

PowerLines

March 2018

Cooperative Principle #5 - Education, Training, and Information

In continuation of a theme from last month's column, another harbinger of spring (*despite what Punxsutawney Phil and his shadow indicated this year which was another 6 weeks of winter – thanks a lot Phil*) is our national association's annual member meeting. Each year the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) hosts its annual meeting. This year, the meeting will be held in Nashville, Tennessee in late February.

Over the past four years in this column, I have either explicitly or implicitly touched on the seven Cooperative principles, except for #5, which relates to education and training. In the NRECA's view, "Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs, and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, helps boost cooperative understanding."

This NRECA signature annual event can attract as many as 10,000 attendees. This meeting is typically attended by a combination of EIEC directors and employees. The opportunity to interact with fellow cooperative employees, board members, vendors, related cooperative organizations, and representatives from all over the United States, and even international attendees as well is a unique learning experience. As electric cooperatives, we share many of the same issues, although we each may have unique circumstances.

Attending the meeting certainly makes a person aware of the larger community of cooperatives, and the influence that can result from joining forces for a common purpose. This event is just one portion of the learning opportunities available within the cooperative realm.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our state association also offers numerous safety, management, and specific technical training, and the NRECA has a variety of educational opportunities throughout the year.

Some of the topics at the meeting include: broadband and high speed Internet, cooperative governance, cyber security, distributed generation (solar and wind), environmental, futurist view, innovation, motivational/inspirational speakers, national political co-op issues, next generation workforce, rural America attracting workers, and safety.

In future columns, I will highlight a theme or two from the meeting. The ability to share information among cooperatives, and to consider and implement ideas and improvements within our individual cooperatives for the benefit of our members is the goal of any training attended.

Please let us know how we can improve your member experience.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

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- Voluntary & Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member's Economic Participation
- Autonomy & Independence
- Education, Training & Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

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Empowering Education Grant Program



The Empowering Education Grant Program is designed to help fund projects that will inspire and benefit students.



Deserving teachers received \$500 grants to put towards innovative learning experiences and class projects.



3D printing is a hands-on newer technology that engages students in learning. We used our grant to purchase a 3D printer. Thank you EIEC!

Jake Hill, Rossville-Alvin High School



Empowering Education Grant Program



“We are excited to be able to help students in the communities where we provide electricity. EIEC’s territory is so spread out, so we thought this grant program was a practical way to reach our entire service territory.”

Bob Hunzinger, President/CEO



Thank you so much for awarding our high school an Empowering Education Grant. We appreciate EIEC’s willingness to invest in our students!

Carrie Miller, Iroquois West High School

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2017/18 Awardees

School	Teacher	Title of Project
Armstrong Township High School	Audrey Cler	Update Classroom Novel Materials
Arthur Grade School	Jessica Vanausdoll	Flexible Seating
Arthur Grade School	Kathleen Burdick	Reading Mastery
Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond High School	Shannon Blesse	Smart Snacks
Atwood-Hammond Grade School	Tim Manselle	Reaching the stars
Atwood-Hammond Grade School	Denise Strack	STEM
Bement CUSD #5	Angie Corum	Real Care Babies/Appliances
Bement School District 5	Kate Ruggless	Project Lead the Way
Bismarck Henning Rossville Alvin High School	Lisa Story	Going Global
Crescent City Grade School	Jody Munsterman	Planting Seeds of Service
Donovan Elementary	Lindsay Maple	Flexible Seating
Gifford Grade School	Tammy Pollard	STEM Stations for Tech Classroom
Iroquois West Elementary	Christina Basham Chris Denton	Family Reading Night
Iroquois West High School	Carrie Miller	U of I - College of Business field trip
Ludlow Grade School	Tanya Turner	Makerspace
Ludlow Grade School	Sherry Janowski	Electricity/Circuitry/Magnet Design
Monticello Schools	Jennifer Smith	STEM Breakout
Oakwood Grade School	Nicole Johnson	Inventing 3D Style
Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School	Leann McPike	Designing by Role Play
Paxton-Buckley-Loda Junior High School	Hillary Sawyer	Lighting Up Education
Paxton-Buckley-Loda Junior High School	Matthew Duffy	Microscopes for Life Science
Pleasant Acres Elementary	Amber Stivers-Anders	9/11 literature to engage history
Prairie Central Elementary	Lisa Lange	Mush!
Prairie Central High School	Andrew Quain	Cemetery Mapping Project
Prairie Central Junior High	David Rothert	Prairie Pens
Rossville-Alvin CUSD #7	Jake Hill	3D Printer
TriPoint School District	Diana Loschen	Live Line Demo
TriPoint School District	Keri Andrews	Peer Buddies
Tuscola High School	Aspen Pirtle	Energy Stewards
Villa Grove High School	Linda Werts	Microbe Power!
Watseka High School	Casie Hanson	Studio 9 Upgrade

Electricity keeps us connected

How many of us remember dropping into the co-op office with our parents and grandparents to pay the light bill? Whether you do that in person, by mail or on-line today, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than just keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences we enjoy in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside your home.

Take a moment and count up the number of televisions, desktop computers, laptop and tablet computers, printers, gaming consoles, music and video players and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps them working comes from Eastern Illini.

