

## Is a train wreck coming?

A runaway train – that’s the best way to describe the numerous regulations the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to enforce on power plants over the next few years. As you can see on the timeline, the EPA (not elected officials) will be taking control of a variety of issues related to fossil-fueled generation, such as coal-fired power plants. These include: ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, the Clean Air Interstate Rule, water, New Source Review, particulate matter, ash, hazardous air pollutants, and greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide).

I love being outdoors, and like everyone else, I want my children to enjoy a clean and safe environment throughout their lifetimes. However, the speed and magnitude of these environmental goals could be a problem given our current reliance on coal-fired generation.

After all, over 50 percent of the electricity generated in the United States comes from coal. If you’re in the Midwest, that number is even greater. In fact, more than 60 percent of the electricity that Citizens Electric provides to you is produced from coal. Some of our neighboring utilities get more than 80 percent of their electricity from coal.

As coal-reliant electric utilities evaluate existing rules and those coming, they are faced with tough choices such as closing older, smaller, less efficient coal-fired plants or installing costly emission controls. Some utilities have spent more money on emission controls over the last few years than they spent on constructing the original power plant. Even worse, the emission controls often consume electricity. That is like spending \$15,000 to upgrade your car’s exhaust system when you only spent \$12,000 to purchase the car, and then it decreases your gas mileage.

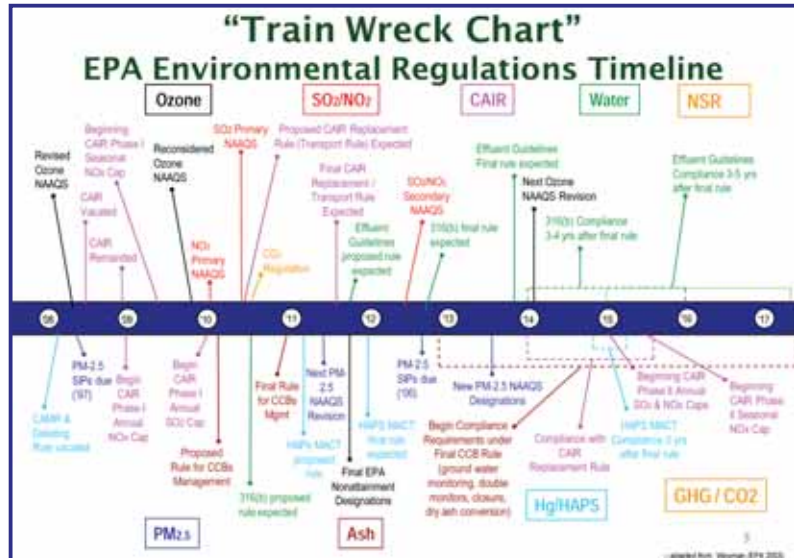
Replacing coal-fired generation with wind turbines meets environmental goals, but it is costly and unreliable. Nuclear power is reliable and does not emit carbon, but it’s very expensive to build. Storing or reprocessing nuclear waste creates other environmental challenges. A “dash to (natural) gas” may be a better short-term solution. However, natural gas is also a fossil fuel, and its cost has been extremely volatile over the past decade.

Consumers expect reliable and affordable electricity. In the past, coal has been the key to meeting those expectations. Coal is now under attack. Some folks are vilifying coal without identifying reliable and affordable alternatives. They’re speeding down the track, but they don’t have a clue about the destination. I’m afraid they’re about to run out of track, and we’ll all be responsible for cleaning up the wreck with our pocketbooks.

I encourage you to stay informed and get involved by contacting your elected officials at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop). It will take all of us working together to keep electricity affordable and reliable.



Van Robinson, CEO



Front and back cover news provided by CEC.

## Employees recognized for years of service



Employees who reached a significant anniversary date in 2010 were recognized at CEC's All-Employee Meeting in October.

Top row l to r:

Andrew Hecht (5 years)  
Roger Schlichting (25 years)  
Bill Wehner (20 years)  
John Ray (10 years)  
Matt Rayoum (5 years)

Center row l to r:

Joan Donze (25 years)  
Lynda Wahlers (10 years)  
Matt Abt (10 years)  
Eileen Bauman (10 years)  
Connie Schmieder (30 years)

Front row l to r:

Diane Petzoldt (15 years)  
Monica Kreidler (5 years)  
Randy Elfrink (5 years)  
Mike Breig (5 years)  
Brad Meyr (5 years)  
Kent Kassel (15 years) not pictured

## Outage updates available online

CEC is excited to announce that you can now view areas affected by outages online at [www.cecmo.com](http://www.cecmo.com). Some may scratch their heads and ask, "If you're out of power, how are you going to use the internet to see if you're out of power?"

Even though you may not be a computer "geek", many of our members stay connected online via iPhones, battery-operated laptops or by computers away from home. Now if you're away and wonder if the power is restored at home, you can find out by clicking on the Outage Center icon located on the left side of CEC's home page. By entering your location number, you'll find out if your lights are out and how many other members have lost power. Following a storm, this will give you an idea of the extent of damages.

Your location number is the only way to see your specific service address. You'll find it located in the top row center of your Citizens Electric bill. Keep this number handy, as it is also important to have available when you report an outage.



## Office Closing Dates

On behalf of Citizens Electric's personnel and Board of Directors, we wish you a merry Christmas and a safe, blessed New Year.

Please note that CEC's offices will be closed on the following dates: December 24, December 27 and December 31. In case of an electrical emergency, call 1-800-286-2251.



## Automated calls on late accounts

In an earlier publication, we reported that approximately one out of five members consistently pay after the due date. Until recently, personnel spent many hours each week (including overtime) making courtesy calls to remind members they were past due and subject to disconnection.

To reduce internal costs and free up representatives to take incoming calls, we are now making automated calls to members who are delinquent. Although we recognize that members may prefer a personal call, we believe this will help keep costs down and allow us to provide better customer service.

## It pays to be on time

Congratulations to *Alan and Linda Koenig* whose account was randomly selected to win \$100 for paying on time in October. Get your payment into CEC by the due date of the original bill, and you could be the next \$100 winner!