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**EMERGENCY POWER OUTAGES**  
To report a power outage, please call 800-933-7362. We are available to serve you 24 hours a day.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Rick Robertson, *Chairman*  
Doug Burnworth, *Vice Chairman*  
Bill Knox, *Treasurer*  
Andy Strack, *Secretary*  
George Bennett  
Mark Demsko  
Joe Hutsell  
Larry Ott  
Jay Wysong

**MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
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*President & CEO*  
Sarah Dreibelbis,  
*Office Manager*  
Doug Dickmeyer,  
*Manager of Engineering & Operations*  
Kevin Dreibelbis,  
*Communications & Marketing Manager*  
Adam Chitwood,  
*Manager of Finance & Accounting*



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# CONTRIBUTING TO *a smarter grid*



It's a familiar scene: poles and wires stretching into the distance alongside a rural highway. This image might appear no different now than it did many years ago. But look more closely.

Invisible to most of us is an overlay of new equipment — automated metering infrastructure, sophisticated computer networks, wireless communications, sensors and fibers — linking remote distribution infrastructure to the utility's operations center using advanced communications technology.

Those iconic poles and wires are now part of a "smart grid" that can be operated using software and automation.

For electric cooperatives, "digitalization" of electric infrastructure kicked into high gear in 2013 when the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) funded new technology research at 23 electric co-ops across the country. That partnership has now evolved into a robust research program exploring everything from drones and smart solar inverters to cybersecurity training and carbon capture technology.

Here are some of the ways Noble REMC members are already benefiting from a smarter grid:

- **More information, more choices.** This technology allows members to view their energy use down to the hour on our SmartHub app, which helps to brainstorm and determine more energy efficient choices in your day-to-day life.
- **Cost savings from increased efficiency.** Many of the new technologies are improving the efficiency of co-op operations — from reducing the amount of electricity

lost in transmission to reducing the need for sending out trucks. These cost savings are passed on to you, our members.

- **Improved safety for co-op workers and the members.** The data from smart technologies provide utility operators a more detailed view of what is happening on the electric system. This data can help us identify electrical hazards faster and plan for the future better.

The research partnership between electric cooperatives and the U.S. DOE, including the national laboratories, has enabled co-ops nationwide to increase their total solar energy capacity, install cutting-edge batteries for energy storage and microgrids, develop data analytics tools and find new ways to capture emissions from coal and natural gas power plants.

This partnership gives electric co-ops in some of the most remote regions of the country access to an amazing network of researchers, including researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, Purdue University and the University of California at Berkeley, to name a few.

In exchange, the researchers can see how these new technologies operate in the real world.

So, the next time you are driving down a country road and you see poles and wires stretching into the far distance, know there's more to that system than meets the eye. While the electricity in your home powers the toaster just as it always did, that electricity is more efficient, more reliable and safer thanks to innovation made possible by cooperation.

**RON RAYPOLE**  
President/CEO



## Annual meeting goes virtual

When Noble REMC employees would normally be setting up tents and unloading soda, buns and chips, we were instead testing out our training room to broadcast our annual meeting live on Facebook.

It was a strange feeling, knowing we wouldn't get to celebrate with you, our members, in person with our traditional picnic, but safety always comes first in the work we do, whether out in the field or in the office.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic made it a bit of a time crunch to coordinate, the transition to an online meeting and a mail-in board of directors' election went off without a hitch.

Members voted on our board of directors by mail, which was decided as the best course of action when taking into account our bylaws, cost and deadlines.

Running unopposed, all three candidates were voted into their respective positions:

- Incumbent **William Knox** will continue to lead members in District 4.
- Newcomer **Joe Hutsell** will be the director for District 5, which was previously served by Bill Emmert who retired from the position after 18 years of service.
- Incumbent **Larry Ott** will continue his duties as director for District 9.

The business portion of the annual meeting was held live on Facebook — where it can still be viewed — and focused on the current success of the REMC, while outlining the future of the cooperative.

