

REMCs to share director...

New head wants to be transparent

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

The new man in charge at Carroll County REMC formally begins the job Nov. 1, but has already begun meeting with staff in the Delphi office. Although the time is fast approaching for him to formally lead the Carroll County group, he does not yet know what he will be paid for the work.



Price

"That's how much I trust these guys," two-year Chief Executive Officer of the White County REMC Randy Price said, referencing the Carroll County board. Carroll County REMC Board of Directors President Tom Flora also sat down with the Comet for the interview. He explained Carroll County REMC will sign an annual contract with White County REMC for Price's services in Carroll County. Price's salary will be paid by White County REMC and Carroll County REMC will be invoiced by the neighboring cooperative. Flora said White County would officially be Price's overseer. Price said he would be loyal

to both boards because he had gotten to know the Carroll County board over the past year. Price said both boards were led to the decision to combine the top positions due to the exploratory work they did for the consolidation effort.

Flora said he expected Carroll County to pay roughly \$10,000 per month to White County REMC for Price's services in Carroll County. He and Price agreed both cooperatives would save "tens of thousands of dollars" for salaries with the contract.

Price explained the local REMC office could experience changes but staff and services would remain the same. He said closing the Delphi office is not in the cooperative's five-year plan.

The new leader emphasized his management style follows a teamwork model rather than supervisor/employee one. He said he would lead the Delphi office in the same manner he leads the White County office. Price said employees in the White County office perform community service work in the local area at their choosing. He said selected readings to enhance their work environment is offered. Price said he would meet with the Delphi staff on a regular basis and would lead Delphi office employees in similar activities.

The new CEO explained it is the goal for both cooperatives to continue to be prosperous.

"Both companies should stay strong and healthy," he said.

He said he could not predict how much time he would devote to each office, but said the time would "balance out over the course of a quarter."

Price said that by combining his services between the two cooperatives risk would be minimized. He said he would give his very best effort to connect with Carroll County REMC members and said he would conduct an online member survey to enhance that process. He said he wanted to earn Carroll County members' trust.

The new CEO said the biggest worry among members is the rising cost of utility bills. Workshops to address the issue are in the planning stage. Local strategic planning will happen after he formally is hired for the position.

Price said the debt of each cooperative is nearly equal. He said White County REMC "sells the product of Fairnet" and said the cooperative to the north was "just marketing a product and trying to help our neighbor be successful."

Flora added that Carroll County REMC does not help Fairnet, an Internet company owned by Carroll County

REMC, with cash flow as was done previously.

Flora said although members who attended the annual board meeting in August voted to reject a consolidation of the two cooperatives, the Carroll County REMC Board of Directors believe a merger is the right move for the organization.

"Board members are members, too," he said.

Flora said education was needed for more members to understand how the measure would benefit the local community. Flora said he does not receive calls from members with concerns about how the board is proceeding. He can be reached at his home by telephone at (765) 564-3166. Price said he could be reached by calling the local REMC office at (765) 564-2057 and a message would be forwarded to him. He said he would post a schedule of his Delphi office times for drop-in visitors.

Flora explained any member can attend a monthly board meeting, usually held on the last Monday of the month, by filling out a form obtained at the local office. He said directors are voted into office every four years.

Both cooperatives have their own unique differences that should spread out our risks so much better in this economy, said Price.

"I will give my very best effort to serve Carroll County," he concluded. "I want to exceed your expectations and earn your trust. We can help each other grow."

Proper leaf disposal benefits everyone

By Thomas Easterly
Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Along with children returning to school, autumn brings with it the bounty of summer's harvest, crisp evening air and the changing color of fall foliage. While nature's beauty provides a glorious visual display, what Hoosiers do with fallen leaves can affect the environment.

Historically, many Hoosiers have been quick to reach for their matches to rid their yards of fallen leaves and other yard wastes, such as grass clippings, branches and weeds. While burning gets rid of the wastes, the smoke from these fires affects air quality, so setting fire to yard debris is not advised. Smoke from all fires releases carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, fine particles and ozone-forming chemicals and can cause a number of negative impacts for Hoosiers and our environment. Unlike dry, seasoned fire wood, fallen leaves have high moisture content and tend to smolder, releasing thick, unhealthy smoke that can affect family members, neighbors and our

environment.

Why should we be concerned about finding alternatives to open burning leaves and other yard waste? Anyone can be affected from the unhealthy smoke from burning piles of leaves. Elderly, young children and individuals with respiratory or heart ailments are particularly vulnerable to ill health effects from fine particle emissions. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) revised the threshold for both particulate matter and ozone, holding all communities accountable for ensuring concentrations lower than ever before. As a result, all of us should work together to prevent unhealthy emissions from unnecessary open burning of leaves and other yard waste.

The good news is there are simple things every one of us can do to improve air quality, starting with the disposal of yard debris. The best way to get rid of leaves, branches and other yard wastes is by composting, chipping and mulching. These options can be done in your own yard or through a program set up with your city, township or county.

Composting returns nutrients to the soil instead of releasing harmful chemicals into the air. Chipped wood can be used around trees and in flower beds to retain soil moisture and control weeds. Mulching leaves on the lawn with a lawn mower returns nutrients to the grass, fertilizing your yard. Raking leaves into a pile and composting them over the winter creates a fertile soil amendment that can be used for flower beds, gardens and potted plants in the spring. Food scraps can be added to an active compost pile year-round to reduce the amount of kitchen waste being sent to landfills.

Since burning leaves, twigs and other yard waste is bad for the environment, I strongly recommend considering alternative ways of ridding your yard of waste. Smoke is unhealthy to breathe, it's a hazard, and there are safer, cleaner and more environmentally-friendly ways of disposal. To learn more about ways to dispose of yard debris, visit IDEM's Web site at <http://www.IN.gov/idem/4525.htm>.

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