

THE GRID

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Office hours:
Monday-Friday
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

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Vice Chairman

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Jeffery Hudson..... Charleston

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Andrew Fearn.... Charleston

Kent Metzger Gays

Thomas Sherman... Humboldt

President/CEO

Amy Bornttrager

**To Report an Outage
call #888-661-2632**

**Send your current email
to info@cmec.coop
for a chance to win a
\$25 bill credit**

New President/CEO for CMEC

Amy Bornttrager was selected as CMEC's next president/CEO by your board of directors. Bornttrager was serving as interim president and has been with the cooperative for almost 15 years as the chief financial officer (CFO). She is engaged at both the statewide and national levels and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from EIU. She looks forward to serving our members and is committed to our four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. CMEC serves more than 9,600 meters over 1,993 miles of line in parts of eight counties.



What Is REDLG?

REDLG (Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants) is federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This program provides loans to eligible rural utilities, which they pass through to a local project that will create or retain jobs

in rural areas. The recipient repays the lending utility directly at zero percent for up to 10 years. The new Hilton Garden Inn to be built near Route 16 is a recipient of REDLG. For details or application guidelines, contact Sam Adair at 217-235-0341.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Our New Journeyman Lineman - Brock Cook from Sullivan

Outdoor Holiday Lighting

Safety Tip
Don't hang lights using tacks, nails or screws; instead use insulated or plastic hooks.

Safe Electricity.org

MERRY Christmas
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Our office will be closed
December 24-25 and
December 31 – January 1
in observance of the holidays.

Shopping for a generator? Do a little homework first

Generators are classified by how much power or watts they can produce. That wattage measurement is important because it determines how many devices you can power. According to Consumer Reports (CR), the typical home requires 5,000 watts to cover the basics.

When considering which generator to buy, decide what you can't live without when the power is out. Then add up the wattages to get an idea of how much power you will need.

For example, a refrigerator typically takes 600 watts to run; a sump pump requires 750 to 1,500 watts; a portable heater can take 1,500 watts; and lights can require from 60 to 600 watts (depending on how many you power and the size of your home).

Safe Electricity offers background on four types of supplemental power sources:



Portable generator

Because these usually run on gasoline, they are extremely dangerous since they can produce carbon monoxide (CO). Because of that, never run these indoors or in an enclosed space and always keep them at least 20 feet from your home when operating them. Additionally, do not use them in damp or wet conditions. Some newer models feature a built-in CO sensor that triggers an automatic shut-off feature if it detects CO buildup. Other advanced models are designed to emit less poisonous fumes; both of these safety features help to save lives. Prices range from \$400 to \$1,000.

Inverter generator

This type of generator has a more complex engine than its portable cousin.

Because of that, inverter generators usually cost more than portable versions. They are much quieter than portable generators since they throttle up and down to match demand (instead of running at constant full power). They also boast more advanced exhaust systems, which also helps with noise levels. Inverter generators typically cost \$500 to \$4,000, and if you pick this kind of generator, you should follow the same safety precautions you would with a portable version.

Standby generator

This is the most expensive type of generator and models range from 5,000 to 20,000 watts. Standby generators are also the most convenient, since they are permanently mounted and they kick on automatically when the power goes out. They run on propane or natural gas and cost \$3,000 to \$6,000, not including installation. Installing them is definitely not something you can do yourself; they should be installed by an experienced electrician.



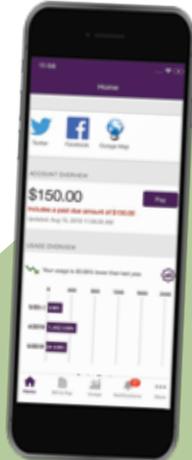
Portable power stations

These stations don't use gasoline or propane; instead they are powered by a battery that can be charged by electricity or by a solar panel. They cost more than traditional portable generators at \$750 to \$3,000. They are extremely quiet and they don't produce fuel emissions so you can use them indoors. The downside is they don't power as many appliances as portable generators and they don't run for an extended period of time.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

SmartHub's New Look

In October, SmartHub underwent a facelift for end-users. Members who have updated their app from their preferred app store have seen the new look and feel. The features are the same, but new navigation helps users access information quicker with a new revamped home screen. With a touch, swipe or tap, members can view and pay their bill, communicate with providers and much more



Scholarship Deadline Reminder

The deadline to apply for the Thomas H Moore IEC Memorial Scholarships is fast approaching. Eleven of the scholarship applications are due Dec. 31, 2019. The lineworkers scholarship is April 30, 2020. Visit cmec.coop or aiec.coop to apply.

