



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# Hi-Lites



## Look out for scams

By Meghaan Evans

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- If someone calls your phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can, hang-up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card (such as a Green Dot card). Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative (CMEC) will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact our office either in person or over the phone at 217-235-0341.
- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of CMEC that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

- Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang-up immediately.
- If you receive an email from an unknown sender, an email riddled with spelling errors and typos, or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email or send it to your spam folder.
- If someone calls your home

claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang-up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

- CMEC wants you to avoid all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you can protect yourself from scammers, call us or visit our website [www.cmec.coop](http://www.cmec.coop).

Meghaan Evans 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.



**Office Closings**

**The cooperative office will be closed  
Friday, December 22, Monday, December 25,  
Friday, December 29 and Monday, January 1  
in observance of the holidays.**



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**

Jeffery D. Hudson..... Charleston

**Vice Chairman**

Chris Christman..... Sullivan

**Secretary**

John Bowers ..... Lovington

**Treasurer**

Steve Shrader..... Westfield

**Director**

Debbie Albin.....Mattoon

Dean Robison..... Windsor

Scott Uphoff.....Mattoon

**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.

**Member Exchange**

**Our Member Exchange has moved!**

This is now available on our website at [www.cmec.coop](http://www.cmec.coop) under our Community tab, Hi-Lites, Member Exchange.



# Board Report

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative was held at the offices of the Cooperative at 104 Dewitt Avenue, East, Mattoon, Illinois at 7 p.m. on the 28th day of September 2017: pursuant to notice duly given. The meeting was called to order by Jeff Hudson, Chairman. After calling the roll, the following directors were present: Scott Uphoff, Chris Christman, Jeff Hudson, Steve Shrader, Debbie Albin, John Bowers and Dean Robison being a quorum of the directors of the Cooperative. Also present were Kim Leftwich, President/CEO, and Amy Borntrager, Chief Financial Officer.

Motion was made by Director Christman to approve the agenda. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Director Robison to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted and the August Safety & Training report. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

In General Counsel's absence, Kim Leftwich refreshed the Board's understanding of an outstanding uncollectible member account and the measures the Cooperative has taken to recover debt.

Director Albin made a motion to revise Board Policy # 3 to strike "regular" from Section III, Provision C. and to add "electronic mail "to the notice requirement. Further, to amend Section III, Provision E to read, "the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order." Motion seconded. Motion passed.

Chairman Hudson made mention that the revised policies would be placed in the information section of the board report next month and not the action items.

Discussion of Board Policy #4 included discussion of means to appoint committee members to standing committees, concluding that Director's should advise the Chairman of committee interests as committee appointments were being made. Director Albin made a motion to add a Safety Committee to the current list of committees. Director Robison amended the motion to read Safety, Health and Environment Committee with this committee listed first among the list of committees. Appointed members to the committee were: Director Albin, Chairman; Director Bowers; and Director Christman. Motion seconded. Motion

passed. Chairman Hudson was designated to develop a list of tasks and duties.

After discussion of Board Policy #5, Director Christman made a motion to change the subject of the policy from "Payment of Telephone Bills" to "Internet Expense Reimbursement" and remove outdated portions of the policy. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

The CEO was directed to make the revisions to the policies and present them at the next Board meeting for review.

CFO Borntrager gave the financial report. She reported revenue dollars were below 2016 actual and 2017 budgeted figures due to the mild conditions in 2017. She reported on the Geographic Information expenses year to date. In addition, she reviewed the total dollars spent on outages in 2016 and 2017.

Director Shrader reported that there was no meeting for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives this month.

Director Robison and Kim Leftwich reported on the Prairie Power, Inc. board meeting.

Leftwich provided highlights from the NRECA Region 5 meeting in Minneapolis, MN.

Leftwich provided the President/CEO report.

In Old Business, Director Bowers asked to revisit issues that have resulted in scheduling of a Special Meeting of Prairie Power, Inc.(PPI), to consider and vote on revision of the PPI By-Laws. After some discussion, Director Bowers was satisfied his concerns were answered.

