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Date: May 19, 2010

To: Telephone Cooperative Managers

From: Jim Rabbitt

Subject: **Electronic Voting**

Governor James Doyle signed changes in cooperative law, Chapter 185, to allow electronic voting by cooperative members on May 18, 2010. The bill, sought by cooperatives, adds another option for members to vote in addition to in-person balloting at the annual meetings.

The intent of the new law is to increase member participation in director elections using available technology that most members use every day, and save money that cooperatives currently spend sending and receiving traditional mail ballots. It does not remove the prohibition against proxy voting and does not affect absentee voting if your cooperative allows it.

To use electronic voting each cooperative must:

- Change its bylaws to approve electronic voting. These changes must be approved by members at the annual meeting.
- Have a means to authenticate that the person casting the vote electronically is a member otherwise entitled to vote. This may require development of user identification and personal identification numbers (PIN) and a secure space on cooperative websites.
- Assure that all votes whether in-person, absentee, if so allowed, and electronic have the same effect.

Given what the telephone cooperatives learned about generation X, Y and beyond about communication we may want to give this serious consideration as a way to encourage participation in the governance of our cooperatives.

Thanks