

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

# Hi-Lites

## The power behind your power

By Anne Prince

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – co-op lineworkers.

### One of the most dangerous jobs

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers often must climb 40 or more feet in the air, carrying heavy equipment to restore power. Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., lineworkers must perform detailed tasks next to high voltage power lines. To help keep them safe, lineworkers wear specialized protective clothing and

equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds additional weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They are also information experts that can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their laptops and cell phones to map outages, take pictures of the work they have done and troubleshoot problems. In our community, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative lineworkers are responsible for keeping 1,994 miles of lines across eight counties working to bring power to your home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools that line-workers use have changed over the years, namely the use of technology, the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineworker is not a glamourous profession. At its essence, it is inherently dangerous, requiring them to work near high voltage lines in the worst of conditions, at any time of the day or night. During hurricanes, wildfires or storms, crews often work around the clock to restore power. While April is known for spring showers, there is also a day set aside to “thank a lineworker.”

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 9. So, during the month of April, if you see a lineworker, please pause to say thank you to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate the hard work they do to keep the lights on, regardless of the conditions.

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*





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Office hours:  
Monday-Friday  
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#### **To report an outage**

- First check your fuses or circuit breakers and see if your neighbors have power.
- If the problem appears to be with the cooperative's lines, call the office at the toll free number (888-661-2632), give the name the service is listed under, and report any hazardous conditions.

Send your current email  
to [info@cmeccoop.com](mailto:info@cmeccoop.com)



for a chance to win a  
\$25 bill credit.

# President and CEO Report

## January 2018 Board Meeting

### Eastern Illinois University (EIU) Earth Day Event

- Met with EIU faculty to discuss combining CMEC's Avian Protection Plan (APP) rollout with Earth Day activities led by EIU.
- EIU will sponsor a colloquium evaluating CMEC intern Tyler Wright's research and the Risk Assessment Model he developed; it provides an opportunity for the research to be vetted before a faculty committee as a means to introduce a new, sophisticated assessment tool and subject it to academic rigor; Tyler's work is unique, and we believe the tool can become a staple risk assessment means for ornithologists to use.
- EIU will sponsor an education and field trip program focused on avian concerns and interests to the region for high school and college students as well as interested community groups; we expect the event to become an annual event for the region.

### More Avian Protection Plan

- NRECA has contacted CMEC and is developing a publication featuring CMEC and Sumter Electric Cooperative, located in Sumterville, Florida, showcasing the leveraging of the GIS system to guide an avian protection plan. The advisory publication will be included on the cooperative research network application on Cooperative.com.

### Rural Partners Board

- Known as the "Voice of Rural Illinois," it was designated the Illinois Rural Development Council and collaborates with the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. Kim Leftwich was invited to speak to the Board, briefing them on The Center for American Rural Energy (CARE). The Board was very receptive and initiated a continuing relationship with CARE. CARE is a consortium of academic institutions, regional economic development groups, and CMEC to test and develop energy innovation approaches for rural America.

### Eastern Illinois University Collaboration

- Met with faculty from the School of Technology and Department of Geology/Geography to develop a working relationship between the departments as we push forward with CARE energy innovation projects.

### City of Bloomington/City of Normal Visit

- Pursuing an electric vehicle demonstration project for our region, Kim Leftwich, EIU faculty, and EIU students visited with principal developers of the electric vehicle program for the two cities.
- City staff shared detailed data and plans with our team to give us a jump start on fleshing out a robust test and evaluation in our rural environment.
- Visitors also had opportunity to tour the Rivian Automotive Company, an electric vehicle manufacturer, that now occupies the former Mitsubishi plant.

### Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

- The CMEC Member Advisory Committee will meet Jan. 31 at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Education Center; Aaron Stalling, Regional Vice President for CFC, will participate, leading a seminar on financial considerations in a cooperative environment.

### CMEC Connect

- Equipment for expanding to Kirksville and South Shores water towers has arrived; installation will commence early February; the new locations open opportunity to serve more members.
- CMEC Connect has already scheduled upgrades for multiple towers including Lovington, Chesterville and Gays; the installations will add capacity and enhance reliability/availability; scheduled for late May.

### Marketing/Member Services

- NRECA's case study of the CMEC HomeServe program has been published to all NRECA members; cooperatives from across the

country are contacting CMEC for information.

- CMEC hosted Egyptian Electric Cooperative's Key Accounts advisor, offering information on our Key Accounts program and Key Accounts Annual Conference; additionally, our Vendor managed/Vendor Owned Inventory program was detailed for their information and consideration.

#### LED Lighting

- CMEC continues to progress in replacing all high-pressure sodium and mercury vapor security lights; some 1845 fixtures have been replaced.

#### Engineering

- Met with Fletcher-Reinhart representatives to spec a Cooper NOVA recloser; the device will be tested to determine if it is our best solution for replacing reclosers in substations during 2018.

#### Operations

- Good progress made on completion of the H1 mile double circuit; the rebuild is part of the Construction Work Plan meant to improve reliability and safety to our system.

