

'Array' of light

REMCs tap into power of the sun at newest generating resource

Officials from three east-central Indiana electric cooperatives and Henry County dedicated a new solar farm in September, tapping into the power of the sun to light up homes and businesses in the region.

The 1-megawatt array south of New Castle covers about 11 acres just north of Interstate 70. Henry County REMC, RushShelby Energy and Whitewater Valley REMC worked alongside Hoosier Energy, their power supplier, to identify a prime location where the three co-ops could show their support for renewable energy and learn more about how solar power works.

"Interstate 70 brings about 40,000 vehicles through Henry County every day, traveling past the new solar farm. The high visibility of the farm highlights Henry County's and Hoosier Energy's commitment to progress," said Ed Yanos, president of the Henry County board of commissioners.

"Such an opportunity puts us in a better position to give advice to our member consumers on the operational issues, costs and benefits of solar



Officials from Henry County REMC, RushShelby Energy, Whitewater Valley REMC, power supplier Hoosier Energy, and Henry County gather to cut the ribbon on a new 1-megawatt solar array south of New Castle that will serve consumers of the east-central cooperatives.



Site of new solar array along I-70

as a renewable energy resource," added Terry Jobe, chief executive officer for RushShelby Energy.

The solar farm is the first of 10 that Hoosier Energy plans to build to benefit its 18 members in southern and central Indiana and southeastern Illinois as part of the electric co-op power supplier's "all-of-the-above" energy portfolio.

Commitment to community is a co-op principle of special importance to the three distribution cooperatives. "We are used to bringing power to our mem-

bers through transmission and distribution lines. Bringing this solar generation directly into the communities we serve is a bit different for us," said Shannon Thom, chief executive officer of Henry County REMC. "This project will benefit the members of the REMCs and the communities of east central Indiana."

"Where electricity comes from is as important as how it gets to homes and businesses. The more we learn, the better we can take advantage of this important resource," added Mary Jo Thomas, chief executive officer of Whitewater Valley REMC.

Hoosier Energy named a Top 10 utility

Site Selection magazine has recognized Hoosier Energy, the electric power supply cooperative based in Bloomington, and its member electric distribution cooperatives as one of the top 10 utility programs in the nation.

It was recognized for economic development results with its member cooperatives in 2014. This is the seventh time since 2002 that Hoosier Energy has been named to the top 10 list by the publication.

Commercial and industrial projects announced last year included 58 new and expanded businesses that are expected to add approximately 2,200 jobs and \$600 million in capital investment in communities served by member cooperatives.

Eighteen member distribution systems that serve more than 300,000 homes, businesses and industries in central and southern Indiana and southeastern Illinois belong to Hoosier Energy.

Service Concepts begins new partnership

Service Concepts, a company founded in 1999 by Indiana's electric cooperatives to support their energy efficiency programs and serve the needs of co-ops and their residential and commercial/ industrial members, is now partnering with AM Conservation Group, the nation's leader in energy and water conservation solutions.

"Our partnership with AM Conservation Group significantly adds to the support we're able to offer our co-ops," said Steve Thrash, CEO of Service Concepts. "Customers will continue to enjoy the competitive pricing and excellent service with far greater resources."

AM Conservation Group also recently invested in GoodCents, a leader in full-scale, demand-side services, energy efficiency program management and implementation and product solutions for some of the largest utilities and cooperatives in North America.

Service Concepts facilitates energy programs via efficiency products, fulfillment and product sourcing services with over 300 cooperatives and other community organizations in 42 states.

"Service Concepts aligns with our conservation mission and has the capacity to reach a broad customer group," said Todd Recknagel, CEO of AM Conservation Group.



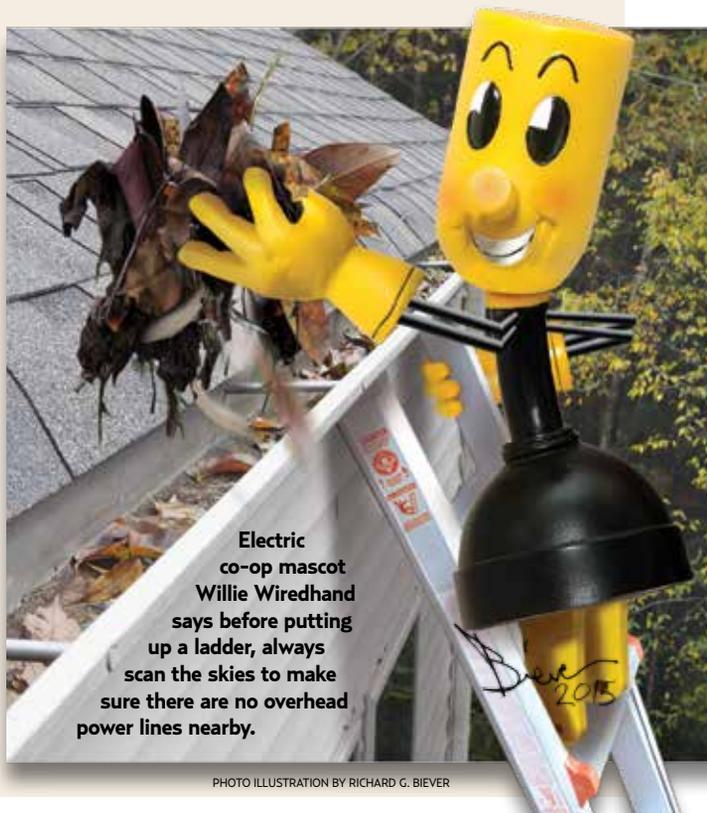
FEATURING WILLIE WIREDHAND^{®NRECA}

Look out **ABOOOOOOOOOOVE!!!**

A ladder has safety issues no matter which end you're at. A fall from the top is obviously a threat, but another danger is when you're on the ground moving it around. That danger: power lines.

Fall is the time for cleaning gutters, pruning and other tidying up chores before winter. Here are safety tips to remember:

- ▶ **Look up and around.** Always be aware of the location of power lines. Ladders and other long items should be carried horizontally whenever possible.
- ▶ **Be careful when working near power lines attached to the house.** Keep equipment and people at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines. Don't place a ladder where it can fall onto a power line.
- ▶ **Take care with electric yard tools.** Never use electric yard tools with a power cord when the ground's wet.



Electric co-op mascot Willie Wiredhand says before putting up a ladder, always scan the skies to make sure there are no overhead power lines nearby.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD G. BIEVER

VanParis named CEO at IEC

Tom VanParis has been selected as the next chief executive officer of Indiana Electric Cooperatives, the Indianapolis-based service association for the state's electric co-ops. IEC is the publisher of **Electric Consumer**.



Tom VanParis

Until last month, VanParis was vice president of member services and communications at Hoosier Energy, the generation and transmission cooperative for 18 electric cooperatives in central and southern Indiana and southeastern Illinois.

He will become CEO of the 80-year-old IEC Oct. 19.

He replaces retiring CEO Rick Coons who has led IEC since 2012.

"I am humbled and thrilled to be joining the team at Indiana Electric Cooperatives,"

said VanParis. "It is an outstanding organization focused on the needs of its 38 member cooperatives. I look forward to us building on that history of service."

VanParis joined Hoosier Energy in 2007, where he was responsible for energy efficiency and demand

side management programs and economic development and communication activities.

Before his work there, VanParis facilitated strategic planning, organizational assessment and governance projects for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) National Consulting Group. He also served as director of marketing and economic development for Buckeye Power in Columbus, Ohio, and in various management positions at Cinergy Corporation.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Purdue University and an MBA from Otterbein University.