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New Election Procedures to be Considered at SPECIAL MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of Members held on March 13, 2004, EnerStar Board Chairman Tom Murphy announced the creation of a “blue ribbon” committee. The committee’s charge would be to review current election procedures and explore alternative methods of electing directors.

Further, the committee was asked to recommend to the board a course of action that would streamline election procedures and encourage more members to participate in the election process.

Additionally, the committee would study re-districting of board areas and the advisability of setting board term limits. Murphy added that the committee would also explore the possibility of requiring directors to attain national director training certification within a certain time period.

Since the Annual Meeting, the blue ribbon committee, now known as the Governance Committee, has been established. Members serving on the committee are George R. Step of Paris, Don Latham of Paris, and



At the 2004 Annual Meeting of Members, Board Chairman Tom Murphy of Marshall addressed achievements over the last couple of years and outlined cooperative goals for the future.

Ken Macke of Marshall. In addition, EnerStar board members Tom DeWitt of Newman, Don Baggs of Livingston, and Gene Higginbotham of Martinsville served on the committee, with Tom Murphy acting as committee chairman. Cooperative legal counsel, Steve Garst, assisted the committee.

Committee discussion points have been consolidated into the following report (see next page) and were presented to the EnerStar board of *continued on page 16b*



directors at their May meeting. After consideration of the Governance Committee's recommendations, the board approved a slate of bylaw amendments to present to the membership in August.

EnerStar will hold two informal area meetings to explain the proposed bylaw changes. The first meeting will be held on Thursday, August 5, at the American Legion in Paris. The second meeting will be held on Thursday, August 12, at the Clark County Extension building in Marshall.

Finally, by resolution, the EnerStar board has announced a Special Member Meeting to be held on Thursday, August 26, at the KC Hall, 614 N. Main St., Paris. Members will receive notice of the meeting along with the proposed bylaw amendments.

"This will be a very important meeting for the future of our cooperative," stated Murphy, "I encourage members to come to the area meetings to learn more about the proposed changes and then come to the special meeting to implement those changes." Members will receive notice of the meeting via postal mail. For more information, contact EnerStar during normal business hours at (800) 635-4145.

Member Representation – Voting by District:

The board will remain with nine directors, each to serve a three-year term. The membership will be divided into three "voting districts," with each voting district containing three "representative districts." Members will no longer vote for the entire slate of directors. Instead, each year, all members will elect one representative from the member's voting district. This change will bring about a better representation from a local district. Every effort will be made to ensure that voting districts have approximately the same number of members. These changes will give local areas better representation.

Voting Process for Directors:

There are two issues for consideration: nominations and voting procedures.

All candidates will be nominated by petition only. The petition will require the signatures of 15 members.

Votes will occur by ballot only. Each member of a voting district will receive a ballot for the candidates from that district annually. Members will have the convenience of returning the ballots by mail or may bring the ballots to the Annual Meeting. Ballots will be counted at the Annual Meeting by the election inspectors.

It is the hope of the board that voting by mail will encourage more members to participate and ensure one vote to be cast by each member. In general, electric cooperatives using mail-voting procedures see as much as 60 percent membership participation. Under EnerStar's current voting procedures, the

percentage of the members voting has ranged from as low as 7 percent to as high as 22 percent.

Term Limits:

The EnerStar bylaws do not currently impose director term limits, and the committee recommended to continue this practice. It was felt that the democratic process of electing directors allowed the membership to decide how long a director may serve – if a director is not doing his/her job according to the desires of the membership, the membership can simply vote for a new director. In a dramatically changing electric industry, good working knowledge may take years to achieve. A director's longevity can be an asset to the cooperative. Term limits could remove a knowledgeable and experienced director.

Director Certification:

The committee's recommendation is that bylaws should not be amended to require director certification. Board policy now urges directors to become certified within six years. The committee believes that all board members should be involved in continuing education, on a yearly basis, to be the best director possible.

Bylaw Amendment to Vote:

As is the current practice, voting on bylaw amendments will be done only at annual meetings or special meetings of members. Bylaw amendments will not occur by mail vote. Members must be present in person at the annual meeting or special meeting to vote on any proposed bylaw changes.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Mark your calendar for one of these upcoming meetings!

**PARIS AREA
INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Thursday, Aug. 5
American Legion
Paris
6:00 p.m.

**MARSHALL AREA
INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Thursday, Aug. 12
Clark Co. Extension Building
Marshall
6:00 p.m.

**2004 SPECIAL MEETING OF
MEMBERS**

Thursday, Aug. 26
KC Hall
Paris
6:00 p.m.

Members will receive a special meeting notice in the mail prior to Aug. 26.

Computer Wares and EnerStar

A Win–Win Situation!