#### Fleet

- Dielectric testing and PMs performed on all fleet vehicles over 15,000 lbs. GVWR.
- Considering bids for a digger truck and serviceman bucket truck; evaluating lease versus buy, seeking to get best value for the member.

#### IT/SCADA

- Continuing software updates to eliminate vulnerabilities; coupled with cyber security/security provided by PPI, systems and data protection continues to be improved.
- Line workers have been provided access to GIS mapping to test in the field before provided to all

employees; iPad profiles are nearly complete allowing rollout to field employees in February; utilization of GIS and iPads in the field will result in more knowledge and capability in the field resulting in greater efficiency to our work.

#### GIS

- Working to complete standardization between GIS, IVUE, WindMil systems resulting in fully electronic system maps.
- Developing a GIS web map that ultimately may give members a visualization of system conditions – outages, work in progress, etc.; currently have employees beta testing to seek out issues and bugs.

#### Safety

- AIEC performed SPCC (Spill Prevention, Control & Countermeasures) training for all outside employees; SPCC training is a requirement that CMEC must meet per safety regulations.



# JOIN US for LUNCH

## Friday, June 15

We will be offering a buffet lunch prior to the start of the annual meeting. The meal will include fried chicken, barbecue pork, baked beans, salads, chips, dessert and drink. The cost of the meal is \$5 per person with children 12 and under free.

Lunch will be served from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased at the cooperative office or check by mail to Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, Attention Carla Bradbury, P.O. Box 709, Mattoon,

Illinois 61938. Please include a note indicating the name on your electric bill and the number of tickets being purchased. Your tickets will be sent to you by return mail. A limited number of tickets will be for sale at the door.

To be eligible for one of two \$50 bill credit drawings, you must purchase your lunch tickets by Friday, June 8, 2018. The bill credit drawings will be held just before the 1:00 p.m. start of the business session of the Annual Meeting. You must be present to win.

## Scholarship deadline approaching

You could be one of six students who receive a \$500 cooperative scholarship. To obtain an application form, go to [www.cmec.coop](http://www.cmec.coop) or contact Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative at P.O. Box 709, Mattoon, IL 61938, [info@cmec.coop](mailto:info@cmec.coop), 217-235-0341 or toll free 888-661-2632.

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRY IS APRIL 30, 2018.**



We have implemented a new IP (Internet Protocol) phone system. Members who call in will be greeted by an automated attendant that will guide them through a series of options enabling them to report outages, make payments or speak to a member service representative. In addition to the new phone system, we will be moving toward automated payments using IVR (Interactive Voice Response). This will keep our cooperative PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliant while ensuring that our members' card information remains secure during the transaction. Members will still be able to pay bills in person at our office, on our website through SmartHub or by signing up for autopay. Thank you for your patience during this transition.



## Don't Waste. Insulate!



Properly insulating your home reduces heating and cooling costs, and improves comfort.

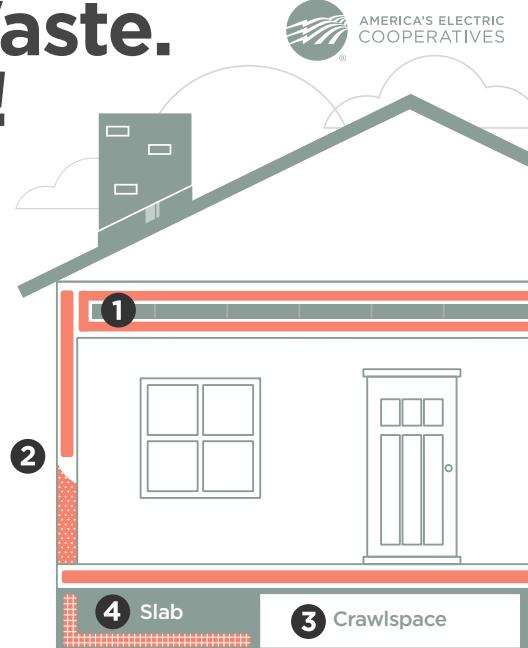
R-values measure a material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value rating, the greater the effectiveness of the insulation. Below are recommended R-values for areas of the home that should be insulated.

\*Recommendations on R-values are subject to regional climate conditions.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

### TYPES OF INSULATION

- Batt
- Foam
- Blow-in



**1**

### DUCTWORK

Whether it's made of metal or plastic (PVC), insulated ductwork protects your investment in conditioned air year-round. Minimal R-values of 4.3 are recommended for blanket-style wraps secured with tape. Insulated ductwork rated at R-6 is also available.

**2**

### EXTERIOR WALLS

There are multiple options for insulating exterior walls. Rock wool or fiberglass batts of R-13 to R-20 value are preferred behind drywall, but each inch of blown-in polyurethane foam insulation provides an R-value of 3.9.

**3**

### BENEATH LIVING SPACE

Whether your home has a full basement, a crawl space or an attached garage, having an insulation value of R-19 under the living space floor will help increase comfort year-round.

**4**

### SLAB FOUNDATION

Properly installed foam boards around the exterior edge of the slab of an existing home can reduce heating bills by 10 percent or more.