



# Clinton County Connection

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Mike Johnson

Visit our website  
at [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com)

Plan to attend your  
cooperative's 73rd  
Annual Meeting  
Thursday  
March 17, 2011

## Pole testing – what is it & why are we doing it?

I hope the membership of Clinton County Electric Cooperative had a safe and joyous holiday season.

One of our 2010 Initiatives was “Infrastructure Improvements” and a big component of that initiative was re-establishing our Pole Inspection/Pole Replacement Program. A member came up to me and asked, “Why are we doing that?” After I thought about it for a couple of minutes, I realized we haven’t informed the membership on what the program is and why we are doing it. Well, I am going to try to do just that.

As is the case with most electric utilities, Clinton County Electric is virtually totally dependent on the use of wooden poles. Even though the poles we utilize are initially treated to resist decay, over time all wooden poles will decay and ultimately need to be replaced. The decay rate varies dependent upon soil type, moisture levels, temperatures and the type of wood the pole is derived from. The objective of our Pole Inspection Program is to determine if a pole is still useful and safe. We currently employ Osmose Company as a contractor to perform our pole inspections.

Our inspection process involves a visual inspection of each pole looking for woodpecker holes, significant cracks, signs of termite and carpenter ant activity, or any other defect with the pole that may result in a pole failure and/or rejection. They will then complete a sound and bore test of the pole, where they will expose the pole below the ground line, bore the pole at an angle on two different sides, determine the size of the decayed pocket below the ground line, and sound the pole above ground line with a hammer looking for the decayed pocket to extend above the ground line.

The majority of decay in a wood pole occurs in the first 18 inches below the ground line. The integrity and strength of a pole is compromised when the shell wall of the pole is less than two inches. That is when it is recommended the pole be replaced. While a visual inspection is valuable and essential in evaluating the overall condition of a pole, any internal decay below the ground line would go undetected if not for our pole inspection program.

Due to time and resource constraints, Clinton County Electric fell behind on our Pole Inspection Program. We will have that situation corrected by the end of 2012. After 2012 our objective will be to inspect poles once every 6 to 7 years, and identify those poles that have significant decay and are in need of being replaced prior to the pole failing due to the lack of pole strength at the ground line.

In 2009 we inspected 4,235 poles and 348 (8.2%) of them failed. In 2010 we inspected 5,211 poles and 398 (7.6%) of them failed. The failed poles will be replaced through the Pole Replacement Program. Generally, this is how it will work: Poles will be replaced in the year following inspection so those poles that failed inspection in 2009 were replaced in 2010. This is a huge commitment for a cooperative our size.

By continuing our Pole Inspection/Pole Replacement Program, we have extended the useful life of our wooden poles, reduced maintenance costs, and increased the reliability and safety of our electric system for all our members. Remember, all initiatives we embark on always have our members’ best interests in mind.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the membership to log on to our website [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com). We will be using this

*(Continued on page 16b)*

# Budget Billing

With the cold weather upon us, we have all noticed the increase in utility costs. Consider Budget Billing to help minimize the financial impact of winter and summer bills. Signing up for the process is easy. Is Budget Billing right for you? Read these commonly asked questions and answers and decide if your budget would benefit from this option.

## Why sign up?

- You know exactly how much you will pay each month. Budget Billing provides 11 months of equal payments with a settle-up in the month of July each year.
- Makes planning and budgeting your energy costs more accurate and convenient.

## How do I get started?

- Email us at [billing@cceci.com](mailto:billing@cceci.com) or call us at 618-526-7282.

## Does Budget Billing cost extra?

- No. There is no service charge or fee.

## How is my Budget Billing amount calculated?

- Budget Billing amounts are calculated based on actual account history.

## Who is eligible?

- Budget Billing is available to residential customers with a \$0 balance who have been members for at least 12 months.

# Did you know you can pay your electric bill on-line?

Simply log on to our website at [www.cceci.com](http://www.cceci.com), click on E-Business Solution on the upper left side of the page and follow the prompts to pay your bill via credit card, debit card or from your checking account. You will need your account number when signing up, so make sure to have a copy of your electric bill in front of you. You can even set your electric bill up for recurring payment each month giving you peace of mind knowing your bill is paid on time each month! Once you are signed up for e-bill and we have your email address, a notification will be sent to you via email each month letting you know your bill is available on-line for viewing. By signing up on our website, you also gain access to valuable information about your account history. Do not hesitate to contact us at 526-7282 or via email at [cceci@cceci.com](mailto:cceci@cceci.com) with any questions.



# Winter months can mean higher use of energy

Electricity is needed for so many things. We take it for granted and are not really conscious of using it.

For those of us who question why our electrical energy use increases during the winter, the following list gives some possible examples:

1. More lighting is needed because of the shorter daylight hours;
2. Most heating systems require the use of electrical power and run almost continuously during extremely cold periods;
3. People use electric space heaters in their homes and buildings;
4. Tank heaters and heat tapes keep livestock fountains from freezing;
5. Engine heaters are being used for autos and tractors;
6. Electric blankets and heating pads are in use;
7. Clothes dryers are used more because it is too cold to hang clothes outside.

