

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



75th Anniversary

Member Memories

The number of Menard Electric members who remember the day the lights came on is getting fewer and fewer. We want to preserve

these memories and feature them as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary. If you remember when electricity came to your home, send us your story!

When power came to the farm

By Norman Cloyes

I grew up on a family farm five miles from Beardstown. I graduated from high school in 1947, but throughout my school years, we had kerosene lamps and earlier the house had carbide lighting.

The "Icebox" was just that, with the iceman coming each week to deliver a 100-pound block of ice. Mom raised chickens and had eggs to sell. We also milked each day and separated the cream from the milk. She sold the cream in town and dad fed the skim milk to the animals. We had no refrigeration to keep these products for very long at the farm.

The washer was gasoline powered with a crank to start it. If the boys could not get it started for her, we had to go to the field to get dad before the washing could begin.

We butchered each fall using a big kettle in the back yard and mom canned the meat on the old wood stove in the kitchen or dad cured it in the smokehouse. The garden provided enough food for mom to can to last all winter.

We gathered around the battery-operated radio. Dad listened to news and the boys looked forward to hearing "The

Lone Ranger" and "The Green Hornet." Since I worked in the fields along side of dad, I do not know whether mom ever got a turn at the radio.

In the early 1950s, electricity was scheduled to arrive at the farm. Dad had the house wired with light fixtures and outlets installed. One morning a man from the REA (Rural Electrification Association) came to the house and told mom the power was turned on and in the house.

When dad came in for dinner (at noon), she announced that they were going to town that very day. Purchasing an electric refrigerator and stove was at the top of her list. Off they went and by suppertime, we had both in our new electrified house.

Shortly afterward, we got the first TV in the neighborhood. On Saturday night, family and friends gather around the small black and white screen to watch wrestling – one of the few choices in those early days.

Electricity was a boon to a farmhouse and a farm community. We still own the farmhouse and have the wood stove in the kitchen as a reminder of earlier times, but we no longer have the challenges that were part of an earlier era.

My story

By Fred Markert

We moved from Cass County to the home place north of Tallula in March 1948. Later that year Menard Electric constructed a line from the road past our farm to our home, a little more than a quarter mile from the main road.

That summer dad traded for a new disk and new International Harvester freezer from Howard Mitchell in Petersburg. Dad's cousin started wiring our house using armored cable and 60 amp service, finishing in October.

When I came home from school one evening in late October we had lights brighter than we ever had at home that I could remember! The next year dad bought a new International Harvester refrigerator as a surprise for Mother's Day.

We soon had an electric stove and wringer washing machine for the home and an electric drill and welder for the farm. What a relief to retire the cordless drill!

We pumped water by hand for livestock and carried it up a hill for home use until around 1952 when a new well was dug and pump and pipe were installed. The digging and trenching were done by hand. You can see how electric power can soon make you lazy!!

By the way, that refrigerator was in use until Sept. 1, 1983, when it still cooled but the thermostat quit working.

Co-op Connections Card Program updates

Visit www.connections.coop for more information and to sign up for these programs.

Prescriptions

Our members saved over 46 percent, or \$13,000, on prescriptions in 2011 and have saved \$29,000 since they first received Co-op Connections cards in Oct. 2009. Throughout Illinois, co-op members have saved over \$1 million on prescriptions!

If you haven't done so already, check with your pharmacy to see if they participate in the program. This is not insurance and cannot be combined with insurance benefits.



Phone app

A free app allows you to download a virtual card (with prescription information) and save your favorite discount deals. More info is available on the website.



My VIP Savings

Click on My VIP Savings for a new program allowing members to earn cash back on online purchases from more than 1,000 merchants including Wal-Mart, Best Buy and Apple. You'll have to establish an account and enter websites through the VIP Savings link to earn rebates (varying with each retailer). You can request a check once you've earned \$25 in cash back rewards.



