



BOARD BULLETIN

CEO Harry Ruth Announces Retirement

Harry Ruth, chief executive officer of East-Central Iowa REC since August of 2003, has announced his retirement effective June 30 of this year. His last day in the office will be Friday, June 28. “In over nine years with the Cooperative, I have had the honor of working with a great bunch of colleagues. I turned 66 last October, and I simply feel it is time for a younger person to come in and tackle the challenges that I did not have time to address,” said Ruth.

Ruth’s accomplishments during his tenure at ECI REC are many, including the creation of a positive and productive work environment. “I have tried to create an atmosphere in which people enjoy coming to work and believe that they are making a significant contribution to the organization, the members, and the communities that they live in,” said Ruth. “I find that when you tell people what you

expect of them, give them the tools and training they need, and point them in a specific direction, they will give you 110%.”

Ruth also oversaw significant investment in the Cooperative’s distribution system that brings electricity to homes, farms, and businesses. By the end of 2015, ECI REC will have rebuilt over 25% of its overhead poles and wires and will have increased the capacity of almost 50% of its substations. A portion of those improvements were done with federal grant money, and so they did not affect members’ rates. “Our reliability in 2012 was the best it has been in years,” said Ruth. “Hopefully, that is because of the improvements that we have made.”

Another accomplishment under Ruth’s guidance has been an increased focus on technology and communications. “Given my age, I have trouble keeping up with this digital era that we have entered. However, when technology improves service to our members or increases the productivity of our employees, I have embraced it,” said Ruth.

“Perhaps I have put my greatest efforts in communications,” continued Ruth. “It is not only important that we communicate with our members, but also that we communi-

cate with public officials and the community at large. What happens in Washington, D.C., and Des Moines can affect our ability to deliver reliable, affordable electricity. People need to know who we are, what our values are, and what we are trying to accomplish.”

When asked what he will do in retirement, Ruth responded, “I want to slow down and enjoy life. I want to spend more time with family and friends, and travel and read more.

“I will miss working at ECI REC,” Ruth continued. “Hopefully, I think I have made lasting improvements to the organization and am leaving it in better shape than I found it. I take great satisfaction in that.”

The Board of Directors has decided to conduct a national search for Ruth’s successor. CEO Ruth was hired after a national search, and the Board believes this resulted in a very successful hire. Another CEO who brings the best to the table is what the Board owes to our members. The Board has already determined what skills and abilities it wants in East-Central Iowa REC’s next CEO. An announcement was published in late November, resumes will be reviewed by the board in March, and interviews will take place in April. A new CEO is scheduled to be selected before June.