It has been four years since EnerStar acquired the Paris-based business, Computer Wares. At the time, Computer Wares, an Internet service provider, might have seemed to be an unusual subsidiary activity for an electric cooperative. But time has most definitely proven otherwise! Both EnerStar Power and Computer Wares have benefited from the relationship.

The reason for the success is quite simple: EnerStar Power has many computer and telecommunications systems that need to be supported and maintained 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Computer Wares offers the unique expertise to support these devices. Computer Wares saves the cooperative money by providing both computer hardware and labor at wholesale costs. The company also provides EnerStar's wireless Internet connection as well.

Take for example EnerStar's eight distribution substations that dot the countryside from Newman to West Union. At these substations, there are approximately 25 computer and telecommunication devices. These devices are necessary to gather up-to-the-minute data regarding electrical usage and system operations. This information is relayed back to the EnerStar office via multiple communications paths such as the Internet and radio frequencies. EnerStar's wholesale power provider, Wabash Valley Power in Indianapolis, remotely gathers the data to schedule power purchases.

Besides all the necessary computers used by the EnerStar employees, Computer Wares is responsible for maintaining EnerStar's five servers, each with a variety of functions. Besides collecting and presenting substation data, servers are necessary to maintain the in-house data stored for software and interoffice documents, the outage reporting system, and the electric mapping system. The propane



department also uses the computer servers for its accounting system, delivery scheduling programs, and mapping system.

It is not just what is in the EnerStar office that needs to be maintained. EnerStar is committed to a high level of customer service 24 hours a day. Therefore, the after-hour dispatch service, which is off premises, needs access to the electric billing and accounting system.

Computer Wares is currently updating EnerStar's in-house billing and accounting system. A "next generation" program, iVUE focuses on improved customer service. EnerStar representatives will have immediate access to all customer records.

But the benefits are not all one-sided. Computer Wares benefits from the relationship also. The company was able to expand its Internet business into the Casey, Martinsville, Kansas, and Westfield communities through the use of EnerStar's office and communication facilities in the Casey propane office.

In addition, through an association with the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC), Computer

Wares is able to take part in programs that only a national company can negotiate. Purchasing wireless and data communication equipment at discounted rates is one benefit. Another benefit is the dial-up acceleration program now being offered. See the next page for more information.

A significant benefit in the near future will be participating in a program called "Wild Blue." Through this association, Computer Wares will offer state-of-the-art, high-speed satellite Internet to anybody who wants it anywhere in the United States. The technology is different than current satellite offerings in that it is more robust and more affordable. More information on Wild Blue will follow in the coming months. The Computer Wares staff is very excited about this offering.

We have discussed a few of the many benefits to both Computer Wares and EnerStar. But the question many members want to know is: How much does Computer Wares cost EnerStar's members? The answer is simple...nothing. Prior to EnerStar's acquisition, Computer Wares was an ongoing, profitable business and continues to be so. The benefits from both organizations create a WIN-WIN situation!



Blinking Digital Clocks and Trimming Trees

An annoying way of indicating the system is working properly!

“Ugh! My clocks are flashing again! We must have had another power outage!”

Coming home to a flashing digital clock is an annoyance at best. It is a telltale sign that your power has been interrupted, even if for only less than a second. It is hard to believe that this annoyance is an indication that the electrical system is working properly.

It may be a small consolation, but it is highly likely that the power “outage” lasted only as long as it takes a tree limb to touch a power line while swaying in the breeze. That is why most electric utilities, including EnerStar Power, have an aggressive tree-trimming program.

But back to lights blinking; as stated this is an indication that the cooperative’s equipment is operating properly. If a fault or short circuit happens on a power line, a device called an oil-circuit recloser (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back in. Although the process is quick – and usually temporary – it may cause your lights to blink, making it necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays.

The OCR is essentially a



breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in your home. It permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service – rather than causing an extended power outage. If the short circuit continues, the OCR will operate or “trip” three times before eventually stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. This process protects the lines from damage, cutting off power to the affected section of the line and isolating the problem until it can be repaired.

Although the weather and nature’s creatures are beyond our control, you can lessen the effects and inconvenience of “blinks” when they occur. When purchasing small appliances and digital clocks, consider a model with battery backup. And don’t forget to check the battery regularly.

You may also want to install meter-base surge protection for the major appliances in your home and surge protection with built-in uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose “memory” would be lost with a power interruption.