Items that were reviewed in the informational section of the Board Meeting were as follows:

- Outage report
- State of Illinois Account Status
- Director Winter School
- Our Town Community Update Breakfast
- Date for 2018 Annual Meeting
- CMEC and other Illinois cooperatives response to Hurricane Irma

Director Bowers made the motion to adjourn. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

**President and CEO Report**

**Anixter – Utility Power Solutions Division**

- Kim Leftwich was invited to speak



September 6 to the leadership of this international division of Anixter; it was the first time a customer had addressed the leadership group.

- Topically, provided an overview of challenges facing cooperatives now and in the future; offered cooperative views on needs from vendors.
- Introduced the Center for American Rural Energy; pitched an Electric Vehicle demonstration project to be developed and executed at the Anixter Mattoon facility.

#### **CMEC Connect Growth**

- Met with Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative (EIEC) September 1 to discuss build-out of CMEC Connect into EIEC territory as an internet offering to their members.
- CMEC/EIEC have established a working group to determine viability of providing CMEC Connect in the southern portion of the EIEC service territory.
- Currently developing a project viability study; as developed, will use the instrument to advise both cooperatives' Boards of progress.

#### **Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) – University of Illinois**

- Met with senior project managers at ISTC to outline a collaboration.
- Relying on our Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) data collection capabilities, ISTC will have the ability to conduct multiple lines of inquiry regarding energy usage and applications in differing customer groups and profiles.

#### **NRECA Region 5 Meeting**

- Attended on behalf of the Cooperative September 19-21.
- A report is included in the Organizational section of the Board Report.

#### **National Information Systems Cooperative (NISC) Visit**

- Arranged a visit and accompanied Eastern Illinois University Technology and Computer Science/Technology divisions to NISC September 22.
- Our visit was to acquaint NISC with the programs and curriculum at EIU and develop an on-going relationship for recruitment of EIU students, as interns for summer programs and as new full-time hires at NISC.

#### **RFD Radio Program Interview**

- Performed an interview with RFD Radio on September 27.
- The focus of the interview was rural development.
- Had opportunity to discuss our REDLG efforts, provision of broadband internet in the rural areas, beneficial electrification efforts, relationships with Eastern Illinois University and Lake Land College, Key Accounts programs, and contributions jointly with CoBank to enhance rural development.

#### **October - Cooperative Month**

- The Co-op Month campaign this year is entitled "Co-ops Commit."
- CMEC has multiple events scheduled including Co-op Connections Day, Canned food drive, a Blood Drive and Community Outreach Day where employees are volunteering at local charities/civic groups.
- Issued a challenge to Anixter to raise money for a local resident fighting cancer.

#### **Charleston Stone Case Study**

- The completed Case Study detailing Charleston Stone's installation of electric primary rock crushing has been completed and forwarded to NRECA.
- The completed study will be published on Cooperative.com for use by cooperatives throughout the country.

#### **J&M Representatives Key Account Visit**

- Member Services met with J&M to discuss CMEC services and answer their questions; also had opportunity to photograph facilities for marketing purposes.

#### **Facebook Videos**

- Several videos have been recorded and added to Facebook describing changes to member billing – Service Availability Charge, Formula Rate Plan Rider and Wholesale Power Adjustment.
- More than 1,000 members have viewed the videos.

#### **LED Lighting**

- 1679 LED Security Lights are installed replacing a like number of mercury vapor and high-pressure sodium fixtures.

#### **Engineering**

- Planning fall substation testing; sub tested will be Union Center, East Charleston, Marathon, and South Mattoon.
- Finalizing plans for rebuild of H1, H2, and H3 miles this fall.

#### **Fleet**

- Truck 17 developed a fuel system issue as crew was in Georgia
- Fortunately, the issue occurred as crew was being released.
- Truck currently in Atlanta undergoing warranty repairs.

#### **Operations**

- See separate report in the Information section: Hurricane IRMA.

#### **GIS**

- Clay County Electric Cooperative visited for briefing on our GIS development; comparing their ESRI based system to our system flexibility.
- Continue to add easements to the GIS system
- Developing a new format for CMEC map locations, standardizing and eliminating duplications; once complete, the format will be uploaded to NISC as the new format is necessary for future integration.