## Pole testing – what is it & why are we doing it? (Continued from page 16a)

medium to inform you, the member, of our various ongoing programs, such as the Pole Testing/Pole Replacement Program. While you are on our website, please take the opportunity to sign up for E- Business; the button is

on the upper left of your screen (see top of this page for more information). All you will need is a Cooperative billing statement and a valid email address.

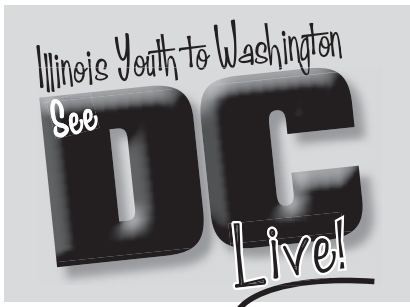
Thank you for taking the time to read this article, and as always, if you

have any questions, concerns or comments, please email me at [johnson@cceci.com](mailto:johnson@cceci.com).

*\*Thanks to Chris Scott, Director of Operations for Monroe County Electric Cooperative for his significant contributions to this article.*

# Applications are being accepted for 2011 Youth Day and Youth Tour

Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. will again sponsor up to 12 area sophomores or juniors on a day in Springfield to be held on April 6, 2011. This event is sponsored by the Cooperative and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Of these 12, two will be selected to go to Washington DC in June 2011 for an all-expense paid tour.



## WHO MAY ENTER?

Youth Day in Springfield and Youth Tour to Washington DC are open to high school sophomores and juniors

that are children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative members. Children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees or employees are not eligible.

## YOUTH TO SPRINGFIELD.

A panel of judges will choose up to 12 students who will participate with more than 125 other youths from other Illinois electric cooperatives in Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield set for Wednesday, April 6, 2011. The day's activities in Springfield will include touring the state Capitol complex, visiting with legislators and a luncheon. The two Washington tour winners will be selected from this group of 12 students.

## WASHINGTON TOUR.

The two local winners will join some 50 other Illinois students, winners of similar contests sponsored by other Illinois electric cooperatives, at

Springfield on June 10. They will travel on air-conditioned buses, returning June 17. While in Washington, they will visit such attractions as the White House, The United States Capitol, Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln Monument and many other national monuments and places of interest.

Applications are available at [www.cceci.com/youthprograms](http://www.cceci.com/youthprograms). Completed applications need to be returned to the co-op no later than January 31, 2011. Feel free to contact Ahren Langhauser at [Langhauser@cceci.com](mailto:Langhauser@cceci.com) with any additional questions.

This program may be suspended at any time due to inadequate funding or participation. As noted above, there will be a maximum number of 12 participants chosen. Notifications will only be made to those chosen to participate in the program.



*In our continuing efforts to provide our members and communities with superior services, CCEC is sponsoring a Lite 4 Bite program that began in November. Turn in two or more canned or other non-perishable food items into our office in exchange for a CFL light bulb! A maximum of four bulbs will be given to each membership, while supplies last (1,500 available). The food collected will be distributed to several food banks located throughout the CCEC service area. Please help us help others!*

## Star light, star bright, where oh where are you tonight?

***It's so dim, it's so dark,  
why does my dog continue to bark?***

Are you tired of coming home in the dark? Are you worried about what may be lurking in the shadows? In this day and age, you can't be too careful! Let Clinton County Electric Cooperative light up your nights with a SECURITY LIGHT to give you a little peace of mind during the long, dark winter nights.

The cooperative installs the light and provides any maintenance it may need – you pay the nominal monthly charge. You can have plenty of light to see what's on your doorstep.

**CALL OUR OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION  
618-526-7282**

# Sue Laux retiring

Back on September 20, 1979, Sue Laux began employment with Clinton County Electric Cooperative. On January 31, over 31 years later, she will be retiring. In 1979 the price of a gallon of gas was \$.86, the cost of a postage stamp was \$.15, and popular television shows were Charlie's Angels and Mork & Mindy. Not only have many things in our world changed over the past 31 years, much has changed at the Cooperative as well.

When Sue began her employment here, there were no computers at the Cooperative. Sue was instrumental in introducing the first personal computer and created and maintained many necessary spreadsheets for the Cooperative. Over the past 31 years, she has worked in many departments including Engineering and Operations, Member Services, Marketing, Customer Service and Billing as well as Editor of the Cooperative newsletter. Needless to say, Sue has been a valuable asset to Clinton County Electric Cooperative.

Sue will join her husband Burnell (Rookie) in retirement. We are sure they



will enjoy spending more time with their 4 children and 5 grandchildren along with the expected arrival of their first great-grandchild next month. We all wish Sue well in her greatly deserved retirement and will definitely miss her great sense of humor. So, you can still visit Sue at the Cooperative until January 31, but after that, attend any of the local Bingos (her favorite past-time) and you are sure to find her there with all of her new-found free-time! Good luck Sue and make sure you come to visit us occasionally!



*Congratulations Sue!*

**IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE**



Make plans to wear your green outfit and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with all of your friends and neighbors by attending **Clinton County Electric Cooperative's 73rd Annual Meeting** on March 17, 2011 to be held at Central High School in Breese. Registration will start at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. **You don't want to miss the chance to see Trustee Ron Becker in his green sport coat!**

**IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE • IMPORTANT DATE**