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New high speed dial-up service available at Computer Wares
Local exchange dial-up numbers for Paris, Marshall, Vermilion, Redmon, Chrisman, Hume-Metcalf, West Union, Martinsville, Brocton, Casey, Kansas and Westfield



Call or go online for details.
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www.comwares.net

Students Learn About Our Nation's Past, Present, and Future at Youth Tour 2004

More than 1,400 students from 43 states descended on the nation's capitol in June for the 40th anniversary of the National Youth Tour. Sixty-four outstanding young leaders from throughout Illinois joined the tour this year. Joining the delegation were Kacee Reynolds of Marshall, Christina Patchett of Brocton and Cole Cribelar of Marshall. EnerStar Power sponsored the students in conjunction with the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

The participants saw some amazing sites in Washington, D.C., including Gettysburg; the Smithsonian Museums; memorials of Lincoln, Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Vietnam War, the Korean War and World War II; the Washington National Monument and National Cathedral; an Iwo Jima Parade and Pageant; the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery; the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia; and the Memorial Holocaust Museum.

In addition to these sites that gave the students a feel for their country, its wars, its presidents and its history, the students toured the Capitol, saw a debate in action in the House Gallery, and met with Congressman Tim Johnson and Senator Dick Durbin to discuss current events and what young voters can do to change their country for the better. Durbin discussed the current situation overseas, education and health care issues, current bills affecting energy prices, and other issues important to the students.

In addition to watching democracy in action, the students practiced democracy by voting for an Illinois representative to the National Youth Leadership Council. Max Nash-Howe of Macomb, sponsored by McDonough Power Cooperative in Macomb, was selected and will represent Illinois



Representing EnerStar at the Youth to Washington trip were left to right: Cole Cribelar, Kacee Reynolds and Christina Patchett. The youth are pictured with John Frietag of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

students at events throughout the year.

The students gained knowledge of the democratic principles of a cooperative through the development of their very own "Chip n' Pop" Co-op. They learned the basic workings of a cooperative by selecting a board of directors, co-managers, and employees to operate the Chip n' Pop Co-op. The board of directors (voted on by the members) held an annual meeting as well

as determined pricing of items, membership fees, and necessary operating expenses.

The Illinois students also joined the other 42 states for a National Youth Day Assembly. At the event the students learned about Touchstone Energy, the Rural Utility Service, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and cooperatives' roles in politics. Glen English, CEO of NRECA, encouraged the students to ask their

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congressman questions and become involved in their local communities as well as their state and national government. The keynote speaker was four-time Paralympic Medalist Mike Schlappi, who encouraged the large crowd with his inspirational, touching and humorous stories. His primary message was “If you can’t stand up, stand out!”

In addition to learning about cooperatives, our nation, and how to make a difference, the students learned about themselves. They formed friendships with students from across the state as well as meeting with students across the nation. They learned what issues were important to students in other communities, and how their rural area may be different from others.

For some students, this was their first major trip anywhere beyond Illinois’ borders. For others, it was one of many. But one thing that everyone had in common was the feeling that this was the trip of a lifetime, one that could not be duplicated even if the students are fortunate enough to return to the nation’s capital.

Additional photos and information about the trip are available at www.aiec.coop. Contact your local electric cooperative for information on how an outstanding youth in your life can participate in this “trip of a lifetime.”

To learn more about the Youth to Washington trip, contact EnerStar’s Angela Griffin at (800) 635-4145, extension 603.



Mission statement

EnerStar Power Corp exists to serve the changing needs of its members by improving their quality of life, by actively supporting community development, and by serving their energy needs.



Director Spotlight Donald Baggs



New to the EnerStar board this year is Don Baggs. He represents District 6, which covers Wabash Township in Clark County. He was elected to the board at the Annual Meeting in March 2004.

Don is a lifelong resident of Clark County and lives on a small farm east of Marshall with his wife of 39 years, Portia.

He is presently a trustee of the Marshall Fire and Ambulance Protection District, a member of the Marshall Masonic Lodge, the Scottish Rite Valley of Danville, and the Clark County Farm Bureau.

It is interesting to point out that Don is retired from Cinergy’s Wabash River Generating Station after 36 years’ service; the last 22 years were in supervision. At the power plant, he was directly involved in generating electricity and operating sub-stations and transmission lines.

“I wanted to use my experience to help the board make positive decisions for the future of EnerStar,” stated Don.

When asked his perspective as a new board member, Don commented that when he was elected to the board, he did not realize the amount of time spent by the board and the cooperative staff gathering information and attending necessary meetings. He felt most EnerStar members did not realize the tremendous amount of work either. “But it is all good and necessary to make the best decisions possible for the benefit of the entire membership,” Don added.

Don enjoys spending his free time hunting, fishing, and attending his grandchildren’s baseball and football games.



