



## **The Cooperative Connection**

A Monthly Publication of Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative

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# From the Desk of Chris Hopfinger Manager/CEO



2022 was a challenging year for the Cooperative, but we were able to get many things accomplished.

With the help of our terrific employees, the board of directors, and you the members, we were able to navigate the year without a rate increase. We also returned approximately \$2 million in Wayne-White capital credits back to the membership. As you may have seen driving around our service territory, we continue to invest in our distribution system and our right-of-way program to deliver the high-quality electric service you want and deserve.

The employees and staff have also done a fantastic job managing the operation and maintenance agreement that we entered into with the City of Fairfield. It has had its challenges, but we are providing quality customer service to the residents of Fairfield. This project continues to provide a positive financial benefit to you the members.

As was discussed at the annual meeting, the cost to deliver quality electric service and top-notch customer service continues to increase. With the rising costs of coal and natural gas, Hoosier Energy has also seen their costs to produce electricity increase. As a result, I anticipate we will probably need to have a rate increase next year, for the first time in 10 years. We are still finalizing the budget for next year, so at this time we do not know the magnitude or the timing of the increase, but we will keep you informed when we have more information available to share.

Lastly, I want to thank you the members, all our employees, and the board of directors. As my first year as CEO ends, I know it wouldn't have been a success without all of you.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Chris Hopfinger  
Manager/CEO



## New Employee Begins Duties at the Cooperative

Following a lengthy search and ten interviews, the Cooperative has hired Chris Simpson as the new Manager of Member Services. Chris and his wife, Bridget and their two children live in Wayne City. He attended Wayne City High School and Rend Lake College. Prior to coming to Wayne-White, Chris was a commercial loan officer for Fairfield National Bank at their Wayne City branch where he also handled a lot of agricultural lending. He also worked for Grainergy Farms for almost ten years where he had a variety of duties, and he has extensive experience in the trucking industry. His hobbies include golf, camping and boating.

Simpson is filling an opening created when Josh Scott recently transferred back into the Engineering Department, and Randy Olson announced his pending retirement from the Member Services and Communications Department this February. Chris began his duties at Wayne-White Electric Cooperative on October 10th. He looks forward to working with our members.

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# Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative

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Cooperative 

# Refurbished Water Tower Brilliantly Pierces the Rural Skyline of Wayne County

By Randy Olson

If you haven't taken a drive west of Fairfield near the Boyleston water tower, you should really make an effort to do that sometime soon. This landmark has just undergone some major renovations and the end results are stunning. Boyleston Waterworks serves approximately 380 households in Big Mound and Lamard Townships in Wayne County. The history of the water supplier dates back to 1969, when they were incorporated and began serving 120 customers. From the beginning, their goal has always been to provide clean, safe drinking water for their residents.



In 1990, Boyleston Waterworks expanded into Lamard Township and added another 80 customers. Another decade later in 2004, there was another expansion further into Lamard Township which added an additional 150 new customers. That latest expansion eighteen years ago brought Boyleston Water Works to the 380 households that they now serve.

The current water tower was initially constructed by Caldwell Tanks, Inc as a result of the expansion in 2004. The tank is a 120-foot spheroid tank that holds 100,000 gallons. Members have enjoyed good service and quality drinking water since the day the tower was erected.



In 2020, the Boyleston Water Works Board decided that it would be wise and diligent to have a routine inspection of the tower done, since it had reached an age of sixteen years. After some research, they hired Mid-South Tank Consultants of Jackson, Tennessee to do a detailed inspection of the outside and inside of the tank, which required that it be drained. While there were no immediate issues found that would be considered dangerous or problematic, Mid-South Tower Consultants did offer some suggestions and data

to support their findings that it would be a good idea to do some routine maintenance on the tower which would extend the useful life of the structure to benefit everyone.

Armed with the specifications needed to make improvements to the tower, the board began the task of discussing and deliberating whether this was the proper move, weighing the cost of making improvements now, versus the cost of completely replacing the tower some more years down the road. The board ultimately reached the decision to move forward, and they began to work with Mary Warren of the USDA Rural Economic and Community Development, as well as Wayne-White Electric Cooperative.

