

Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Published by Clinton County Electric Cooperative

Volume 16 Number 2 • email - cceci@cceci.com • Web page - www.cceci.com • April 2008

Across the manager's desk



How to Avoid a... **RATE INCREASE**

It's vitally important that each and every cooperative member contact his or her respective Senators and Representatives regarding the ever-growing climate change voicing his/her concern that it will have on everyone's electric bills.

Electricity needs are on the rise, and the climate changes continue to increase. Congress needs to know that these issues must be addressed. We encourage you, as co-op members/owners to contact your representatives and senators. Let them know you are concerned and ask them

where they stand. We have made it easy to contact members of congress regarding these issues. Visit the co-op's Web site at www.cceci.com or go directly to www.ourenergy.coop and complete the letter that is available.

If Internet access is not available to you, you can copy the sample letter below and mail it to the legislators listed. Or you can come in the office and fill out a card and we will e-mail it to the proper congressmen.

If you don't want a rate increase - and who does? - it's so very important that you start the conversation with your elected officials NOW.

Clinton County Electric Cooperative

Sample letter to Federal legislators

U.S. House

(depends on co-op member's address as to which one they would write)

The Hon. John Shimkus
Member of Congress
240 Regency Centre
Collinsville, IL 62234

The Hon. Jerry Costello
Member of Congress
144 Lincoln Place Court, Suite 4
Belleville, IL 62221

U.S. Senate

The Hon. Dick Durbin
U.S. Senate
525 South Eighth St.
Springfield, IL 62703

The Hon. Barack Obama
U.S. Senate
607 East Adams St.
Springfield, IL 62703

Dear Senator (or Representative) (last name):

As a member/owner of Clinton County Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Breese, Illinois, I am writing regarding federal climate change legislation. My understanding is that there are at least nine such bills currently pending before the U.S. Congress. Almost all of the electricity I receive from our co-op is generated from a coal-fired plant which utilizes clean coal technology, and I favor cost-effective proposals to lessen greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, I strongly oppose - and urge your opposition - to any bill that would unnecessarily increase costs significantly, and which would include unrealistic timelines to reduce greenhouse gas emissions since the technology to achieve these carbon reductions is not yet available.

It makes sense that climate change legislation should focus on developing and using new technologies, and give appropriate incentives to co-ops and other utilities. In addition, I think legislation should cover the entire economy and not simply electric generation, and also address emissions from other nations. And, it is critical that any proposal also consider the economic costs of the plan and not cause significant negative impacts - I have heard that some of the pending climate change legislation proposals would have exorbitant price tags. Cost is of particular concern to me as a member-owner of a not-for-profit rural electric cooperative, as any increased costs to our co-op flow directly to my neighbors and me in the form of higher electric rates.

Thank you in advance for your consideration on this important issue. I urge you to only support legislation that addresses the above concerns and which will protect our electric co-op from having to dramatically raise rates.

Sincerely,

Clinton County Electric Holds 70th Annual Meeting of Members

More than 250 members attending the co-op's 70th annual meeting on Thursday, March 20, were informed of the organization's financial status, power supply, products and services and capital credits.

According to Secretary-Treasurer Ron Becker, total margins for the year were \$624,000. Becker stated that because the co-op is in good financial shape, capital credit checks totaling \$200,000 were being distributed to those people who were co-op members in 1988. The practice of returning capital credits is a very important way that member-owned cooperatives differ from investor-owned utilities.

Jim Riddle, President/Chief Operating Officer of CCEC, addressed the power supply agreement with Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). He said SIPC would remain CCEC's power supplier until 2033. He added that although CCEC's rates continue to be relatively stable, SIPC's current power supply cost is being driven higher by the cost of fuel: coal, carbon and natural gas.

Riddle also talked about the ever-growing climate change and how important it is for each co-op member to contact his or her senators and representatives regarding their concerns. "Electricity needs are on the rise, and the

climate changes continue to increase. Congress needs to know that these issues must be addressed. We encourage you, as co-op members/owners to contact your representatives and senators. Let them know you are concerned and ask them where they stand."

Scott Ramsey, President and General Manager of SIPC, was the guest speaker. He provided an overview of the SIPC and CCEC partnership as part of the Prairie States Power Plant. He said this entity would continue to work to bring the best services to CCEC members.

Board Chairman Joe Voss talked about upgrades that the co-op made in 2007. "This year we added a new transmission line from our Breese substation, south of town, to a new sub north of Breese. This will improve our switching capabilities and improve reliability for the whole system." Voss also added that the co-op continues to look at automated meter reading systems.

