

Carroll Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Annual Meeting of Members
President's speech: Harold Sutton

"I want to thank you again for taking the time to come out to our annual meeting. My remarks will be very brief this year because we have a speaker who will talk to you about the Emerald Ash Borer and how it affects each and every cooperative member.

I want to mention three things. Each is an unpleasant truth to our cooperative, but we must deal with and find a way to move forward from these inevitable happenings.

First, we had a lost-time accident. One of our linemen was injured when he became complacent in his job. Complacency is something I have been concerned about for a long time, because it is something we all have a tendency to do. Fortunately, this lineman has made a full recovery, but the accident could have been much more severe. We all make mistakes – and we learn from them – and I hope that this serves as a wake-up call for all of our employees. Line work is dangerous and there is no room for complacency.

Second, a rate increase is inevitable. The closure of coal mines last year is still taking a toll on the cooperative's bottom line. We have made strides to have additional load built, but our commercial sales still lag behind. The Emerald Ash Borer, which you'll hear about later, is also causing outages and the need for immediate removal or trimming of ash trees. So far this year, we have spent more than \$200,000 on the removal of ash trees outside of our normal right-of-way.

We need to remember why this Coop exists. The investor owned utilities decided that this service area would not be profitable. However based on ORECs annual rate comparison last winter we charged just \$0.16 more for 1000 kwh than Ohio power. While they average 21 consumers per mile of line and we have only six or seven.

The third and final comment I would like to make, is this: A long time board member, Kenny Brown, had decided not to run again after serving 36 years on the Coop board. He will be sorely missed by the board and especially me. Those on the board might find that statement confusing, yet understandable. Kenny and I did not always share the same point of view. But on a board of directors that can be a very good thing. In Kenny's case, it has been a great thing, because Kenny causes us all to think harder and dig deeper. He has been a great servant to the coop.

Now, I would like to present Kenny with this plaque commemorating his 36 years of dedicated service to Carroll Electric. Please join me in a round-of-applause for his service and sacrifice for our Cooperative."