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Hi-Lites

Cooperatives see the future

By Anne Prince

Dramatic changes are transforming all aspects of the energy industry. Interest in renewable energy is at an all-time high, and ultimately consumers want greater control over their energy use and payment methods. The prevalence of smart-phone apps and “smart” technology for the home is increasing, and consumers and businesses are showing greater interest in electric vehicles.

There’s no denying it: electric utilities will have to make changes to the way they provide energy to accommodate these trends. Luckily, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative (CMEC) is uniquely positioned to meet these changing energy needs because we are a cooperative.

Co-ops are community-led.

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique. Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

Kim Leftwich, CEO of CMEC, explains that, “Electric cooperatives belong to the communities they serve. This heightened community focus allows us to quickly adapt to evolving consumer expectations. Our closeness to the community ensures a better response to these needs because we are led by the people that we serve.”

Co-ops are a catalyst for good.

Electric co-ops, like CMEC, are a catalyst for good in their communities. Co-ops engage their consumer-members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 75 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible. Today, it means bringing broadband to rural



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

homes and offering services such as Air Med Care, Safety Demos, HomeServe, Autopay, Budget Billing and SmartHub.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op. Right here in our eight-county service territory, we partner with Lakeland College, Eastern Illinois University, Sara Bush Lincoln Health Center, Charleston Stone and Coles Together.

The co-op business model is unique. It is pragmatic, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned that trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members’ best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve—now and in the future.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and co-op affairs for the NRECA, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric co-ops. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation’s landscape.

Visit us at these events during October:

Mattoon Chamber Expo @ Cross County Mall	10-3 p.m.	Oct. 4
Co-op Connections Day @ CMEC	7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Oct. 5
Touchstone Energy Balloon Fest @ Lake Shelbyville	Daily	Oct. 5-7
CMEC Volunteer Day @ Catholic Charities	8-4 p.m.	Oct. 12
CMEC Volunteer Day @ Douglas Hart	8-4 p.m.	Oct. 19
EIU Homecoming Parade @ Charleston	9:30 a.m.	Oct. 20
Blood Mobile @ CMEC	9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Oct. 26
Downtown Trunk or Treat, Mattoon	5-9 p.m.	Oct. 26

Stop by our office for a chance to win giveaways! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates #cmecc

P.O. Box 709 (104 Dewitt Ave., East)
 Mattoon, Illinois 61938

Phone: 217/235-0341 or
 Toll-Free: 1-888-661-CMEC (2632)
 Office hours:
 Monday-Friday
 7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Chairman

Debbie Albin.....Mattoon

Vice Chairman

John Bowers Lovington

Secretary

Natalie ParkersonMattoon

Treasurer

Steve Shrader..... Westfield

Director

Jeffery D. Hudson..... Charleston

Kent MetzgerGays

Bill Voyles..... Sullivan

President/CEO

Kim Leftwich

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.

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed on our website: www.cmec.coop



Beware of Electrical Dangers When Decorating for Halloween



Christmas is no longer the only holiday that we bring out lights and yard decorations to show our festive spirit. Halloween has become a time to string up lights, plug in fog machines, light up those electric powered decorations and create a yard that is scare-worthy to any trick-or-treater that may stop by. But beware of the hidden electrical dangers that could spoil your holiday.

“Many times, we store our annual decorations away in the garage, basement, or storage shed and cords can become frayed or damaged in storage from extreme weather or by a mouse that may have found its way into the storage space,” says Molly Hall, Energy Education Council executive director.

Safe Electricity offers these tips to make your Halloween safe and fun:

- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration. Check for cracking, fraying or bare wires; they may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
- Replace any damaged decorations.
- Make sure any lights, animated displays, or other electrical outdoor products are Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved and

marked for outdoor use.

- Follow the care and instructions that accompany your electrical decorations.
- Don't overload extension cords or allow them to run through water on the ground.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into outlets protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If your outlets don't have them, either contact a qualified electrician to install them or use portable GFCIs instead.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways to avoid tripping hazards.
- Turn off all electrical decorations and lights before leaving home or going to sleep. Consider using a timer.
- When decorating outside, always make sure to look up and check that you and any equipment, such as ladders, are at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Avoid any dangerous tricks this Halloween by enjoying your treats and decorating safely. Get more safety tips at SafeElectricity.org.