Re-elected to three-year terms were trustees Timothy Hanke, District No. 1; Kevin Kampwerth, District No. 2; and Randy Renth, District No. 3.

Every member registered at this year's annual meeting received a \$10 bill credit and a fluorescent work light.



Service Awards were given to employees and trustees of the co-op at the 70th Annual Meeting of Members. Those receiving awards were (left to right): President Jim Riddle, 20 years of service; Lead Lineman Myron Johnson, 35 years of service; Bookkeeper and EDP Operator Cathy Markus, 35 years of service; Trustee Kevin Kampwerth, 10 years of service; and Lineman Allan Deiters, 20 years of service.

From the Billing Department...

What are capital credits?

\$200,000 in Capital Credits are being distributed this year. Some of you picked up your check at the annual meeting. Those of you who didn't pick them up at the meeting should have received yours in the mail around the first week of April.

What are Capital Credits?

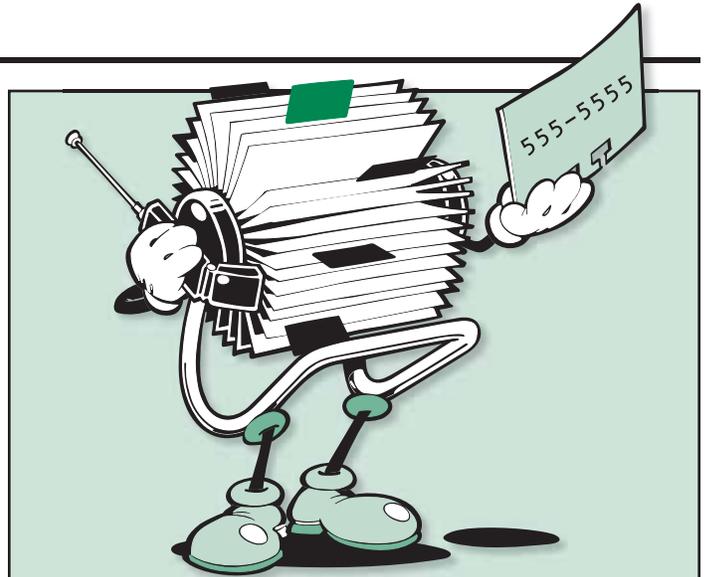
Capital credits are to cooperatives what shares of stock are to a for-profit company. When you own stock in a for-profit company, your stock may pay dividends based on the performance of that company.

At Clinton County Electric, you accumulate capital credits based on how much revenue you pay to the cooperative. The difference between the two types of businesses is that the customers of an electric cooperative are also the owners. There are no outside investors to please, only the users of co-op's products and services.

At Clinton County Electric, a member and owner are one and the same: you are a part owner in this organization. In essence, you have stock in the company. That "stock" is known as capital credits.

Capital credits are assigned to member accounts based on each member's purchase and the cooperative's operating margins. The capital credits are retained for several years to invest in the electrical distribution system. Your board of directors authorized the return of credits issued in 1988 to those who earned them in that time frame.

If you think you should have received a check, but didn't, please call our office and we can check our records.



Phone Numbers, Phone Numbers, Phone Numbers

We need your help updating our records. When you get ready to pay your next electric bill, please write your phone number(s) on your bill stub and return it to us so we can update our records. This information is especially important during outages, but we may also need to contact you with questions concerning your bill or for other reasons.

If you have a work number or cell number in which you can also be reached, please include this information also. The phone numbers you provide are for our use only – please be aware that we respect your privacy and do not give them out to anyone else. Thank you.

Found



We have a pair of women's eyeglasses in our office that we found in the snow the early part of February near the night deposit box next to the front door. If you have lost a pair, please come into the office to identify and claim. Thank you.

We Need Your Account Number!

To insure proper and accurate credit in a timely manner, please include your bill stub with your payment, even if you come into the office to pay and especially if you drop it off in the night deposit box.

When we receive cash in the night deposit box (and we discourage anyone from doing this!) with no bill stub or even money orders that aren't properly filled out with no bill stubs, it makes it impossible for us to know what account to credit these payments. Or, sometimes, a third party pays a bill and if there is no bill stub accompanying the check we don't know whose account to credit.

Please, always include your bill stub when paying – either in person or by mail.

Energy Costs

As the national debate on global warming and greenhouse gas emissions continues, the question of how much consumers are willing to pay for renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate change also continues as congress considers legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

New technologies to reduce greenhouse gases, specifically carbon dioxide, will cost billions of dollars, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. It's an "unpleasant and inescapable truth," noted the *New York Times*, "...that any serious effort to fight global warming will require everyone to pay more for energy." Those in the electric industry agree that we are talking about possible significant increases in what we pay for electricity.

