

ENERGYLINES

TRAINING CENTER TRANSFORMATION

WITH AN UNRELENTING FOCUS ON SAFETY, FRANKLIN
TRAINING CENTER GROWS TO BE BEST IN THE STATE
PAGES 3-4

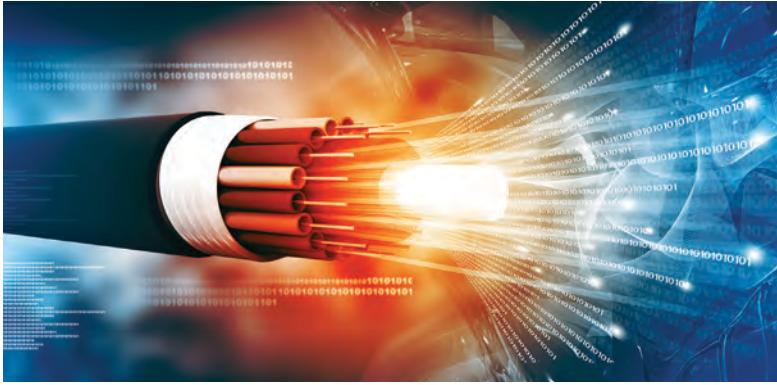


COOPERATIVE COLLABORATION

SEI REMC works with
communications co-op
to bring high-speed
internet to members.
PAGE 6



RURAL BROADBAND NEWS



\$9.2 billion approved for rural broadband

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has approved \$9.2 billion to fund construction of rural broadband networks during the next decade, according to the Wall Street Journal (WSJ). The FCC says the funds will help bring high-speed internet to five million homes and businesses in 49 states.

Electric cooperative winning bids are expected to top \$1.6 billion to serve 900,000 locations in 31 states, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Since 2012, the FCC has spent about \$35 billion on rural broadband efforts with funding coming from fees on telephone bills, according to the WSJ.

ENERGY NEWS

Walker column published in Indiana business newsletter

Hoosier Energy CEO Donna Walker wrote a column published in the Dec. 15 edition of INPower, an Inside Indiana Business newsletter for the state's energy technology sector. Her column focused on Hoosier Energy's transition to greater renewable energy.

In the column, Walker showed how Hoosier Energy is providing reassignment, professional outplacement services and retirement options to the employees impacted through the retirement of the Merom Generating Station in 2023.

Future development options were discussed including industrial development and a possible energy campus.

"Today, we don't need to choose from among reliability, affordability, or sustainability; all three are possible," said Walker.

ONLINE EXTRA

>> Read Walker's column about holistic transition to sustainable energy at [InsideIndianaBusiness.com](https://www.insideindianabusiness.com).

ON THE COVER

Crews from WIN Energy train at the Franklin Training Center. Learn how the facility has transitioned to become the best in the state. Our report shows how training has continued throughout the pandemic, including crews learning new skills for underground line work.



150

DEALERS DECLINE EV SALES

About 150 General Motor dealerships nationwide have exited the luxury brand Cadillac as they were not willing to spend \$200,000 to prepare their showrooms to sell upcoming electric vehicles.

General Motors revises deal with EV startup Nikola

A revised deal between General Motors (GM) and electric vehicle startup Nikola showed a scaled-back investment by the Detroit auto manufacturer. GM will not take an 11 percent equity stake in Nikola, according to the Wall Street Journal.

While GM is not planning to build an electric pickup truck for Nikola, it will provide fuel-cell technology.

Cadillac dealers decline selling electric vehicles

As Cadillac plans to launch its first electric vehicle in 2022, about 150 dealerships (17 percent) accepted buyout offers to stop selling the luxury brand, says the Wall Street Journal (WSJ).

Cadillac's parent company, General Motors, gave dealers the choice to exit the brand or spend about \$200,000 to prepare to sell electric vehicles. Required upgrades include updated electric systems, charging stations and repair tools, says the WSJ.



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Eight ways Hoosier Energy works to succeed

These are the strategic priorities that the Hoosier Energy workforce strives to achieve every day.

- EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
- MEMBER FOCUS
- RISK MANAGEMENT
- GOVERNANCE
- COMPETITIVE RATES
- COST MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
- SUPPLY PORTFOLIO
- OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Contributions help educate adults

Bootcamp partnership helps adult students earn high school equivalency diplomas

In Monroe County, about 5,700 working-age adults lack a high school diploma or equivalent, according to Robert Moore, director of adult education for the Broadview Learning Center at Monroe County Community School Corporation.

With Hoosier Energy's help, 11 of those people have earned their high school equivalency diplomas, which now opens opportunities for careers and career training in high-demand jobs like information technology, business services, advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, building and construction, and transportation and logistics.

Hoosier Energy's Dave Stolz, Senior Manager of Power Markets, has known Moore for many years, since Moore helped Stolz's son with his education.