President and CEO Ron Raypole pointed to the cooperative's commitment to renewable energy programs, Operation Round Up donations, annual cash back allocation and the "Commitment to Zero Contacts" safety program as measures that keep the cooperative as successful as it is.

"During this unprecedented health emergency, our employees did not miss a beat in taking care of you. I am so proud to have the dedicated staff who care so much about meeting your needs," Raypole said. "We hope that you will think of Noble REMC as more than your trusted energy resource, but also as a local business who supports community, powers economic development and is a leader for quality of life initiatives for area residents."

Board Chairman Rick Robertson added that the REMC is in solid financial shape and has worked to put a strategic plan in place, including maintaining safety as the co-op's first priority, operating efficiently, providing competitive rates and supporting economic development.

Though this year's meeting was all business, our message is the same: Your safety is our priority, and we'll continue to provide reliable service to our members and community.



# Ask the energy advisor

## Are you afraid of the dark?

By **Brian Hawk**

Is the Loch Ness monster real?

It has often been talked about, rarely seen and can be quite scary to witness. You may have one under your home and not even know it!

What I'm really talking about here is a crawl space.

With spring's slow transition into summer and the rains turning into 90-degree days, your crawl space has great potential to turn into a dark, wet space that scary creatures thrive in.

I touched on some of the issues commonly found in crawl spaces in my last article, but I would like to dig a little deeper this month.

Let's start at the beginning of creating a healthy crawl space.

While inspecting a wet or damp crawl space, you need to identify the source of the moisture. The most common source of wet crawl spaces is a lack of downspouts or downspouts that are not properly connected to tiles running the water away from the foundation.

The next step is to contain the moisture in the crawl space. Install a 10-mil or heavier vapor barrier over the crawl space floor, overlapping the seams 12 inches and running the plastic 12 inches up the crawl space walls. Finally, tape the seams on the floor and seal the plastic to the walls with silicone sealant.

Ideally, this should be followed by closing any crawl space vents and spray-foaming the crawl space walls up into the floor joists. This will give you the opportunity to turn your crawl

space into a mini basement, a.k.a. a conditioned space.

Once these steps have been completed, you will need to control any moisture that may find its way into this space. This can be done with a crawl space ventilator, existing supply/return ductwork in the space or an Energy Star®-rated dehumidifier. It will also be important to install a decent, remote hygrometer — an instrument to measure water vapor — to monitor the humidity in the crawl space.

The health of your crawl space directly affects the health of your home. If you have any questions on keeping your crawl space Nessie free, please call me.

**Brian Hawk** is the energy advisor at Noble REMC.

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## SAVE MONEY, ENERGY THROUGH WATER HEATER PROGRAM

Did you know you can purchase your electric water heater directly from your electric co-op? That's us! Noble REMC.

Whether you're replacing your old water heater or installing one in a new home, we provide energy efficient options free of charge or at cost, depending on the circumstances. We also provide credits for water heaters purchased elsewhere.

For those replacing their water heater, they can purchase them at cost from us for:

- 50-gallon water heater — \$366
- 50-gallon heat pump water heater — \$1,220
  - *Also eligible for a \$400 Power Moves® rebate*

New home needing one water heater:

- 50-gallon water heater — FREE
- Heat pump water heater from Noble REMC — \$150 credit
  - *Also eligible for a \$400 Power Moves rebate*
- Any size water heater, purchased elsewhere — \$366 credit

There are additional options for homes needing two water heaters, as well as other sizes of water heaters that can be special ordered and priced at our cost.

You also have the potential to benefit from a \$50 electric replacement installation allowance, \$100 gas replacement installation allowance and an \$85 annual service reimbursement.

Interested in learning more? Call Energy Advisor Brian Hawk at 800-933-7362 for additional pricing details or visit [nobleremc.com/water-heaters](http://nobleremc.com/water-heaters).

# A legacy of selflessness

## DIRECTOR BILL EMMERT RETIRES FROM NOBLE REMC BOARD

Beginning his position as District 5 Director in 2002, Bill Emmert spent 18 years giving back to the community through his service to Noble REMC. Now he wants to give an opportunity for the next generation to lead, as well as pursue other community projects that need support.