Find Your Name and Win \$

Starting in January 2020, we will be hiding one member's name inside each issue of this newsletter. Find your name and call or email us to receive a \$25 bill credit. Credit must be claimed by the end of each month in which the newsletter is published. Happy Hunting!



PRESIDENT/CEO REPORT - September 2019

President/CEO

- Amy Borntrager attended NRECA's Region 5 meeting in Milwaukee, Wis., where the theme of the event revolved around creating a culture of safety.
- She also attended the CEO breakfast where Sheldon Peterson (NRUCFC CEO) and Jim Matheson (NRECA CEO) presented to the group. Continued support is needed by communicating with legislators, media and members about the importance of the RURAL Act, legislation to preserve the tax-exempt status for co-ops receiving funds from government grants. This is a critical legislative priority for cooperatives this fall. We need to continue to communicate our advocacy strategy with our boards and our members.
- On Sept. 5, 2019, Amy attended a "Town Hall" meeting at SBLHC. It is their all-employee meeting. It was informative to see the management team present the strategic initiatives to all employees and how they met their goals for the prior year and what their future organizational goals were.

CONNECT

- CMEC Connect has received all the equipment to begin the Connect upgrades. We are currently waiting for

a tower crew to become available to set the date to perform the work. We will replace the link between Sullivan and Lovington and upgrading Gays Water Tower. We plan to complete this in October.

Member Marketing Services

- CMEC participated in the Farm Progress Show. This year's booth was member-safety focused. CMEC also sent two journeyman linemen to showcase climbing and rescue techniques for the attendees. This was the first year in a new space at the event, and it seemed to work well.
- CMEC's Member Advisory Committee met on Sept. 12, 2019 at the Coles County Memorial Airport. Molly Hammond and Mary Warren spoke about the programs that the USDA offers. More than 30 CMEC members attended this function. We asked the current members to submit names to participate on the committee. Andrew Fearn, airport manager, led the group on an airport tour following the business meeting.
- Cooperative month is in October. Our Facebook page will have daily updates. All board and staff will receive a weekly (every Monday in October) email detailing the current events of the week.

- Gerry Kinney, employee for Wayne-White Electric Cooperative, will present his survival story of coming into contact with 7,200 volts while repairing a transmission line. The cooperative will open that day at 10 a.m. so all employees can participate in this training. We are encouraging board, employees and spouses to participate.
- We also plan to participate in the EIU Homecoming Parade. We will showcase one of our bucket trucks, and employees and board members can walk or ride in this event.
- We plan to fulfill one of our cooperative principles, commitment to community, by volunteering at one of our member's facilities, Douglas Hart Nature Center. We have two shifts that we will work that day to help our neighbor to the east.
- We participated in the Mattoon Chamber Expo at the Cross-County Mall on Oct. 3, 2019.
- We also had a bloodmobile at the cooperative on Friday, Oct. 11, 2019.

Safety

- The CMEC Safety Committee met on Sept. 9, 2019 for its monthly meeting. We did a radio interview on WTIM

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(870 AM) to discuss Cooperative Month on Oct. 2, 2019. We discussed the trenching and shoring training our outside crews received. We have put shoring equipment in the 2020 capital budget. We also reviewed the Safety Improvement Plan for 2019. The goals set were safety communications/awareness, organizational safety culture, and clarification of safety rules and procedures. We provided the list of accomplishments to the board in August. We also reviewed the accomplishments with the safety committee and are committed to continue the safety culture in 2020.

- We have created a separate area on our capital budget for safety items. We want the employees to see the commitment to safety from the top of the organization.

Key Accounts

- Amy Borntrager and Sam Adair met with Josh Bullock and Jackie Joines from Lake Land College to present a check for the scholarships that we fund. We can match our donation with a donation of equal amount from CoBank, one of our lending institutions.
- Amy Borntrager, Anita Hoene, Jim Wallace, David Welsh and Sam Adair attended the Mattoon Hotel and Coles Moultrie Convention groundbreaking on Sept. 18, 2019. Also in attendance were Tom Sherman, CMEC board member for district 6 and Aaron Ridenour, who assisted with the loan application.