Join us at the polls on November 6

By Dan Riedinger

Our co-op's number one priority is providing our consumer-members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. But doing this job requires more than stringing and maintaining power lines throughout our service territory. It requires political engagement. That may seem far removed from our core mission, but it's essential to serving you, our consumer-members.

That's why we're participating in a national program of America's electric cooperatives called Co-ops Vote. Co-ops Vote encourages all co-op members to participate in national, state and local elections while educating political candidates and elected officials about the important role played by electric cooperatives in their communities.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing the nation's electric co-ops, launched Co-ops Vote



in 2016. Co-ops Vote started as a national non-partisan get-out-the-vote initiative that helped drive rural voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election.

Through this program, electric co-ops realized they had a unique advantage: As co-ops, the civic virtue of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community—one of the seven cooperative principles—through participation in our democracy.

Co-ops have another advantage. Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the electric cooperative family has put into political engagement. When we all get involved, we can make things happen

politically and in our local communities.

Our participation in Co-ops Vote helps to ensure that rural issues remain part of the national discussion—and are supported by

our elected officials. But Co-ops Vote isn't just for co-ops. It's for co-op members just like you.

You can participate by registering to vote and committing to cast your ballot on November 6. If you're interested in getting more involved, just give us a call or visit www.vote.coop to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Election Day!

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The Great Pumpkin Patch

As part of Cooperative Month, we will be featuring The Great Pumpkin Patch during the month of October. They invite you to see over 300 varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds from over 30 countries around the world; all grown locally in Arthur. Take in the beautiful surroundings and learn about the Cucurbit family. Visit numerous premier displays with over 5,000 hardy mums, exhibits, mazes and gardens. Grab a bite to eat on the farm and listen to live music on the weekends. The Great Pumpkin Patch is open every day through October 31 from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. and is located at 1749A CR 1900N, Arthur, IL. For more information visit: www.the200acres.com or call 217-543-2394.



President & CEO Report July 2018

Safety

- Thad France, AIEC Safety Specialist, performed crew visits as the primary safety activity for the month; France visited the CMEC construction crews and one (1) contract forestry crew; all results recorded and debriefed to participants.
- Currently changing Fire Retardant (FR) clothing supplier for better service and pricing.
- All Operations and Engineering personnel have completed all required online training for the year.

Governor Rauner Visit

- CEO Leftwich was invited to participate in a roundtable on July 2 with Governor Rauner; 30 local companies and local government officials had opportunity to converse with the Governor on multiple topics.

Green Mill Village (Arcola) Visit

- Staff met July 5 with Green Mill Village developers and the City of Arcola to discuss issues. The parties committed to jointly seeking economic development for the area; the City and CMEC outlined an improved highway lighting project to attract Interstate traffic and exchanged site information that may be hosted on City/CMEC websites as information for potential investors and business developers.

Rural Partners Board (RPB)

- The Board is a member of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, an avenue to promote issues of importance to rural Illinois. Eastern Illinois University principals (President, Provost, and Faculty Chairs) and CEO Leftwich briefed the RPB July 10 on the Center for Clean Energy Research and Education (CENCERE) and The Center for American Rural Energy (CARE), both housed at facilities at EIU. RPB members welcomed the information and had lengthy discussions about projects underway.

Rivian Automotive

- Rivian Automotive is new in electric vehicle manufacturing. Rivian invited CMEC and Prairie Power, Inc., our generation and transmission provider, on July 11 to the Normal, Ill. manufacturing facility to meet with its Strategy Director of Battery Systems and Director of Storage Systems. The group evaluated many concepts that would appear to have applicability to the EV automotive market, but may readily be adapted to utility battery storage solutions. We are in the process of defining several prototype solutions for application in utility storage, all to be applied and tested through the Center for American Rural Energy (CARE) and located in cooperative test sites.

Carbon to Ethanol

- CARE and CEO Leftwich met with a research group developing a proprietary process for converting CO₂ to ethanol. The application would receive carbon dioxide from a fossil generating source and convert the gas to ethanol. If determined practical and cost effective, a fossil generator would effectively become a non-emitting source of greenhouse gases (GHG). Working to develop a prototype to be operated

under the auspices of CARE.