*(continued on the next page)*



Through the USDA, Boyleston Waterworks (BWW) was able to secure a 10-year, zero percent REDLG loan to help fund the tower improvement project. Wayne-White acted as the sponsor (or conduit) of the loan application. BWW was required to provide 20% of the project cost as a down payment, which they were able to do, all without raising the water rates for their customers. Members of the board who came to this decision to move forward with refurbishing the water tower include: Galen Dunn, Clinton Legg, Sam Resor, Becky Couch, Sharon Young, Jack Tribe, and Mike Irwin.



Several agencies played a vital role in helping to put this project in motion once the board reached their decision. They include the USDA (Mary Warren), Wayne-White Electric Cooperative (Britt Shepherd and Chris Hopfinger), Mauer-Stutz, Inc (Collin Dunn, Project Engineer), Peoples National Bank (Matt Moore), Harrison Law Office (David Harrison), Hogan Painting & Sandblasting Contractors (Heath Hogan), and Mid-South Tank Consultants (Matt Finney).

After the recommendations and specifications were provided by Mid-South Tank Consultants, the project was put out for bid. Three bids were received, with the winning bid being awarded to Hogan Painting & Sandblasting of Van Buren, Missouri. Due to Covid and other issues, the timeline of the project was delayed until 2022. The project description included repair, cleaning, and painting of the exterior and interior of the 100,000 gallon water tower.

As you can see from the photos in this story, Hogan Painting & Sandblasting did a remarkable job on the tower. The work commenced on August 30, 2022 and was completed earlier this year in mid-October. The end result should provide Boyleston Waterworks with several years of useful service from the refurbished tank and tower. Total cost of the project “all-in” was around \$200,000 which including the initial physical inspection, the consultant’s recommendation, the engineering fees, as well as the labor and materials itself. By refurbishing the existing 18-year old tower, the project is **saving** Boyleston Water Works in the neighborhood of \$700,000 over the purchase and installation of a new tank and tower, which would be \$900,000. Most importantly, this project was done without raising the rates for water customers, as mentioned earlier.



When you look at the “**before**” pictures of the tower in white, and the “**after**” photos in blue, you can appreciate the scope of the project and the vast improvements that have been done. Electricity to the water pumping station located on outer Mount Vernon Road is supplied by Wayne-White Electric Cooperative. Wayne-White also began handling the billing on behalf of Boyleston Waterworks in March of 2019.

## Ditch the Electric Furnace; Buy a Heat Pump and Save

If you are planning to purchase a doublewide home or single-wide manufactured home this year, make certain that you do **NOT** purchase a home with a standard electric resistance furnace. The cost to heat your home will be too expensive and you would be better served to insist upon an optional air-source heat pump or dual-fuel heat pump (gas back-up) from your dealer. The heat pump and gas furnace option will cost a little more up front, (\$1,500 to \$2,500) when you order the home from your dealer, but it will save you money each month on BOTH your heating & cooling as opposed to having a standard electric furnace and a separate central A/C unit.

Wayne-White has incentive rebates available for the purchase of high efficiency dual-fuel heat pumps that are 16 SEER for existing stick-built homes and 14 SEER or above for new or current manufactured homes. There are no incentives on standard electric furnaces because they are not efficient and cost too much to operate.



Dual-fuel is defined as having a gas/propane back-up.

If you currently live in a mobile or manufactured home (doublewide) and you have a standard electric furnace (as shown in the photo)

tucked in a closet, or if you have electric baseboard heat, you need to seriously consider replacing it with a dual-fuel heat pump. We will pay you **\$1,500 to \$2,500** to replace your unit if you meet the SEER (efficiency) requirement. The rebate is the highest when you install a heat pump unit with a gas/propane furnace back-up. Even an all-electric heat pump or a mini-split heat pump (without gas back-up) can qualify for a

rebate of **\$750** if you meet the SEER requirements mentioned above and are a member/customer of Wayne-White Counties Electric Coop. Ordering a standard heat pump with a new manufactured home will add about \$1,400 to the price of your home, but with our \$750 rebate, the unit will pay for itself in a short period of time due to the amount of electricity cost you will save by **not** having an electric furnace. It's really a no-brainer. Our advice is: don't order a manufactured home with a straight electric furnace.