#### **IT/SCADA**

- Continue software updates on office computers to eliminate vulnerabilities.
- Investigating IP phone systems for office installation; provides multiple access and service updates to better utilize communications capabilities.

#### **Safety and Training**

- August 24, Bill Arthur and Jim Wallace participated in the Shelby Electric Cooperative RESAP inspection; the activity was the first occasion Bill had participated, meant to train him for future RESAP activities.
- John Pickowitz and Jim Wallace attended a PPI forum for discussion on new agreements with Ameren; the agreements contain a cooperation component for substation and line switching that will allow CMEC to perform switching on Ameren devices in emergency circumstances while following a prescribed protocol; it likely could insure CMEC members service is restored much more quickly in many instances.

#### **Buildings**

- Work has begun on the North building to clean and paint all surfaces and modify the 2 east bay doors for greater height clearance
- Northeast pole structure is also being painted and door openings framed for future overhead doors.
- Backlot scheduled for oil and chip the week of September 25.

## Increase efficiency as temperatures plummet

A cold winter can bring an equally cold reality: higher heating bills. This winter, keep your costs and energy use as low as possible by following these winter efficiency tips:

- Have a heating system checkup, and change your filter every month or two during winter.
- Make sure there's plenty of insulation in attics and crawl spaces. Check the ductwork that's in your basement or attic. Air leaks in ducts can account for 20 to 30 percent of wasted heat. If there are leaks or holes in your ducts, use sealant or metal tape.
- Check for gaps and air leaks around doors, windows, outlets, etc. Seal these areas with caulk, sealant, weather stripping, etc.
- Use a programmable thermostat to set your temperature lower when you're away to prevent energy waste

from heating an empty house. Using a programmable thermostat can help save about \$180 each year.

- Leave space around heating registers so warm air can easily enter the area.
  - Consider replacing old heating equipment with newer, more efficient systems.
  - Keep curtains open to let direct sunlight heat the home during daylight hours. Remember to close your curtains in the evening to reduce drafts.
  - Turn your water heater down to the "warm" setting, or to 120 degrees, to cut back on the energy waste and reduce the risk of scalds. Water heating consumes a higher percentage of heating costs than you might think, nearly a fifth.
- For additional information on energy efficiency, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Scholarship deadline approaching

Ten \$2,000 academic scholarships are being awarded through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program to high school seniors. Five of the scholarships will be awarded to the child of an Illinois electric cooperative member. A sixth award will go to the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative director or employee. Three additional scholarships will be reserved for use at a two-year Illinois community college. **Deadline for applications is Dec. 31, 2017.**

Candidates are judged based on grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

The tenth scholarship, the "LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship," was awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$2,000 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. LaVern McEntire served as a lineman for McDonough Power Electric Cooperative from 1949 to 1991. He and his wife, Nola, helped to endow and establish the new scholarship to financially assist deserving individuals in becoming trained lineworkers. Relatives of co-op employees or directors are eligible for the lineworker's scholarship, as are individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard. **The deadline for this application is April 1, 2018.**

For more information, contact Carla Bradbury, 217-235-0341, email [info@cmec.coop](mailto:info@cmec.coop) or contact your area high school guidance counselor.



## Lineman's Safety Rodeo

Shane Ruppert, Mike Stuckey and Jake Logue represented Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative at the 20th Lineman's Safety Rodeo, sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives on Friday, Oct. 20. Teams of linemen from Illinois electric cooperatives participate in competitive events using skills that focus on agility, speed, accuracy and safety. This year, 13 teams participated in the competition.

Line personnel competed in five team events and four individual events. Team and individual events included hurt man rescue, egg climb, knot tying and a digger derrick obstacle course. Additionally, teams competed in a single-phase transformer change out.

As a team, Logue, Stuckey and Ruppert received third place in the hurt man rescue event. Ruppert also earned third place in the same event competing as an individual lineman. Congratulations to our linemen on their team and individual efforts!