

CLOSED CIRCUIT

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SAFETY DRIVEN • ENERGY SMART • COMMUNITY INVESTED

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2016 Service Awards



DON LANGE



JULIE KERNS



TIM LUPKES



ADAM MCCUDDIN



TIM MARIENAU



ERIC PAGE



LYDDA YOUMANS

CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE congratulates the following employees for their years of service to the cooperative:

45 Years: **Don Lange**, Manager of Operations

25 Years: **Julie Kerns**, Engineering & Operations Administrative Assistant

15 Years: **Tim Lupkes**, Journeyman Lineman

10 Years: **Adam McCuddin**, Journeyman Lineman

2 Years: **Tim Marienau**, Manager of Finance

2 Years: **Eric Page**, Apprentice Lineman

Director **Lydda Youmans** was also recognized for completing her first term on the CEC board. The recipients were honored during the annual Service Awards banquet in December.



LOOKING BACK AT 2016, IT WAS A great year. I am very happy to be back at Clarke Electric Cooperative and thankful to have my first year completed without any disastrous storms. In fact, up until mid-December, it was one of the mildest weather years I can remember. Our members probably noticed it too, with smaller electric bills.



DAVID OPIE

The mild weather pattern in turn generated lower revenue. Because we forecast expense and revenue by the months, we were able to reduce our expenditures to help offset this lower income. While Clarke Electric Cooperative works hard to control our expenses, we remain dedicated to, and actually increased our budget for the Right-of-Way clearing program.

For more than 10 years, we focused on reclaiming the right of way. By the end of the second quarter in 2017, we anticipate the initial clearing on the entire distribution system will be complete. Once that is done we will start a methodical five-year maintenance plan.

Vegetation clearing and trimming had not been addressed for a number of years, which caused significant tree height and density. Many of our members may notice a dramatic visible change as we work along. And I want to thank our members for their understanding and patience as we catch up on the requirements

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Reading pays! We have hidden two of our members' account numbers in this issue. If you find your member location number, call during January to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.



CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

PO Box 161, 1103 N Main, Osceola, IA 50213-0161

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Working for You: Board of Directors Approve 2017 Work Plan

AT ITS DECEMBER MEETING, THE CLARKE ELECTRIC Board of Directors approved the cooperative's 2017 Business Plan.

CEC's major focus over the past decade has been to complete the reclamation of the right-of-way (ROW) cycle in our eight-county service territory that encompasses 11 substations. This reclamation included major tree removal, stump grinding and underbrush clearing. We can proudly inform our membership that this major undertaking will be complete at the end of July. CEC can then begin the task of maintaining the ROW program that



aligns with our reliability plan that is reported to the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB). As our electrical system is inspected annually by the IUB, CEC can use this information to determine the ROW rotation that is needed to pass these inspections.

Happy New Year from the General Manager...continued from pg. 1

to keep the power lines clear of trees and heavy brush.

Once our Right-of-Way clearing is caught up, the cooperative's annual clearing expenses will reduce dramatically. Among the benefits of this program is the significant reduction of outages caused by wayward tree limbs, the lines are easier for the line crew to access and repair, and it lessens electrical line loss while increasing safety and reliability.

In the spring of 2016, the CEC Board of Directors and Leadership Team held a strategic planning session. The plan we created will guide us with specific initiatives for the next three years and with more generalized goals further into the future. We have completed many of the strategic initiatives slated for 2016 so at the beginning of the new year, we will review what we have accomplished and plan how we are going to achieve our directives in 2017. A new year is always a good time to reassess yourself and your organization.

It has been almost a full year since I returned to work at Clarke Electric and seeing our employees in action reinforces my certainty that each one of our valuable employees is effective and passionate in their roles. Every employee at Clarke Electric Cooperative is committed to the cooperative, the cooperative spirit and to our members. Their commitment is reflected in their dedication to working long hours, working in harsh conditions and being exposed to dangerous situations. Our employees are like family and our family is here to serve our members. In our cooperative, membership matters.

From our family to yours, Happy New Year!

A new era begins in 2017 with our ROW program in which we go back to where we started a decade ago and begin a 20% rotation in our service territory. This plan has been approved by the IUB. With this rotation plan, CEC anticipates that complete tree removal and grinding will not be as intense as it was a decade ago. Currently, we plan to trim 239 miles of trees and underbrush around the Clio substation and 140 miles at the Grand River substation. In addition, we have some minor ROW clean-up in the Derby and Osceola substations. This will also include spraying 350 miles of ROW around the Derby and Humeston substations.

In addition to the ROW program, the business plan incorporates the annual rotation of our vehicles and equipment that helps keep maintenance costs low. In 2017, our major purchase will be a track digger that can access our electrical distribution system to replace our infrastructure much more easily and safely.

The annual budget reflects the cooperative's long-standing commitment to provide our member-owners with safe and reliable energy service, while maintaining the financial integrity of the organization. 48-31-03-00

The Board of Directors provides leadership and direction through the analysis and approval of the cooperative's annual budget. As member-owners, your support and loyal patronage is essential to the success of this cooperative as we continue our efforts to provide you safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Clarke Solar Farm Energized

CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, ALONG WITH our power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), energized the Clarke Solar Farm Dec. 16.