"When Rob told me about his efforts, I immediately jumped on the idea and petitioned Hoosier Energy to support this," says Stolz. "I knew our small contribution would help those who are struggling to get their education."

The grant from Hoosier Energy powers the High School Equivalency three-day Bootcamp, which is held about every six weeks for adults who have barriers to attending other adult education classes.

But time isn't the only barrier to these students. One obstacle is the test fee

of \$80, which cannot be paid with adult education funds and is often difficult for those living in poverty to pay. Moore says he has been able to obtain funds through Indiana's CARES Act to pay for those tests during the second half of 2020.

Another often-overlooked

barrier is food. Because the bootcamp spans three days, students are served a light supper on Thursday evening, and a light breakfast and lunch on Friday and Saturday. Before, those meals were paid for by the teacher, but Hoosier Energy's grant picked up the tab in October and November.

"We feed their minds, of course, with the academic content they need to pass the high school equivalency tests. We feed their bodies with a couple light breakfasts

and lunches to sustain them, and we feed their spirits with some confidence-building and relaxation techniques," Moore says.

Stolz sees the potential for students earning their high school GED having the opportunity to possibly work for Hoosier Energy or member systems in the future.

"I am sure they would make a great contribution to our business and community. We just never know how much potential is out there until we try," says Stolz.

Besides the grant, Hoosier Energy has provided additional support by human resources analyst Tina Dixon talking virtually about careers and training. [EL](#)

"I am sure they would make a great contribution to our business and community. We just never know how much potential is out there until we try."

DAVE STOLZ

Senior Manager of Power Markets

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A TRAINING CENTER

With a unrelenting focus on safety, Franklin Training Center grows to be best in the state

In 1967, Hoosier Energy's Franklin Training Center site was just a simple concrete block building full of mice that couldn't be used for its intended purpose – a primary substation powered from Napoleon – because new regulations restricted power line construction in the area. Co-op leaders were dreaming of a training program to ensure line workers had the skills and knowledge they needed to keep themselves and others safe on the job.

A formal program was set into motion in October 1974 by Board of Directors Chairman Dewy Barnett, and the first Hoosier Energy Apprenticeship Training and Safety (HEATS) class launched on April 12, 1975. That class was taught by Joe Robb at Daviess-Martin County REMC.

However, Bob Richhart, entering his 30th year at the co-op, had a vision to turn the Franklin site into a home base for both classes and physical training. Because of his passion for safety and employee training, Richhart was instrumental in meeting the growing needs of the members. The HEATS program became a cornerstone of Hoosier Energy's employee development program, as well as a continuing education opportunity for journeymen.

"I really can't say enough about the Franklin Training Center and the work our safety team does there," Richhart says. "The facility offers in-depth training in a safe environment that allows for one-on-one classroom and field work."

While the program's focus has always been to train cooperative employees, HEATS has transitioned into a comprehensive training opportunity housed at Franklin Training Center. Officially opening in 2003, it quickly gained in popularity for being an exceptional program.

"We have groups contacting us on a regular basis to see if they can either join some of our training sessions or use our facilities to train their groups," said John Bullock, Hoosier Energy Safety and Training Specialist. "There isn't another training facility of this caliber in the state of Indiana. It is something for which we take pride."



HE PHOTO

ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP: Standing on the ground is Bob Richhart and Ken Seager, providing training at the Franklin Training Center in the early 2000s.

That original block building evolved into one classroom and a garage, and then in 2015, the addition of a second classroom and garage were completed. Having a space for meter training and classroom instruction, as well as a training yard with poles and underground circuits – added in 2019 – means member cooperatives can be confident their apprentices and journeymen have experience and exposure with the most up-to-date and best technology available.

Member cooperatives looked to expand the program again in 2019 with the launch of the Member Service Representatives HEATS program. With a focus on front office employees, this new educational track helps co-op employees learn terms and processes to better explain outages and other events to member-consumers. Upon satisfactory completion of the two-and-a-half-year program, indentured participants receive an apprenticeship certificate. **EL**





Energized underground training

Training program continues during pandemic, includes underground line sessions

Even during a pandemic, hands-on learning happens year-round for participants in the Hoosier Energy Apprentice Training and Safety program at Franklin Training Center. With altered schedules, masks and social distances, apprentices have been able to hone troubleshooting skills and efficiency on energized underground residential cables in recent months.

“Interacting with underground components is becoming more and more a greater part of a lineman’s everyday job,” said Brandon Gentry, safety and training specialist, explaining the junction boxes and transformers strategically placed throughout the training yard.

“These stations are capable of replicating every fault or problem condition that linemen could see in the field.” Gentry said that the instructor can pick whatever might be encountered in the field and reproduce it on the training station, and then make the line workers find and diagnose with live voltages. “While everyone pitched in, John Bullock came up with an electronic way through relays and timers so that we could produce that same condition reliably over and over and over so that we can have accurate training.”