Timeline of Electricity and Menard Electric



1879 Edison made public 1st Incandescent light bulb

1913

Electric refrigerator invented



May 11, 1935

Rural Electrification Administration established by Franklin D. Roosevelt

June 13, 1936

Menard Electric unofficially organized



1939 Televisions appear on market

1941

U.S. enters WWII. Line construction slows due to shortages of personnel, copper wire & other equipment

1945/46

Growth of co-ops takes off again

1879



1901 Radios invented



1919 Pop up toaster invented

September 12, 1936

REA loan approved to build lines. Bylaws adopted.

August 7, 1937

First lines energized

October 9, 1937

First annual meeting

1942

Moved to downtown Petersburg office

Healthy Savings Discount Program

Discounts on chiropractic, dental and vision care as well as lab work and hearing aids are now offered. Discounts are provided at the time of service and range from 10-40% on dental and 10-60% on vision care.

A new card is required to take advantage of this service; you can print one off at the www.connections.coop website using the information on your current card or call our office and we'll send you a new one. Find details and listings of local providers online as well.

The Co-op Connections Card is available free to all Menard Electric members. If you have a great saving experience let us know about it--e-mail info@menard.com or call the office and ask for Michelle.



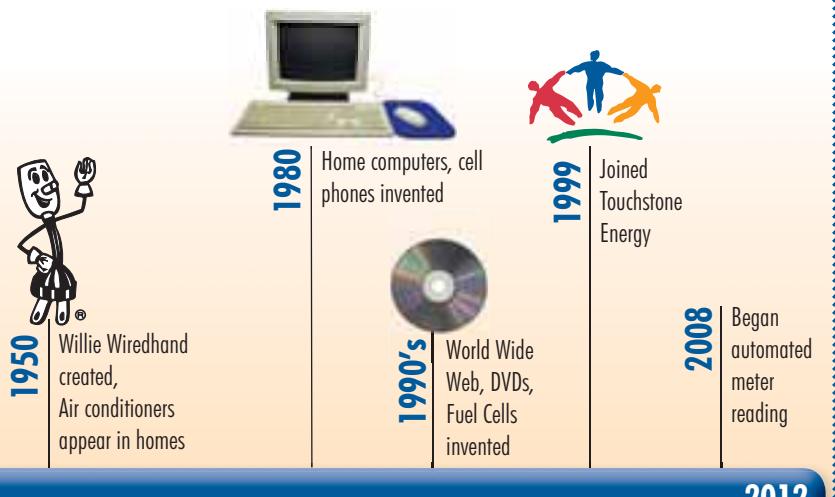
Want to be a director?

Nominating Petitions due soon for Board of Directors

Petitions are available now at the office for directors in districts 2, 5 and 9 on the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative. Petitions must be signed by no less than 10 members and must be submitted to the co-op's office by 4:30 p.m. on April 18. One co-op member will be elected from each district to serve a three-year term. Incumbent Directors Gary Martin, District 2; Jay Frye, District 5; and Donald (Chuck) McMillan, District 9 will seek re-election.

A good director must:

- Be a member in good standing.
- Be accessible to members within the district.
- Spend adequate time on board work and attend most regular board meetings held the fourth Tuesday evening of each month.
- Acquire knowledge about the electric utility including finances, management and public issues. (It takes time to learn the system and for that reason our directors have made long-term commitments to serving the co-op.)
- Let management manage. Directors do not oversee day-to-day operations; they establish policies and point employees in the direction the co-op should follow.



Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at www.menard.com or contact our office.

Present were Directors Gary Martin, Jerry Brooks, Michael Carls, Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Steven Worner; also Manager Lynn Frasco, Attorney Charles Smith and Mgr of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton.

Adopted 2012 budget.

Frasco and Hinton updated Board on refinancing of remaining RUS 5% loans totaling \$6,983,366.74 to a loan with CoBank at fixed rate of 4.55% per annum, saving approx. \$413,057.00 over life of loan.

Frasco discussed ICG billing dispute

with Prairie Power Inc. over construction costs of 138KV line serving ICG. PPI underestimated costs. Frasco has recommended meeting to representatives from ICG, Menard and PPI.

Reviewed updated Menard construction cost fee schedule effective 1/1/12.

Discussed workman's compensation results year to date and 2012 program revisions. