

PowerLines

YOUR CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS CONNECTION

**Central Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative 

Photo from Unsplash

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The Difference

BY MATTHEW BOSHAW
CEO & General Manager

An electric cooperative is different, and I would argue better in many ways, than an investor-owned utility. One of the most significant differences is that the members are not simply electricity consumers, but are also owners of the cooperative. That ownership is perhaps most evidenced by the rotation of patronage capital. For those who might not be familiar with this process, let me describe how it works. Central Electric Cooperative (CEC) is a private, not-for-profit distribution electric cooperative. At the end of each fiscal year, money left after we have paid all our expenses is referred to as our margin. This margin is then put into an account for each member based on their respective electric usage that year. This allocation represents your individual ownership in the cooperative — your equity. CEC uses this equity for several years to ensure the financial stability of the cooperative and then, when the financial position allows, the board of directors instructs staff to return some portion of that equity to our membership

in the form of a capital credit retirement.

Your board of directors considers the regular retirement of capital credits to be foundational to what makes us a cooperative. They have given it priority, second only to maintaining a competitive rate in our long-range financial plan. After reviewing our financial condition each year, they decide whether to retire capital credits, how much to retire and how it will be distributed.

Under the direction of our long-range financial plan, we are working to increase our equity level and decrease the number of years of patronage capital rotation to provide us with some flexibility when market conditions are less favorable. The current economic conditions demonstrate the value of these efforts. Unfortunately, it was necessary for us to raise rates for our members at the beginning of 2023 for the first time since early 2020. As I have described in some detail in previous articles, we received a significant cost increase from our generation and transmission provider for 2023. In keeping with our philosophy of regular retirement of capital credits and to mitigate the impact of the rate increase on our members, the

Continued on page 2

board voted to retire approximately \$3.1 million to our membership this month. This decision was not entered into lightly. CEC’s financial health at the end of 2022, our equity level, and the number of years of patronage capital rotation were all considered.

In anticipation of your question regarding a rate increase followed by a capital credit retirement, let me address this process. Earlier, I described the patronage capital rotation process. We are required to allocate our end-of-year margin to our members’ accounts and cannot use it to pay expenses the following year. So, in short, the rate increase is a look forward at the expenses we will have to pay. Our rate must cover those expenses in order to remain financially viable and meet the loan covenants from our lenders. The retirement of capital credits allows us to demonstrate the flexibility our financial planning created for this type of circumstance. We have taken advantage of positive economic conditions in recent years to put ourselves in a position to mitigate the rate increase to our members. We have taken advantage of positive conditions in the recent past to extend the time between rate increases, become more competitive with surrounding utilities, decrease our number of years of patronage capital rotation, and increase our equity level — all while meeting the loan covenants of our lenders. To put it simply, we have planned for a rainy day, and it is raining.

This year’s approved capital credit retirement reflects the largest single distribution in the cooperative’s history, while still maintaining an equity level that offers a sound financial position and the ability to plan for future adverse conditions. Your board and staff recognize the impact the current economic conditions have on you and our communities and believe this retirement will be a direct benefit to you. You will see this distribution reflected on your April billing if you have an active account with CEC. This process is unique to cooperatives and can seem complex, so if you have questions or would like more clarification, please reach out to us. As always, thank you for your continued patronage — as you can see, it serves you well.

Capital Credit Process



1. Money comes in from members when they pay their electric bills.

Electric bills can be thought of as each member’s share of the funds needed for their cooperative to run.

2. Money goes out to pay Co-op expenses.

Members’ dollars are pooled together and used as operating capital so the co-op can provide reliable service and pay co-op expenses.

3. A little bit is set aside for the future.

Capital credit funds are retained for a period of time for long-term improvements and maintenance of the co-op equipment, to ensure reliable service. This keeps rates lower by offsetting the need for the cooperative to borrow funds.

4. Any funds left over are returned to members at a later date.

Capital credits are allocated to members based on their energy purchases. When the financial condition of the co-op allows, capital credits are retired (paid) to each member in the form of either a check or a credit on their electric bill.

Look on your April bill to see your capital credit return!