A person who works hard without a need for any fanfare, Emmert retired from his director position at this year's annual meeting without the recognition most would want. That doesn't mean his service will soon be forgotten. His selfless devotion to the success of his community is a legacy he continues to cultivate.

Noble REMC thanks Emmert for his leadership during his nearly two decades of service to our members.

In one of the rare moments he isn't out helping others, Emmert sat down to reflect on his time with the cooperative:

### WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO JOIN THE BOARD?

At the time I first was a candidate for the director spot, I had just sold a business in Columbia City and wanted to become more involved in our home community of Albion. The communication we had received from Noble REMC made it sound like a good operation.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MEMORIES?

The annual meetings were always a highlight, because it gave us the opportunity to visit with members from across the entire area of our service territory.

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

The operation of a not-for-profit, and the financials attached to it, were at first a big change to understand. The meetings we attended and classes we had to become familiar with electric co-ops were always interesting and gave me a chance to meet



Retired Noble REMC Director Bill Emmert, middle, smiles as he talks with Apprentice Lineman Mike Klopfenstein, left, and Journeyman Lineman Rob Coil, right, during Noble REMC's Community Day in 2019.

people I knew from other areas, as well as make new acquaintances.

### WHAT WILL YOU MISS MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

I'll miss the collaboration with other directors and REMC staff.

### WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO RETIRE FROM THE BOARD?

It seems to me that directors should step aside to allow others to have the same opportunity, and I have other commitments that are asking more of my time.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

The time is already being spent with the

efforts a community group are making toward starting the Albion Community Center, also known as the Augusta Hills Learning, Recreation and Community Center. This is a much bigger undertaking than we first expected, but we intend it to be a great community asset.

### ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT MEMBERS TO KNOW ABOUT THE COOPERATIVE AND YOUR TIME HERE?

Noble REMC is a very well operated co-op, which is respected throughout the state. The reason for this is the many dedicated employees and staff, both present and past.

# Your donations making a difference

With an ever-changing world, Noble REMC's Operation Round Up program continues to give back to make sure our community's projects remain successful.

The co-op is grateful for the more than 80% of members who participate in the program, allowing their electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar each month. These cents are then kept locally through community grants given each quarter.

Organizations awarded funding from the second quarter distribution of Noble REMC's Operation Round Up Trust Fund, totaling more than \$17,500, include:

- **Elkhart Civic Townships**, \$1,000, baseball and softball equipment
- **Noble County Extension Homemakers**, \$700, purchase of books for distribution
- **Town of Albion Parks Department**, \$1,000, construction of new restroom facilities
- **LaOtto Volunteer Fire Department**, \$1,525, thermal imaging camera
- **Bear Lake Camp, Inc.**, \$358, AED system battery
- **Hoosiers Feeding the Hungry**, \$1,000, meat processing
- **City of Kendallville**, \$1,000, Kid City event
- **Youth for Christ of Northern Indiana**, \$1,000, East Noble Campus Life programming
- **LaOtto Community Park, Inc.**, \$2,000, for community park improvements
- **Drug Free Noble County, Inc.**, \$1,000, for prevention support programs
- **Cromwell Park Board**, \$1,500, playground slide installation
- **The Apple Tree Center**, \$500, outdoor rain gear
- **Life and Family Services**, \$850, client education
- **Courthouse Square Preservation Society, Inc.**, \$2,500, Noble County Courthouse gazebo repair
- **Churubusco Youth Foundation**, \$1,000, Churubusco High School Show Choir trailer
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana**, \$1,000, site-based School Buddies program

## What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?



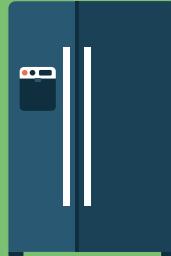
**Clothes Dryer**

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



**Refrigerator**

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



**Hot Water Heater**

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.