If you are purchasing a new doublewide, order it with a dual-fuel heat pump and we will pay you **\$1,750** as a rebate for this option. Order it with a standard heat pump option or a mini-split heat pump (no gas back-up) and get **\$750** from us. Do **NOT** order or purchase a manufactured home with a standard electric furnace. A heat pump will help you manage your electric bill better and make your home more energy efficient. Proper insulation and weatherization are also important. If you have air leaks, seal them with caulking or spray foam. Your dual heat pump will be a much better choice than a standard electric furnace or electric baseboard heat. Visit our website for more details about the rebates or call us at 842-2196.



# College Scholarship Deadline Is December 31st

It is Scholarship time again at Wayne-White Electric Cooperative. The deadline is December 31, 2022 to apply and be eligible for one of (12) scholarships to be awarded statewide by the Illinois Electric Cooperatives valued at \$2,000 each.

There is no cost to enter. As a cooperative member, if your son or daughter is a senior and plans to enroll full-time (at least 12 credit hours) in a two-year or four-year college, they are eligible to enter. Children of cooperative employees and directors are also eligible. Naturally, you cannot win if you don't enter. Look for the Scholarship logo (at upper right) on our website at [WayneWhiteCoop.com](http://WayneWhiteCoop.com)



While the scholarships are competitive statewide, Wayne-White Electric Cooperative has been fortunate to have many recent scholarship winners in the past six years. The application includes academic information and test scores, community activities, volunteer experience, and a short 500 word essay describing their knowledge of electric cooperatives, how they function and the impact of electricity on their lives.

The annual winners are NOT necessarily the students with the highest ACT score or perfect GPA. A lot of weight is placed on the written essay, extra-curricular activities and volunteer service to the community. Every cooperative member's student is encouraged to apply regardless of their GPA or ACT test score. Apply online before December 31 to be eligible.

Another relatively NEW scholarship is also offered-known as the Lavern & Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship. This award is worth \$2,000 towards the cost of attending lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. Mr. McEntire worked as a linemen for over 42 years at an electric cooperative in Macomb, Illinois.

The winner of this unique lineworker's scholarship will be based upon an essay, biographical statement, references, and a recommendation. It is a separate application from the other twelve IEC scholarships. The applicants for the lineworker's scholarship should be "related" to an electric cooperative employee or director, or have served or is serving in the Guard or U.S. armed forces. **You must apply online through our website at [www.WayneWhiteCoop.com](http://www.WayneWhiteCoop.com)**





# Recipes of the Month



## Zucchini Bread

- 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, nutmeg, baking soda, cinnamon and sugar. In a separate bowl, combine oil, eggs, water, zucchini and lemon juice. Mix wet ingredients into dry, add nuts and fold in. Bake in 2 standard loaf pans, sprayed with non-stick spray, for 1 hour, or until a tester comes out clean. Alternately, bake in 5 mini loaf pans for about 45 minutes.

## Black Bean & Corn Salad

- 1 can, 14 ounces, black beans, rinsed & drained
- 2 cups frozen corn kernels
- 1 small red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 red onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin, half a palm full
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce, just eyeball the amount (recommended: Tabasco)
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil, eyeball it
- Salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Let stand at least 15 minutes for corn to fully defrost and flavors to combine, then toss and serve. The corn will also place a quick-chill on this easy side-salad as it defrosts -- no need to refrigerate, you can actually eat it right away.



If you have a favorite recipe and photo, send it to us at "The Cooperative Connection"

Email your photo and recipe to us at:  
[rolson@wwcec.com](mailto:rolson@wwcec.com)