Have you looked around your kitchen lately? Between the coffee maker and toaster and the microwave and air fryer, a lot of us have added several other modern small appliances.

If you've got a craft nook, workshop, or extra garage space for projects, the power tools and machines you use to cut and shape your projects are either plugged in or recharged from the outlets connecting your household wiring to Eastern Illini, your member-owned, not for profit cooperative connection to powerful solutions.

You use electricity to run all these devices, along with the lights, the stove, heating and air conditioning too. The good news is, even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain, especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates and education have

increased by 3 percent or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have also increased by more than 2 percent annually, and even bread costs have risen significantly.

Electricity costs rise about 1 percent a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. That means we're doing more things with less energy.

Kilowatt hour use per household dropped by 8 percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9 percent decline reported by all electric utilities, nationwide.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and we're always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why EIEC encourages energy efficiency, promotes the use of ENERGY STAR® appliances, and suggests technology, designed to give member/owners more control over their electricity use.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and adjustable appliance settings also give you opportunities to control or even trim your monthly bills.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's going to become

even more critical as digital devices and Internet-connected technologies become even more important in our every day lives.

The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices. That number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll depend upon Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

That's why we're always on for you, working to provide service that's reliable and even more valuable to you, our member/owners.



People to know at Eastern Illini: Tim Kulow

If it lights up, heats up, makes a noise or smokes, we'll fix it.

It's Tim Kulow's mantra as Electrical System Engineering Foreman at Eastern Illini. It sums up his very technical position quite well. He works with substations, line regulators, capacitors, electrical breakers, load controls, solar inspections and a myriad of other equipment and electrical components. He spends his days trouble shooting, repairing, replacing, regulating and re-engineering, so member/owners always have safe reliable power.

Tim is a whiz at math and uses his abilities to solve the daily challenges of his job, whether it be finding a bad script in an embedded code, uncovering glitches in a recent installation, or hunting up meters that can interface with different connectors. He enjoys the variety of the projects he works on and finds satisfaction in solving problems and creating solutions that make a positive impact on providing electricity to Eastern Illini member/owners.

"Tim makes Eastern Illini a better place, says Shannon Deck, Member Care Representative at EIEC who works with Tim to resolve member/owner electrical issues. "Tim is just a wealth of knowledge and Eastern Illini and our members are very lucky to have him on staff."

Tim's first job as a teenager was working at the Standard Oil Station where he made \$1.83 per hour. His first job at the co-op was as summer help in 1981. He went full-time in 1983 and now has 35 years of service. He's had the job of Electrical System Engineering Foreman for the past 13 years.

Tim recalls that the first winter on the job for him was one he'll never forget. Christmas Eve of 1983 saw - 80 degree wind chill, high winds, and blizzard conditions. The situation added up to all hands on deck to get power restored.

It wasn't exactly what he wanted to be doing on Christmas Eve, but he stepped up along with others to restore power.

Tim reflects on other storms throughout his career and says that no matter what causes the outage, EIEC's number one priority is taking care of member/owners. We work together. It's a family-like atmosphere at Eastern Illini and he enjoys what he does and the people with whom he works.

Tim was born in a small farm town about 50 miles west of Springfield, named Arenzville. Arenzville and the 400 people who currently live there host an annual Burgoo Festival. Tim enjoys going to the Burgoo Festival not only for the stew but for the camaraderie. In 2018 it will be held September 7th and 8th.

Burgoo is a soup made from chicken, beef, and vegetables and cooked for several hours until the flavors have blended, and the ingredients have become a thick stew. Arenzville burgoo is cooked in iron kettles over a wood-burning fire to give it a special smoky flavor and according to Tim, it is the best Burgoo you'll ever taste.

Tim owns a Harley Davidson motorcycle and he seizes every opportunity he can to experience the sense of freedom and adventure that comes from riding the back roads of America, stopping at hole-in-the-wall restaurants and spending time with good friends.

He's been on several memorable trips including riding down the Blue Ridge Parkway. This glorious 469-mile trek of scenic roadway is full of sweeping curves, steep hills and fast drops and runs from Virginia all the way to North Carolina.

He's also traveled on the Trail of the Dragon, an eleven mile stretch of road on the



Tennessee and North Carolina state line, that boasts 318 white knuckle turns that add to the thrill of the ride.

Tim is a big fan of another Tim – that's Tim Wilkerson, a drag racer with the National Hot Rod Association. Tim Kulow is drawn to the sound of the 8,000-horsepower engines, the smell of the nitro-methane fuel, and the 300 mph speed of the cars.

Anytime Tim gets a chance, you'll find him at a track. It's not surprising that Tim enjoys drag racing. His job at Eastern Illini requires noticing the subtleties, understanding the inner workings and paying attention to the details all of which are very similar to the math and mechanics used in auto racing to win.

In his spare time, Tim also enjoys snowmobiling. He finds snowmobiling relaxing as he travels through timber areas in northern Wisconsin, creating his own path and reaching places that are undiscovered or seldom visited.

Tim and his wife of 32 years, Ann, live in Paxton. They are very proud of their family: son, Austin, daughter-in-law, Danielle and daughter, Danielle.