11597 IL Hwy 1 • Paris, Illinois 61944 (217) 463-4145 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F

Safe Electricity Offers Summer Safety Tips

No matter how you plan to spend the rest of your summer days, whether it be finishing a home improvement project, trimming a tree, or taking a refreshing swim, Safe Electricity wants you to consider the electrical equipment around you, and potential hazards to avoid during summer months. Of particular concern are power lines overhead and the added dangers when water and storm activity are present.

“Keep your summer season enjoyable and safe,” said Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. “Know what to do when thunderstorms and lightning threaten. Be aware of overhead power lines when doing work outside your home. Make sure children know and follow basic safety rules.”

Safety tips to keep in mind this summer:

- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles, or when installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes or doing roof repair work.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals.
- If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, move indoors and stay away from electric appliances and objects that could conduct electricity. Use only cordless or cell phones to make calls. If you’re in an open area outside, tingling skin or crackling sounds could signal that lightning is about to strike. Drop down to a squatting position to make yourself as small as possible - feet together and hands on knees - with minimal contact with the ground.
- Electricity and water are a dangerous mix. Keep electrical appliances and tools at least 10 feet away from pools and wet surfaces. Never use electric yard tools if it’s

raining or the ground is wet.

- Never step into a flooded area – especially basements - if water is in contact with electrical outlets, appliances, or cords. Don’t use any electrical appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you’re wet or standing in water.
- Be sure outdoor outlets and outlets near wet areas of the kitchen, bath, and laundry room have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to prevent serious shock injuries.
- If your projects include digging, the State of Illinois requires you call J.U.L.I.E. prior to disturbing the earth so underground utility services can be located. The toll-free number for J.U.L.I.E. is (800) 892-0123. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. Call at least two business days ahead of your dig date. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

In addition, Safe Electricity urges everyone to make sure children understand and follow basic safety rules:

- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren’t touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field,

safely away from trees and overhead power lines.

- Never climb a utility pole. Don’t play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment.
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment that can kill you. Never rescue a pet that goes inside. If that situation should arise, you should call EnerStar instead.

“Storms can also leave electric hazards behind,” Hall added. “It’s a good idea to keep utility emergency numbers close at hand.”

If you see a downed power line, stay far away from it and call EnerStar Power immediately at (800) 635-4145. Warn others to stay clear of the wires. Assume that all downed power lines are energized.

Source: www.SafeElectricity.org.

“Safe Electricity” was launched by a coalition of Illinois electric utilities, electric co-operatives, the Illinois Energy Association and University of Illinois, through the Illinois Electric Council (IEC), a non-profit industry forum committed to safety and efficiency education. The prevention of electricity-related tragedies is the goal of Safe Electricity. The program is aimed at expanding public awareness of electrical hazards and proper actions to take around them.





Back to School

EnerStar, your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, urges you to be extra careful as you drive to work this month. Watch for students getting on and off buses and crossing busy streets.



Touchstone Energy®
The power of human connections

Co-op News

Okay, the power's out. Now what?

Outage reporting tips to speed restoration

A pop-up storm. A squirrel. A car accident. Malfunctioning equipment. Any of these things, or sometimes a combination of any of them, can cause a power outage. EnerStar does what it can to prevent power outages but sometimes they cannot be avoided. When the power does go out, you may be inconvenienced, frustrated or concerned. We agree. That is why we do everything in our power to correct the problem and restore power as soon as possible.

With your help, we can restore your power in the quickest manner possible and make sure everyone is safe during an outage. Here are a few tips to help you when an outage occurs:

■ Your safety is always first!

First and foremost, always keep a safe distance from downed or damaged electrical equipment. Assume every wire is energized. Call EnerStar Power and keep everyone away from the area. Let our trained professionals handle the situation.

■ Gather relevant information that might help speed restoration

Check the fuses or breakers in your home. Check the breakers below the meter if the meter is located on a yard pole. Then call your neighbors and see if their power is out. This will help you determine if you are the only one experiencing the power outage or if it is more widespread.

Call EnerStar Power at (800) 635-4145 to report the outage. If you have no specific information

on the possible cause of the outage, all you need to do is leave your telephone number in the automated phone system. This information is routed to our customer service representatives and our line crews are dispatched immediately.

During widespread outages, our automated outage system does an excellent job of processing call data to help analyze the situation. As information is received, the computer system can often pinpoint the problem. The more calls, the better job it does. These reports help crews focus their efforts on the most efficient way to restore power.

But if you have information on the specific cause of the problem or the location of damage such as a tree on the wires, please stay on the line to speak with a customer service representative. They will take the information and deploy line personnel for the fastest possible restoration.



■ Your help and understanding is appreciated

During outages, members often become our extra eyes and ears. We appreciate your help finding the cause of outages. And, of course, we appreciate your patience as we do our best to safely and quickly restore your power.

Power Out?
Call EnerStar toll-free at
(800) 635-4145