Miscellaneous

- Carla Bradbury has attended two different annual meetings this year to gather new ideas for our 2020 annual meeting. She attended Adams Electric Cooperative in Camp Point and Southwestern Electric Cooperative in Greenville. We plan to start this process in the beginning of October and can hopefully improve our event in the future.

Operations and Engineering

- Jake Lueken began his employment as an apprentice lineman.
- The installation of G&W "Viper" breakers will begin soon. This is a big step in the future automation and data acquisition of our substations. Half of the substations should be installed by the end of 2020 with the remaining breakers installed by the end of 2022.
- Staff and the Rubber Gloving Committee met with representatives of IBEW Local 702 to discuss the union's expectations concerning rubber gloving procedures.
- The Hilton Garden Inn at Coles Centre has requested temporary service to begin construction. Drawings and

specifications have been submitted to CMEC for determination of service requirements.

- HSHS Medical has broken ground and submitted information for service determinations. Blue Cross Blue Shield has submitted the information needed for service as well, but there is not a timeline on beginning construction yet.
- Much time and effort are being put toward the creation of the 2020-2023 Construction Work Plan. The plans are for the kickoff meeting to take place in October to be finalized for the Operating Budget.
- Heritage Woods in Charleston has experienced four cable failures in the last three months. Work to replace the faulted sections of cable as well as any nearby "old" cable sections is underway. Expectations are to be in that area working through the fall.
- Service has been connected for the new surgery center at SBLHC. In addition, CMEC will extend the primary conductor on east from the Prairie Pavilion buildings to Loxa Road in order to provide a loop feed that will allow the Charleston substation to be able to serve the area in case of a failure of the Sarah Bush substation.
- Jim Wallace, Director of Operations and Engineering, has been working with Prairie Wolf Solar Farm to determine crossings of the CMEC distribution system to reach the Ameren substation between Ashmore and Kansas. This will be a large solar installation up to 10 MW.

IT/SCADA

- David Welsh, Director of Information Technology, continues to work on software updates on office computers to help eliminate known vulnerabilities and AMI MultiSpeak interfaces.
- He continues working with the AMI vendor to fix meter archiving issues.
- Work continues integrating the voltage regulator list into our customer information system.
- The breaker software has been created and is currently being reviewed by our electrical engineering firm.
- Working with our engineering firm on monitoring phase angles for the Bruce-Bethany, Bruce-Mattoon tie for the new workplan.
- CMEC's Master SCADA communications system was damaged by lightning. That has been repaired.
- Two AMI extender bridges were damaged by lightning and have been replaced. In addition, we are adding an extender bridge on Western Avenue to help signal issues.
- Running a pilot test on a new AVL (Automatic Vehicle Locating) system. We have currently installed the

equipment on five of our fleet assets. David Welsh and Sandra Fisher, controller, will work to provide results from this program.

- We added an additional Verifone device to the front counter. This will assist the second member service representative to process credit cards when needed.

GIS

- Shaun Vester, Manager of Geographical Information System, continues to work on maintaining our database structures for integration with our customer, meter and outage information systems.

Financial

- CMEC accounting department will travel to M.J.M. Cooperative in Carlinville to see NISC's Accounts Payable Work-Flow process. We plan to implement this module in order to automate invoice processing from start to finish. It will electronically log the approval process of invoices. This will allow our management team to approve invoices through an app on an iPad rather than routing paper through the office. Aimee Boswell, accountant, started this process. The management team has embraced the new procedure, and it helps eliminate the routing of invoices throughout the office.
- We plan to do another capital credit retirement in November 2019, retiring years 1980-1982.
- We allocated the 2018 margins on the members accounts this month. Members will see that reflected on electric bills. Further discussion with the board will be at the September board meeting.

Human Resources

- We had a journeyman lineman resign to move to Indiana, so we have started the process to replace that position.
- Annual enrollment will begin for benefit reviews with employees.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Laundry Tip: Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter clothing. You'll spend less time drying the lighter-weight items.

Source: energy.gov

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