Dave Helton, safety and training instructor, said the project came together because a lot of people knew there was a need and worked hard for it, including Johnson County REMC helping with equipment and manpower

to dig and lay lines. “We think we have a good start, but we intend to expand the underground yard to provide more in-depth training,” Helton said about the transformer and junction boxes.

When a member or Hoosier Energy hires an apprentice, that person goes through a four-year, 8,000-hour on-the-job training program that prepares them in skills necessary to do their jobs safely and efficiently. From learning how to climb and descend a pole to handling 7,200 volts of electricity, apprentices also receive classroom training on a wide range of topics from the theory of electricity to how to recognize sexual harassment. Besides lineworkers, Franklin Training Center also trains meter and substations technicians.

“We’re constantly training all year round,” said Helton, explaining that most of the hands-on training happens at Franklin Training Center.

According to Gentry, having apprentices learn at Franklin Training Center offers consistency across the membership regardless of co-op size or resources. “What it boils down to is safety,” he said. “It’s all about our members and providing a better training service for them to be more productive and go out and troubleshoot in a timely manner.”

Helton, Bullock, Kevin Burch, Gentry and Chrystal Hoffmeister are all involved with training apprentices in the line, substation and meter apprenticeships. [E](#)

“It’s all about our members and providing a better training service for them to be more productive and go out and troubleshoot in a timely manner.”

BRANDON GENTRY

Safety and Training Specialist

SUBSTATION DESIGN

HOOSIER ENERGY SYSTEMS BUILT FOR SAFETY, RESILIENCY

The design of Hoosier Energy substations has been an evolutionary process since the first stations went online in the 1960s. Substations that connect with other utilities and member co-ops are the backbone of the grid. The design team at Hoosier Energy focuses on safety and reliability as they improve new substation configurations.

“As we update the substation designs, we get more and more efficient. We use similar components and our crews are very familiar with them. This helps improve reliability and safety as we control costs,” said Senior Substation Design Engineer Mark Hall.

TRANSFER BUSES

The bus scheme used at a substation has a direct impact on reliability. Transfer busses allow for circuit breaker maintenance while maintaining electric service.

SIDE-BY-SIDE

To the right of the line below shows the Hoosier Energy side of the substation. To the left is where energy is transferred to member co-ops.

RECLOSER

Reclosers sense problems on the grid and can shut off power. This is why your lights might flicker three times during a storm and turn off on the fourth instance. That is the recloser sensing there is a problem, remaining off.

THIS IS NOT A FAN

This equipment, resembling a fan, helps deter animals from climbing onto components of the station – increasing reliability.

OUTGOING CONDUCTOR

This is where stepped-down energy is sent to street-level power poles and on to member consumers.

SINGLE-PHASE REGULATOR

These are used to help balance the load as it fluctuates. This equipment adjusts voltage for optimal performance to meet load demands on the grid.



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SEI REMC announces joint fiber venture

Electric and communication co-ops join to provide high-speed internet services

Southeastern Indiana REMC is joining forces with another cooperative – SEI Communications – to bring high-speed internet service to its members.

The co-op reviewed candidates based on cost and quality. This led them to SEI Communications because they both share the co-op business model. SEI leaders enjoyed learning that both organizations put the needs of the membership ahead of making a profit.

SEI Communications offers its members reliable fiber optic internet and telephone service in Dearborn, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland counties – including a portion of Southeastern Indiana REMC communities.

“There is a great need for high-speed internet service in our seven-county service territory,” said Keith Mathews, general manager of Southeastern Indiana REMC. “Improving the quality of life in southeast Indiana is important to us. We believe that high-speed internet service is essential for our communities to grow and thrive and we are committed to moving forward with a broadband project to further advance the opportunities available in our rural communities.”

The joint venture leverages the experience and expertise of both organizations to buildout a fiber network and provide the high-speed connection and quality customer service that members want. SEI REMC



27 Likes · 8 Comments

CO-OP COLLABORATION: Southeastern Indiana REMC announced its partnership with SEI Communications on Facebook. The partnership will help bring high-speed internet service to its member-consumers.

worked closely with the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative, utilizing its knowledge and expertise as a guide through the process.

“The critical work we are doing will make fiber connectivity possible for many households in southeast Indiana who currently have limited or, in some cases, no other options,” said Tony Clark, CEO and general manager of SEI Communications.

SEI FIBER, a division of Southeastern Indiana REMC, is expected to launch in 2021. The REMC will build out the fiber network and SEI Communications will connect the service at the home or business. [f](#)



Remaining steadfast as workforce pursues its goals

Hoosier Energy CEO Donna Walker shared a video message with the board of directors and employees about the teamwork, persistence and achievement the G&T had throughout the year. Walker spoke about the long-range resource plan, employee training, wholesale rate design, COVID-19 and employee safety.

ONLINE EXTRA

To view the video, visit Hoosier Energy's YouTube page at <https://www.Youtube.com/user/myhoosierenergy.com>