CEC is retiring \$3.1 million in 2023.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Matthew P. Boshaw

CEO & General Manager

Chester Conti

Director of Finance and Accounting/CFO

Lisa A. Hoover

Director of Member Services

Christopher W. Kossman

Director of Information Technology

Fred E. Terwilliger

Assistant General Manager/COO

Central Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Outage Notifications

CEC offers real-time text and email notifications.

Don't wait until you have an outage — sign up today!

Visit www.central.coop for more information.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Help Make a Cooperative Difference: Join ACRE®!

CEC cares about giving members reliable and reasonably priced electricity. While many of the cooperative's decisions are made internally, sometimes decisions affecting our membership are made by legislators in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C.

CEC recognizes the importance of expressing concerns and providing information about co-ops and rural communities to our nation's leaders. CEC's relationship with national, state and local legislators greatly benefits the co-op and our members.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification® (ACRE®) Co-op Owners for Political Action provides a voice for electric cooperatives. ACRE® is a non-partisan political action committee that aids legislators who support cooperative initiatives.

Your participation in ACRE® will support legislators who understand our interests and fight for co-op members. For just a few dollars, you can help CEC strengthen and enhance our grassroots network. Members can also support ACRE® initiatives by knowing co-op issues, engaging with local legislators as an electric cooperative leader, and by voting.

Each membership makes a difference. Please consider making the commitment to support the future of rural communities with ACRE®.

You can add your voice to this important cause and join ACRE® Co-op Owners for Political Action by filling out the adjacent form and sending it in with your electric bill. For more information, visit our website at www.central.coop or contact your ACRE® coordinator, Toni Bresnahan, at 800-521-0570 x2161.

Membership Form

There are two easy ways to contribute:

1. Have the amount added to your next electric bill.
2. Submit a check made payable to PREA ACRE.

Add a one-time contribution to your electric bill:

- Regular Member: \$25
- Keystone Member: \$50
- Century Club Member: \$100
- President's Club Member: \$500
- Other \$ _____

Submit a check:

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Member's Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Account: _____

Email: _____

Federal Election Law requires the following information for contributions equal to, or exceeding, \$200.

Employer: _____

Occupation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return this form to:
ACRE

**c/o Central Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 329, Parker, PA 16049.**

Contributions to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) are not tax deductible. Contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.



CO-OP NEWS



2023 Member Photo Contest

CEC invites you to submit your best photo for our 2023 Photo Contest. The top three winners will receive a prize: a \$100 bill credit for first place, a \$50 bill credit for second place, and a \$25 bill credit for third place.



Electrical Safety Programs

CEC is committed to raising awareness about electrical safety. To reduce the number of electrical incidents in our communities, CEC provides several free, electrical education programs.



Portable Generator Safety

by Dylan Linke, Manager of Safety and Loss Control

When weather impacts electrical service, some people turn to portable electric generators as a source of temporary electricity. However, this convenience could be the source of disaster. If not properly installed and operated, portable generators can pose several risks including dangers associated with carbon monoxide, and electrical and fire hazards.

If a portable electric generator is connected to the main electrical supply coming into the house, the generator could back-feed into the electric supplier's system and harm workers who are making repairs. To avoid back-feeding, a homeowner must have a qualified, licensed electrician install a transfer switch between the generator and utility power in compliance with all state and local electrical codes. In addition to protecting linemen by ensuring proper wiring, a homeowner should calculate wattage requirements to prevent overloading and damage to appliances and the generator.

Using a generator indoors can kill you in minutes! Never use a generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces because they can produce high levels of carbon monoxide. Remember, you cannot smell or see carbon monoxide. Most carbon monoxide poisonings are caused by exhaust fumes drifting into doors, windows, vents, and crawl spaces. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away. If

you experience serious symptoms, get medical attention immediately. Always follow the instructions that come with your generator. Locate the unit outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.



Keep the generator dry and do not use it in rainy or wet conditions. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator. Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin. Never try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. It can bypass some of the built-in household circuit protection devices. For power outages, permanently installed stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to the home.

Generator fuel sources such as gasoline, propane and kerosene should be stored outside of living areas in properly labeled safety containers. Do not store fuel near fuel-burning appliances. If the fuel spills or the container is not sealed properly, invisible vapors can be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches in the appliance. Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.



Role: Member Energy Specialist
Employee Since: May 2019

Employee Spotlight:

Connie Long



What do you do at CEC? I am the new Member Energy Specialist; I assist members with ways to save electricity.



