minimal \$100 charge we can help find air leaks in your home as well as identify any damaged or missing insulation that create cold spots in your walls or ceilings.

If you do need insulation or weatherization work on your home, we have a list of local qualified contractors on our website at www.recc.coop. We also have a list of heating contractors who offer high-efficiency electric heat pump and geothermal systems, along with fossil fuel systems. Our heating system rebates and Dual Meter rate also make electric heating even more economical along with their excellent safety and reliability.

We hope that more members will start their quest for lower bills at our website and the new SmartHub portal, where you can see your monthly, daily and hourly electric use along with weather data to evaluate your consumption patterns and determine where you might take action toward savings.

For all of your energy questions, feel free to call our office at (217) 438-6197. Let's work together to keep your bills affordable year-round!

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. 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



Annual Meeting set for June 12

RECC's 2014 Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, June 12 at Glenwood Elementary School in Chatham, so get that date on your calendar! Registration will open at 5 p.m., with a free pork chop dinner. Displays and kids' activities are also open during the dinner and registration time. The business meeting will be at 7:00, and will include elections for three directors on the Board. All members are invited and encouraged to attend... after all, it's your cooperative!

Don't forget your Valentine on Feb. 14!

As you plan your special message for that one or more special persons in your life, remember that you're part of something really big, and hopefully fun!

- About one billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged each year. The holiday is second only to Christmas in terms of the number of cards sent.
- Teachers will receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, and sweet-hearts.
- About one quarter of Valentine's Day cards have humorous messages.
- American women say they'd rather receive chocolate than flowers on Valentine's Day.
- Richard Cadbury invented the first Valentine's Day candy box in the late 1800s.

Thanks to ResearchManiacs.com

Students learn about power line safety

Local students got the chance to learn about the dangers of power lines with a live demonstration presented by Kyle Finley of LiveLine Demo. After some juggling of schedules due to snow and cold weather, demonstrations took place at Lincolnwood High School for grade school students from Raymond on January 9, and at the Carlinville Intermediate School for 4th grade students on January 10. The presentations were funded by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, M.J.M. Electric Co-op, Ameren and U. of I. Extension.

LiveLine Demo educates students on power line safety and how to protect themselves or someone else from injury or death. The display was constructed with the same poles, transformers, and line hardware used by local utility companies to assist students in understanding electrical systems. During the course of the presentation, Finley demonstrated common mistakes people make involving electricity and power lines.



Kyle Finley brought his sizzling high-voltage safety demonstration to Lincolnwood School in Raymond on January 9.

Make your voice heard for affordable electricity

Carbon dioxide standards as revised by the Environmental Protection Agency in January still “effectively eliminate new coal power plants as a future electric generation option,” NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson warned. “The emissions standards require carbon capture and storage at new coal plants despite this technology not existing on a commercial scale at any power plant anywhere in the world,” she added. EPA’s new proposal takes “a reliable domestic fuel with a historically predictable cost off the table.”

RECC and other electric co-ops across the country have asked our members and friends to tell EPA and their congressional representatives to keep coal as one of our vital energy sources in the next decades, through the website www.action.coop. While more than 100,000 consumers have registered at the site, our effort pales in comparison to powerful environmental groups who are promoting an “All But One” approach to our energy strategy.

“As not-for-profit, consumer-owned utilities, electric co-ops rely

on a diverse fuel mix to provide affordable, reliable electricity to 42 million Americans. We believe strongly in our responsibility both to our environment and to members, who often serve some of the most economically vulnerable populations in this country,” Emerson said.

If you have not already registered your comments at the action.coop site, PLEASE take a moment to make your voice heard. Make sure that coal is included in the “all-of-the-above” energy strategy that President Obama said he wants to pursue.



RENEWABLE ENERGY



NUCLEAR POWER



NATURAL GAS



CLEAN COAL

America needs an **ALL OF THE ABOVE STRATEGY** to keep electric bills affordable

**URGE EPA TO RECONSIDER
ITS "ALL-BUT-ONE" APPROACH**

ACTION.COOP