

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

Volume I

Number 17

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BAH! HUMBUG!

RMU Leaves Lump of Coal in Our Stocking

(Follow up to: "When the Lights Go Out..." NSN Vol. 1, No.14)

By Phil

In case you missed this little notice, it was under the obituaries on the records page in the December 2, 1998 issue of the Rolla Daily News:

INTERCOUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNOUNCES \$1,100,000 REFUND TO MEMBERS

"While continuing our efforts to provide quality service at low rates, Intercounty Electric Cooperative Association's financial condition remains strong. Thus, in their scheduled meeting held November 20, 1998, the board of directors voted to return \$1,100,000 in revenue collected during January through October 1998. This is a one-time discount based on energy use revenue collected. All current active members of the Cooperative in good standing as of November 15, 1998 who had metered service during January through October 1998 can expect a refund on the bill received in December. Your refund will be in the for(m) of a DISCOUNT on the energy bill. The discount will be a proportion of the \$1,100,000 based upon your kilowatt hour (kWh) energy usage during January through October 1998 divided by the total kWhs sold by Intercounty during this period."

(end of notice)

A friend living outside the city limits of Rolla called this notice to my attention. His share of this rebate was \$149. Nice Christmas gift. Despite the disclaimer that this is a "one-time discount", he has received two of these rebates this year. I also learned this isn't the first year Intercounty ratepayers have received rebates and they rarely suffer power outages. They certainly have no 10-hour, system-wide blackouts.

He was so enjoying rubbing my nose in this that he pointed out some other benefits of his user-owned utility company - Intercounty Electric Cooperative (IEC). To each of the IEC services he told me about, I have added a comparison service of our user-owned utility company, RMU.

IEC publishes and distributes a free monthly newsmagazine to communicate with its owner/customers. It has articles on Intercounty operations, what happens at board meetings, announcements and interesting articles on people and doings in rural communities. The recipes, he says, are very good too.

COMPARE with RMU: They communicate with their owner/customers by sending a monthly bill so the board will have surplus 'profits' to give to the city to pay their bills. They give rebates to certain select businesses, buy buildings for large corporations in a private industrial park, and whatever else the 'expert economic developers' in the RCDC, Chamber and city want to spend it on.

IEC's ratepayers get cash to help with the purchase of a list of home appliances and heating options if they purchase or replace a washer, dryer, hot water

heater, and so forth with one having certain energy-saving ratings. The incentives range from \$45 to \$300/ton depending on the appliance. In encouraging energy savings, everyone benefits in the long run.

COMPARE with RMU: They have long and expensive blackouts and say it's someone else's fault.

IEC 's December magazine had an article offering to buy, at cost, for IEC ratepayers, a transfer/double-throw switch, which is needed if the homeowner is putting in a generator to kick on during a power failure. Not only will they help you with the approximately \$299 purchase of the switch, but they'll also install it free so that they can be sure it is correctly hooked up to protect the owner and lineman who may be harmed by a missing or improperly installed switch.

COMPARE with RMU: If you touch their stuff they'll have you arrested. But! RMU does send you a monthly bill so they will have surplus 'profits' to give away to the city...

IEC has an annual board meeting in Licking each July. Free lunch, music, prize drawings, board reports and fun for all. It's partly to conduct business and partly to show appreciation to their community of owner/customers. More than three thousand ratepayer/owners are served lunch!

COMPARE with RMU: Forget picnics. Pay your bill or they'll shut your power off. There are four board members appointed by our mayor and city council but they don't necessarily want to rub elbows with you. Presumably they have board meetings but you never hear much about what happens in them. They certainly never have rate hearings and the reason is becoming clearer all the time. But! RMU does frequently and quietly raise our rates so they will have surplus 'profits' to give to the city to pay ... (you know the routine).

By the way, have you gone back and compared your current electric and water/sewer bills with a few years ago? If you have blood pressure problems -- maybe you'd better not. On our December bill OUR WATER/SEWER RATES JUST WENT UP AGAIN. That's a big "HO! HO! HO!" from our utility company. Once again using a false pretext to bilk us for more money to give to our spendthrift city council and their special friends.

Here are the citizens that the mayor and your councilpersons have appointed to run our utility company:

- Dain Ward 364-1556 (Don't forget "Dain Ward Day" on December 18.)
- William Jenks III 364-1414
- James Stoffer 341-4434
- Maurice J. Alfermann 364-1700

Merry Christmas to all and to all a Good Night!

FREE MAYBERRY!!!

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