It concerns those of us at Clinton County Electric greatly that the *Times'* editorial called these increases beneficial. Energy is currently under-priced and therefore over-consumed, it said. "As long as today's energy is relatively cheap, there is little incentive for private firms to develop new fuels and technologies," the editorial stated. Higher prices will force consumers to use less electricity and make it profitable for others to invest in alternate, and higher-priced, resources.

These skyrocketing electric bills will be painful for thousands of electric co-op consumer/members. Your co-op knows this. That is why your representatives at the co-op question each proposal brought forward by congress.

Changes in the electric industry are coming, but each change needs to have a real, measurable payoff. Additional

dollars paid through rate increases need to fund programs that result in significant changes worthy of the sacrifice consumers will have to make.

We need more research in most areas to effect real, measurable change. More research is needed to find ways to improve the efficiency of renewable resources, such as wind and solar. We need to develop ways to store this intermittent energy so that it can become a more stable part of the system. Nationally, electric co-ops are leading the push for more investments in research and development for carbon capture and storage, and clean-coal technology. At the same time, individual co-ops are working to find new, economically feasible projects that will move us toward changes in the industry.

We here at CCEC always promote energy efficiency. We offer reduced rates on heating and cooling kilowatt-hours when members install either geothermal or high efficiency air-to-air heat pumps. We also offer high-efficiency electric water heaters to our members for \$1.

Collectively, co-ops are looking at creating a national renewable energy co-op. Co-ops are doing a lot to help cut emissions improve efficiency and meet the needs of their members. They strive to do it while remembering that electricity is a necessity, not a luxury.

As we balance what needs to be done with what it will cost and who will pay that cost, Clinton County Electric will be looking out for you.



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

Productive dialogue begins by asking tough questions and requiring straight answers. Start by asking your elected officials these questions to get the dialogue headed in the right direction.

- Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide; What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
- What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?
- Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Start The Dialogue

NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE (_____) _____

EMAIL _____

I AM A MEMBER OF _____ CO-OP

SIGNATURE _____



For more information visit
www.ourenergy.coop

Start the conversation with your elected officials now @ www.ourenergy.coop

RECIPES

Pony Shoe Casserole

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 can Cheddar cheese soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 bag French fries
- 1 pkg. shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef and drain. Mix beef and soups together. Put in a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Put French fries on top. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 50 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with shredded Cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered for 10 additional minutes or until cheese melts.

Good Corn Casserole

- 1/2 stick butter
- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. flour
- 2/3 C. evaporated milk
- 2 cans corn, drained
- 1/4 C. sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a casserole dish. In a saucepan, mix butter and sugar and heat until melted. Mix flour in and remove from heat. Add milk and corn. Pour into casserole dish and bake for 60 minutes. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Living Green, Living Safe

Global warming, air and water pollution, solid-waste proliferation and careless disposal of chemicals damage our fragile Earth and impact our health.

By implementing the following simple, practical steps collectively, we can help heal the earth and ourselves.

- 1. Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs.** These bulbs use a quarter of the electricity of regular incandescent bulbs, and they last up to 10 times longer.
- 2. Drive less.** Carpool, walk, bike or use trains, buses and other public transportation.
- 3. Heat and cool your home efficiently.** Installing an electronic thermostat can make it easy to adjust the heat and air conditioning at night and when no one is home.
- 4. Run your dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer when full.** Clear the lint filter after every dryer load and air-dry your dishes.
- 5. Take advantage of solar power.** On cool days open blinds and curtains to let the sun passively heat your home. Keep your blinds closed at night to keep the heat in.
- 6. Insulate, caulk and seal gaps and leaks in exterior walls, doors and windows to make your home more energy-efficient.**

- 7. Nurture houseplants.** Green plants filter the air indoors and can absorb pollutants emitted from carpets, furniture, and electronic equipment. Spider plants, Boston ferns and palm trees are good choices.
- 8. Choose non-toxic cleaners.** Look for 100 percent biodegradable, phosphate-free, chlorine-free, and dye-free products.
- 9. Buy durable instead of disposable goods.** This includes razors, food containers and batteries.
- 10. Dispose of hazardous household chemicals, pesticides, paint containers and motor oil properly.** Most communities have drop-off sites for these items.
- 11. Buy recycled products.** Look for paper with a high percentage of recycled content.
- 12. Use a push mower instead of a gas or an electric mower.** Leave grass clippings on the lawn instead of picking them up.

Healing the planet is a big job, but if we all do our part, we can do it together.

For a Healthier you...