What is one professional skill you are currently working on? I am currently working on a building analyst certification so I can further help members understand a homes energy concerns.



I am most proud of purchasing my first home on my own.



Do you have any pets? Yes, her name is Loki. She is my incredibly spoiled 9 year old Siberian Husky.



What is something you can't live without? Ice cream and the beach, without a doubt.

Lineworker Appreciation

by Kessa Moore, Communication Representative



On April 10, we celebrate the amazing linemen who power our community!

You've likely noticed CEC's crews working on power lines and electrical equipment in our communities. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough, but it's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. In celebration of Lineworker Appreciation Day, here are some interesting facts about electric lineworkers.

Did you know the equipment and tools a lineworker carries while climbing an electric pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's equivalent to carrying six gallons of water! With a heavy tool belt around them, CEC's linemen often climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 65 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career — because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

They often work non-traditional hours and outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Becoming a journeyman lineman typically takes around four to five years of on-the-job training. Specialized skills, extensive training and experience are all necessary to work with high-voltage equipment. Shortcuts are not an option and there is no

room for error.

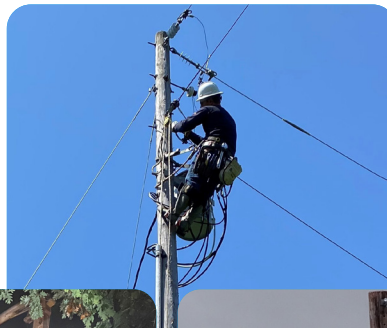
Despite the many challenges, CEC's linemen are committed to powering our community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and family unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done — sometimes days later. The unexpected, and sometimes long, restoration efforts requires patience and understanding from their families as well.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. At CEC, there are 22 linemen working to keep power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain more than 3,000 miles of power lines for more than 25,000 members across seven counties.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our communities. Without their exceptional dedication and

commitment, we simply would not have the reliable electricity we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions, to keep power flowing. We are thankful for our linemen and for their courage and commitment to keeping our communities' lights on.



CEC linemen working on system improvements and restoring power.



Ways to Save During Easter

by Connie Long, Member Energy Specialist

After last month's issue, I'm sure no one wasted any time beginning their spring cleaning. Now that our houses are nice and clean, we can move on to Easter — and if your family is anything like mine, then holidays are a time to get together. Yes, spending time with family is great, but let's be honest, the food is what keeps us coming back. Did you know there are many ways to save energy and cut costs while preparing your meal? Remember, these tips will also be useful for any holiday or meal you are making.

My family for instance, like most families, has ham for Easter dinner. Most people cook their ham in the oven, which usually takes a few hours, causing your electric usage to increase. Have you ever considered cooking it in a slow cooker or on the grill? When it comes to electric usage, cooking your food in a slow cooker for 8 hours is equivalent to cooking food in your oven for 35-55 minutes. Although your cooking time will be extended, you will save energy and money. Cooking your ham on the grill will vary depending on size, but it

does not use electricity if you have a gas or charcoal grill.

Then we move on to my favorite part of the meal, the side dishes. There are so many side dish options, which means you typically have smaller dishes. When using smaller dishes, you can fit more in the oven at one time, enabling you to save energy and use your oven for less time. As hard as it may be, only open the oven door when necessary. Opening the oven door can lower the temperature inside the oven by as much as 25 degrees or more. When cooking any meal on the stovetop, ensure you use the correct size pot for the burner you will be using. Using the incorrect size can cause you to use more energy than needed. For instance, using a six-inch pan on an eight-inch burner can waste more than 40 percent of the energy. Or, don't forget if you have multiple slow cookers, you can always use one for a side dish too.

You can't forget about leftovers. When putting away your remaining food, let it cool to room temperature before placing it in your refrigerator. Letting it cool will not only prevent bacteria from growing quickly, but also keep your refrigerator from working harder to maintain its set temperature by adding hot or warm food to it.

So, with that said, I hope you have a Happy Easter, enjoy family time and, of course, enjoy a meal with them — all while saving energy and saving yourself money.

2023 Photo Contest

CEC invites you to submit your best photo for our 2023 Photo Contest. The top three winners will receive a prize: a \$100 bill credit for first place, a \$50 bill credit for second place, and a \$25 bill credit for third place.