OATI Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure

- CMEC discussing EV charging infrastructure development with Open Access Technologies, Inc. (OATI); looking for means to develop a model for EV charging station buildout.

AT&T Fiber

- CMEC evaluating Fiber to the Substation (FTTS) to diminish communications vulnerability and enhance operational distribution automation (DA) features as we build/install automated substation breakers through 2019. DA is one way to diminish costs of operation and improve restoration times. Effort is part of development of a long-range technology plan.

Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA)

- CMEC has had considerable recent activity with solar developers contacting CMEC C/I and residential members touting the benefits of solar installation under the FEJA legislation. At present, it is still not determined if cooperatives (or municipals) are eligible to participate in the FEJA programs. ComEd has filed suit in Appellate Court to prevent co-op/muni participation. CMEC continues to meet with developers and members who express interest. Impacts on other members are of significance – non-participating members will end up subsidizing all the facilities that become operational among other issues.

CMEC Connect

- The link between the CMEC tower and Charleston tower had failed and traffic was routed back around the network ring to maintain service; some issues arose because of the different equipment causing users to experience less than satisfactory service. Multiple switch changeouts and reprogramming finally remedied and improved the situation.
- Unusual spring and summer storms contributed to multiple link problems over the past few months.

Marketing/Member Services

- Sam Adair, Manager of Marketing and Member Services, participated in the Touchstone Energy Joint Advisory Meeting in Orlando. Sam serves on their Cooperative Relations Committee.
- CMEC Marketing/Member Services provided an electrical safety demonstration for Coles County 4-H and spoke about the "Cooperative Difference." 4-H members built a DC powered circuit and had the opportunity for a bucket truck ride.
- CMEC met with surrounding co-ops to discuss the possibility of expanding the Key Accounts Conference to include other co-ops and their C/I members. The event may include a golf outing and Key Account Representative Training from Touchstone Energy. The project is under study, but CMEC continues to lead the State in Key Accounts programs.

LED Lighting

- 2,088 security lights have been replaced with LED lighting; about 700 lights remain to be replaced.

Engineering

- Jef White has begun duty as a Field Engineer; he is

already handling Report-on-Calls, JULIE locates, and drafting work orders.

- Engineering received 382 JULIE requests plus called for 14 themselves; some 53 primary and 18 secondary locates were performed. All locates are now assigned GPS coordinates that may be used in the future by a contractor, precluding the need for a Field Engineer to make the trip.
- 41 Report-on-Calls received and assigned during the month; aligning the project list for Engineering personnel to get real benefit from addition of an additional Field Engineer.
- Evaluating the Construction Work Plan to update based on the most current system information.
- Researching change to regulator control panels as Siemens improvement has been marginal.

Operations

- Linemen Pickowitz, McDowell, Stuckey, Logue, Stanciu, and Forestry lead Starwalt left 1 a.m. Friday, June 29 to provide storm assistance to Egyptian Electric Cooperative in Murphysboro. After repairs completed there, the crews were reassigned to Southeastern Electric Cooperative in Eldorado. They were released and returned to CMEC July 1 about 11 p.m.
- All Operations employees have iPads with a "live" GIS webmap. Late one evening, our on-call service person noted an outage at a cellular tower, suspected it was potential theft, called Cumberland County Sheriff who caught suspects at the tower stealing copper. There had been four similar incidents the preceding week in the county. Technology works!

Fleet

- Unit #11, scheduled to be replaced this year, developed an issue with fuel leaking into the oil crankcase; we've brought out a spare bucket to get us through the fall expecting the new budgeted vehicle in October.
- New on-call unit (unit #39) is nearly ready for use; merely waiting for the center console with radio, inverter and switches.

IT/SCADA

- Configuring and reading metering data from the automated substation breakers, currently in test and evaluation mode. Once evaluation is complete, we will determine the make/model we intend to go forward with installing throughout our substations.

Negotiations

- CMEC union contract expires October 1, 2018.
- Parties best served by a multi-year contract.
- Staff has canvassed Illinois cooperatives on settlements reached for some guidance as to trends.
- Small number of work related issues to negotiate.
- Larger issue is the growing cost of wages and benefits; must be addressed holistically.
- As CMEC union represented employee wages/benefits are near the top among Illinois cooperatives, determined to minimize Cooperative cost increases.