The Clarke Solar Farm will produce 514,160kWh of energy as part of CIPCO's larger 5.5MW statewide solar project. The Clarke site contains 1,296 solar panels – enough to power 51 homes.

Utility-scale solar provides reliable, clean electricity generation for members of Clarke Electric Cooperative and compliments CIPCO's existing renewable energy generation portfolio. The development and installation costs for utility-scale systems are significantly below those of residential-scale solar and provide benefits to all members within the CEC system. Members of all income levels will benefit from this project.

The project will be unveiled to members of Clarke Electric during a special event scheduled for this spring.





Community Minded: Seeking the Next Generation of Leaders

CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS gearing up for another year offering students in our service territory a chance at an exciting opportunity for an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.! We're looking for the next generation of leaders to represent Clarke Electric on a state and national level during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour 2017.



JASON GIBBS

If you're a junior in high school who is interested, or know someone who might be, download an application and find more information at www.cecnet.net/content/2017-youth-tour. Applications are due Friday, March 3 and essays will be due Friday, March 17. Interviews will take place March 29.



Youth Tour will take place June 9-15. Participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss issues that are important to them back home. There's also plenty of sightseeing and learning more about the cooperative business model. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour experience with a promising student. Students can call Jason Gibbs at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154 for more information.

IMPORTANT DATES

Application Deadline: March 3

Essay Deadline: March 17

Youth Tour Judging: March 29

2017 Rebates Now Posted

BUSINESSES, FARMING OPERATIONS AND RESIDENTS who are members of Clarke Electric Cooperative are reminded to take advantage of the rebates we offer on purchases of energy efficient products. 17-16-02-01

The 2017 rebates are now posted at www.cecnet.net.

And don't forget about our Pull the Plug program as your reward for removing and recycling inefficient operational refrigerators, freezers and window air conditioners. Refrigerators are worth \$35 and freezers and window air conditioners are worth \$25 each. Just give the cooperative a call to request collection of your eligible appliance(s).

For questions on any of our rebates or member programs, contact Jason Gibbs, manager of member services, at (800) 362-2154.



The Cooperative Difference: Patronage Dividends



A S A MEMBER-OWNED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Clarke Electric Cooperative is proud to return patronage dividends to its member-owners. These returns are based on the amount of electric use members use during the years selected for payouts. In some cases, this means our larger commercial accounts may receive a large check at the end of the year.

That was the case for Plum Building Systems of Osceola and Miller Products Company. Pictured at top are, Clarke Electric General Manager David Opie (left) and Manager of Member Services Jason Gibbs (right) presenting Plum Building Systems Plant Manager Steve Baker with a check for his business's patronage dividend payout. Pictured at bottom, Gibbs and Opie present Miller Products Company General Manager Denis Weiser with their patronage check.

**Visit www.cecnet.net to pay your bill
online using SmartHub!**



Energy Smart: Energy Efficiency for Every Season

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO THIS WINTER? TAKE the initiative to increase the energy efficiency of your home for all year round. You can trim your electric bill by taking a few simple steps. Here's a list of recommendations for year-round energy and money savings!



"Saving money and finding energy efficiencies in the home is important to our members," said Jason Gibbs. "That's why Clarke Electric maintains a robust energy efficiency program to support and educate our members."

Remember to lower your thermostat a few degrees in the

winter. A programmable thermostat makes it easy to keep your home the right temperature all year long. As the weather cools down, pull up your window shades. Keeping blinds open during cold weather lets heat from sunlight in, reducing the need to turn up your home's thermostat.

During the spring, stop air from escaping your home by sealing leaky ducts. A little caulk can go a long way. Air leaks in your home add up. Caulking cracks and openings to the outside could save more than \$200 a year.

November Outages

- Equip/maintenance failure - 6
- Trees - 3
- Lightning - 1
- Animal/bird - 4
- Customer caused - 1
- Unknown - 2
- Motor Vehicle - 3
- Fire - 1

Looking Out for You

Changing filters is important in the summer. Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, forcing it to work harder on hot summer days. Now's the time to adjust the programmable thermostat up so it's set at 78 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. This can save up to eight percent on monthly cooling bills.

Fall is a great time to check the insulation in your attic. For those mild fall days, a fan is a much more energy-efficient choice than cranking up the air conditioning. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

Clarke Electric is dedicated to being an energy efficiency resource for our members. To learn more about how you can save money through energy efficiency practices, visit our web site at www.cecnet.net

+ CEC Cares For Your Safety: Distracted Driving

5 DISTRACTED DRIVING STATS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 3,179** Number of people killed each year in vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers (Federal Communications Commission, 2014)
- 4X** How much using a cellphone increases your risk of crashing (National Safety Council, 2014)
- 1 in 4** The probability that a vehicle crash involved a cellphone (National Safety Council, 2014)
- 60%** Percentage of people who use cellphones while driving (Harris Poll, 2011)
- 21-24** Age group most likely to send a text or email while driving (Distraction.gov, 2012)



CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

PO Box 161, 1103 N Main, Osceola, IA 50213-0161

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

David Opie, General Manager
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www.cecnet.net

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