Submit your photo for a chance to win! The photo can be of beautiful scenery, power lines, landscapes, or anything! Members must submit their photo before June 9. Members will vote for the top five photos from June 16 to July 28. Then voting begins for the top three photos from Aug. 4 to Oct. 20.

Voting will take place on CEC's website. Members will also have the opportunity to vote using a ballot in the September issue of this newsletter.

Winning photos will appear on CEC's website and in future publications of this newsletter. Winners will be announced in late October.

Rules:

1. Only one entry per membership.
2. A CEC member must have taken the photo within one of CEC's seven service counties (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Forest, Mercer and Venango).
3. The photo should be submitted electronically through CEC's website by June 9. When submitting a photo, you must include where the photo was taken, your name, CEC account number, and a title for the photo.
4. Employees and directors of CEC, along with their immediate families, are ineligible.
5. The prizes will appear as a credit on the winners' bills and may not be redeemed for cash.



Please call 800-521-0570 if you have questions about the photo contest.

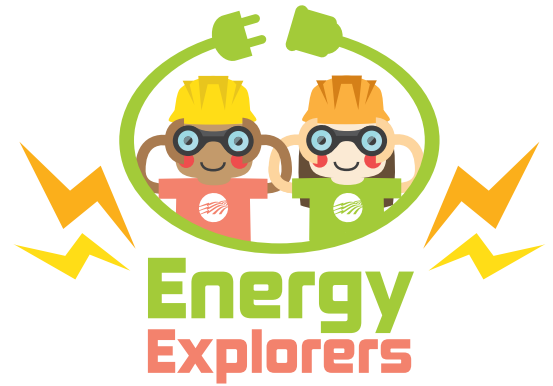
By submitting a photo to this contest you grant CEC permission to use the image in any and all of its publications, including internal and external newsletters and website, without payment. However, photo credit will be given. CEC reserves the right to disqualify any photo deemed inappropriate or offensive.

SPRING EFFICIENCY WORD SCRAMBLE

Did you know there are several ways you can save energy during spring months?

Read the efficiency tips below and unscramble the bolded letters to reveal how you and your family can save energy during springtime.

Don't forget to check your work in the answer key below!



1. Sealing air leaks around doors and **diwwson** saves energy and keeps your home comfortable.

2. LED **hlgist** typically use 75% less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs.

3. Unplug devices and electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone **scragher**.

4. Planting shade **esrte** around your home can block unwanted heat from the sun.

5. Ceiling fans are used a lot when the weather gets warm, but be sure to turn them off when you leave the room to save **yengre**.



Answer Key: 1) windows 2) lights 3) chargers 4) trees 5) energy

From the Kitchen of:
Mary Ann Dietrich

RECIPE: **ZUCCHINI DELIGHT**

INGREDIENTS:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 tablespoons butter | 1/2 cup oil |
| 3 zucchinis, sliced | 1 cup shredded mozzarella |
| 2 onions, sliced | Pepperoni |
| 3 peppers, cut in strips | |
| One 8-ounce can tomato sauce | |
| 1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs | |



INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Place melted butter in a 9x13 baking dish. Arrange zucchini, onion and peppers in layers. Drizzle oil and tomato sauce over the vegetables. Sprinkle bread crumbs and cheese on top. Add a layer of pepperoni. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 50-60 minutes.



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IN CONTROL.**

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Central Electric Cooperative

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Your Board of Directors

From left (back row): Robert Smith, Vice President, Butler County; Jody Weaver, Clarion County; **(middle)** Ken Durrett, Butler County; Rick Weaver, Clarion County; John Campbell, Forest County; **(front)** Nancy Lendyak, President, Armstrong County; Ken Etzel, Venango County; and Althea Smith, Secretary/Treasurer, Venango County.

 central.coop/meet-your-directors

MISSION: CEC safely provides reliable and competitively priced electricity to our consumer-members and was established by and is committed to the communities we serve.

716 Route 368, P.O. Box 329, Parker PA 16049
Member Services: 800-521-0570; Outages: 800-282-8610
www.central.coop

Newsletter Editor: Kessa Moore

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Missed an issue?

Catch up at www.central.coop

Read past issues of Power Lines and stay up to date on CEC news.