- Adding hard-boiled eggs to a salad will give you a protein boost. For additional protein, also add ½ cup of canned chickpeas to your greens.
- The following snacks have less than 100 calories each: Half a small apple with two teaspoons of peanut butter, 99 calories; one orange, 80 calories; a 1-oz. slice of reduced-fat cheese, 80 calories; 10 raw almonds, 70 calories.
- Blueberries are packed with twice the antioxidants of raspberries and spinach. One serving has as many antioxidants as five servings of broccoli, carrots or apples. It's best to eat them fresh and uncooked.
- Eat a half grapefruit three or four days a week to protect your heart. The fruit is loaded with antioxidants and soluble fiber, which help reduce heart disease.

Late Charges and Disconnection

In order for the Cooperative to operate in an efficient and financially sound manner, we must maintain a prompt payment procedure administered fairly and equitably to all. Any variance from this procedure is costly to the cooperative as well as to all members, but mostly to the late-paying members. Ultimately, if you don't pay your bill by the due date each month, you have just given yourself a 5 percent rate increase.

How long does a member have to pay his/her bill before a late payment charge is added?

The net amount of the bill is due on or before the 25th of the month. The gross amount, which includes a 5 percent late payment charge, applies to payments received AFTER the 25th of the month. Any bill payments put in the night depository or payments picked up at the post office prior to 8:00 a.m. on the first business day following the 25th of the month will not be assessed the late payment charge. All payments received after the 25th of the month will be charged a 5 percent penalty.

How much is the late charge and why is it charged?

The late payment charge, or penalty, is 5 percent more than the net amount. This amount is added to cover the expense of additional paperwork and special handling involved in processing past-due accounts. Why do you want to give yourself a 5 percent rate increase? This is exactly what you are doing when you don't pay your bill by the 25th of the month.

If the bill is not paid on or before the 25th of the month, then what happens?

A delinquent notice, or a reminder, is prepared and mailed on or about the 28th or 29th of the month. This notice, mailed from our computer center in Lake St. Louis, is a friendly reminder that you may have misplaced or overlooked paying your bill. The delinquent notice states the amount, with 5 percent penalty, that you now must pay and also gives the final disconnect date the bill is due (usually about 10 days from issuance). This notice also states that if the bill is NOT paid by the final disconnect date, a collection trip may be made and a \$35 collection fee will then be added to the bill. In addition, if the bill is not paid at time of collection, service may be disconnected.

If the member is unable to pay the bill, what should he/she do?

It is the member's responsibility to call or come into the office to make arrangements to pay the overdue bill. This should be done as soon as he/she gets the bill. Don't wait for some miraculous windfall. Definite arrangements must be made with an AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE of the cooperative in order to avoid disconnection. The cooperative's after-hours answering service DOES NOT have the authority to make any payment arrangements. Also, please DO NOT leave notes in the night depository - speak with a cooperative employee in person or at the very least by phone. DO NOT rely on a note left in the night depository to be used as insurance against disconnection. If you do not talk directly with a cooperative employee about arrangements for your bill to be paid, you probably will be disconnected for non-payment. If you ask for information about aid from federal, state or community programs, the co-op will give you whatever information we have, but it is then up to the member to contact the proper agency. The co-op cannot do this for you.

If no arrangements are made and the bill is still not paid, then what happens?

On or about the 10th of the month, CCEC will send an employee to the member's premises to collect payment or disconnect the service. At this point, the member can still avoid disconnection by paying the past-due portion of the bill and the \$35 collection fee. The co-op employee is authorized to accept payment but may refuse a personal check from a member who has a history of writing insufficient funds checks.

Can arrangements for settlement of a past due bill be made with the collector?

Definitely not. However, he may be able to establish radio contact with the office and receive permission to grant certain considerations in special circumstances. Usually the collector will tell the member to call the office while he waits for further instructions from the office. Even if arrangements for payment are made at this time, the \$35 collection fee will still be added to the member's bill.

If the member states that he/she believes the past due bill was too high, will the service still be disconnected?

Yes, absolutely, the service will be disconnected if the bill is not paid. This is definitely not the time to complain about a high bill. Such inquiries should be discussed with the office as soon as the consumer receives the bill in question. The cooperative wants to know about a questionable bill so that we can work together to resolve the problem. But this should be done BEFORE the co-op is in the process of disconnecting the service.

If service is disconnected for non-payment, what's the next step?

Obviously, it is in the member's best interest to avoid all the added expense of re-connection, not to mention the inconvenience, by paying the bill prior to disconnection. But, if a member is disconnected for non-payment, arrangements must be made with the Cooperative and all past due bills PLUS all collection fees PLUS a re-connection fee, in addition to a deposit **MUST BE PAID IN CASH OR MONEY ORDER before service will be re-connected.** The fee for re-connecting during working hours (our linemen work from 8 AM to 4:30 PM - any work that takes them past 4:30 p.m. constitutes overtime charges) is \$65. Overtime charge for re-connection is \$100.

