



Co-op Chronicle

January/February 2024



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Training and Continuing Education at UDWI

As a utility cooperative, UDWI REMC recognizes the critical importance of training and education to ensure the utmost safety for our team and our members, as well as helping our team improve the reliability and efficiency of our co-op. Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance. These principles are a key reason why America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of our members first.



Education, Training, and Information is number five of the Seven Cooperative Principles. Education and training for members, elected directors, CEOs and employees helps our team effectively contribute to the development of our cooperative. Continued education opportunities are pursued by both UDWI's linemen and office staff to help us to reliably serve our members.

In 2023, UDWI employees collectively spent 3,000 hours training and improving their skills for the betterment of the cooperative. Nearly 1,000 of those hours were specifically dedicated to safety and cybersecurity training. This includes OSHA-mandated safety training as well as industry-specific safety training that helps our employees ensure that all workplaces are safe. These trainings are often held for larger groups to allow our team to practice working together and create standards and expectations across more employees.

An additional 2,000 hours of training were spent on "skills improvement" training – opportunities for our employees to attend events focused on leadership, technology, member service, employee relations, and general industry knowledge. We are grateful to serve in an area that allows us cost effective, local access to so many training sessions that help us improve the co-op. Employees from member services and operations have continued their education and training through the internal co-op programs required and by attending conferences and seminars. Additionally, a training on UDWI's outage management software provided our team with an opportunity to learn more about the latest updates, and how to best utilize the system to effectively communicate with members before, during and after a storm while keeping our crews safe.

UDWI Chief Operating Officer Shane Smith received his Certified Key Account Executive certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This program helps key account executives and their co-ops construct and implement a winning key accounts business attraction and retention program. This certification is part of UDWI's commitment to strengthening our key accounts support and promoting economic development.

UDWI Linemen Curtis Hasler advanced to Journeyman Lineman at the Hoosier Energy Apprenticeship Training and Safety (HEATS) Graduation last fall and Member Service Rep/Dispatch Gary Frye graduated the Member Services Representative portion of HEATS. The first HEATS class was launched in 1975 and has since become a cornerstone of Hoosier Energy's employee development program, as well as a continuing education opportunity for all member-system journeymen. Two more apprentice linemen from UDWI are going through HEATS training along with three office workers taking the Member Services Representative portion of HEATS - training remains a top priority as we head into 2024!

UDWI prioritizes our safety culture with the goal that every employee feels comfortable and safe to report any incidents or accidents that they experience, including near-misses or something they may observe in the field. We prioritize open lines of communication for the safety of our team and members without any fear of retribution. It's not just a culture - it's a state of mind and way of life for our team members, and we take it very seriously!

SAVE THE DATE: 2024 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS - APRIL 24, 2024

Smithville Update:

- Stanford 1-6 are all complete and open for orders. Phase 7 is still on track for 2024 design and construction
- Greene County SE Phase 1, 2 & 3 are open for orders
- Owen County Switchboard Phase 1 is open for orders
- Owen County Switchboard Phase 2 will be open for orders by end of year
- Owen County Switchboard Phase 3 will be open for orders in January

For more details, please visit www.smithville.com/statusmap/.

South Central Indiana REMC Update:

Drops to homes are ongoing in Freedom West, Freedom Central, Freedom Northeast, and Freedom Northwest. Engineering is complete for Freedom East and Freedom South, and mainline construction is scheduled to begin in late December/early January for Freedom South. **If you are interested in receiving fiber internet service, please register as soon as possible at join.sciremc.com.**

Outage Hub Updates/Text Alert System



UDWI's Outage Hub received some updates this past fall!

During outages, UDWI encourages its members to utilize the Outage Map, which helps provide you with real-time information and updates. In addition to seeing the number of outages in our territory, our members now have access to additional outage information! Our dispatch team will work to upload additional information to our outage map in real-time as our linemen work to repair outages.

New texting features were also added to UDWI's Text Alert System. UDWI's text message alert system provides members with another tool to receive important account information and urgent outage alerts.

Please visit the Outage Hub on our website to learn more about each of these features, and learn how to enroll in the Text Alert System if you already aren't!

Qualifications for UDWI REMC Board of Directors

Three candidates will be elected at the 2024 annual meeting. **Districts 5, 7, and 8 are up for election.** Candidates will be elected to serve a three-year term. Interested candidates must contact the UDWI office to receive a petition packet.

Completed packets must be turned in on or before Wednesday, January 24, 2024.

To be eligible to become a director of the REMC, a person must meet the following qualifications:

1. Must be a member of the cooperative;
2. Must be a bona fide resident in the district which he/she is to represent;
3. Must not be in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to the REMC, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to members of the cooperative;
4. Must not be a close relative of an incumbent director or an employee of the REMC.



Office Information

Meter Testing Continues: UDWI meter technicians continue with routine meter tests in our entire service territory and will do so over the next few years. Employees will be driving a white utility van with our logo placard. Be sure to identify these items before approaching any vehicle that may be in your area. Report suspicious behavior to your local law enforcement office. "Like" us on Facebook to stay up to date on current testing locations.



UDWI REMC Community Fund: UDWI's Community Fund is a non-profit organization that provides members with an avenue to make a difference in their communities. The program allows members to round up their energy bills to the next whole dollar to create the funds. Then, the community fund board awards the amount collected to local organizations. Applications are now open; apply by March 13 to be eligible for our next round of grants! **Interested in giving back to local not-for-profit organizations? Call our office to enroll in the round up program!**