The collection and re-connection fees are charged to defray the added cost of having to send an employee out to collect payment, disconnect service and/or reconnect service.

Past due bills cause the cost of service to go up. Past due bills hurt the financial condition of the cooperative in two ways. First, the collection and reconnection fees do not always fully cover the expenses caused by past due bills; therefore, any uncovered expense is paid by all CCEC consumers as part of the cost of operating the cooperative. Second, if a past due bill remains unpaid, it becomes an operating expense, which reduces yearly operating margins. When margins become dangerously low, rates must then be increased to keep the cooperative financially sound.

If you have any questions concerning bills or CCEC billing procedures, please call the office at 526-7282, Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New Employees

Adam Robke



Adam joined the co-operative family on Feb. 4, 2008, as an apprentice lineman. Adam hails from Germantown and is a 2005 graduate of Mater Dei High School and a 2007 graduate of Ranken Technical College. He was previously employed with Li'l Rock Electric.

Craig Benhoff



Clinton County Electric welcomes Craig Benhoff to its list of employees. Craig's first day with us was Jan. 2, 2008, and he also serves in the capacity of apprentice lineman. Craig lives north of Breese and is a 2003 graduate of Mater Dei High School and also attended Ranken Tech, graduating in 2005. Besides working at the co-op, Craig helps out on the family farm.

Annual Meeting Photos

Guest Speaker at the Annual Meeting was Scott Ramsey, General Manager of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). Mr. Ramsey provided an overview of the SIPC and Clinton County Electric partnership, as part of the Prairie States Power Plant.



Pre-meeting entertainment was provided by organist Duane Grapperhaus.



Duane Noland addresses Clinton County Electric members emphasizing the importance of letting your congressmen know you are concerned about future electric rates.



(left) Apprentice lineman Craig Benhoff and (right) office personnel Cathy Markus watch as a member registers for the 70th Cooperative Annual Meeting held on March 20. Each member registered at the meeting received a \$10 bill credit on the April bill and a fluorescent work light.

Financial Information

BALANCE SHEET

As of February 29, 2008

ASSETS (What We Own):

Total Utility Plant	21,312,530
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	7,949,310
Net Utility Plant	13,363,220
Cash & Temporary Investments	0
Investments in Associated Organizations	1,018,935
Accounts Receivable	438,556
Materials & Supplies	457,840
Prepayments & Other Deferred Expenses	464,124
Total Assets	15,742,675

MEMBERS' EQUITY & LIABILITIES (What We Owe):

Members' Capital Credits	6,914,576
Other Equities	240,939
Long-Term Debt	6,644,785
Consumer Deposits	116,185
Other Liabilities & Deferred Income	1,826,190
Total Members' Equity & Liabilities	15,742,675

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Two Months Ended Feb. 29, 2008

INCOME:

Sale of Electricity & Other Services	2,165,177
Other Income	127,676
Total Income	2,292,853

EXPENSES:

Cost of Electric Power	1,655,104
Operations & Maintenance Expenses	215,864
General & Administrative Expenses	181,742
System Depreciation	102,176
Interest Expense	81,695
Total Expenses	2,236,581

NET MARGINS

56,272

Clinton County Connection

Published by Clinton County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Board of Directors

Joseph A. Voss, Chairman.....	Carlyle
Cary Dickinson, Vice Chairman	Hoffman
Ronald Becker, Secretary-Treasurer.....	Trenton
John White.....	Carlyle
Vernon Mohesky	Breese
Kevin Kampwerth	Carlyle
Randy Renth.....	Mascoutah
Tim Hanke	Carlyle
Richard Timmermann	Germantown

Staff

James B. Riddle.....	President
Ralph Kuhl.....	Manager of Administrative Services
Bob Kroeger	Engineer
Harry Buller.....	Manager of Operations
Susan M. Laux.....	Editor

Published by Clinton County Electric Cooperative

The Clinton County Connection
Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc.
475 North Main Street, P.O. Box 40
Breese, Illinois 62230 (618)526-7282
Office open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



The CLINTON COUNTY CONNECTION (USPS 008-212) is published bi-monthly for \$2 per year by Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc., 475 North Main Street P.O. Box 40, Breese, IL 62230. Periodical rates postage paid at Breese, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CLINTON COUNTY CONNECTION, 475 North Main Street P.O. Box 40, Breese, IL 62230.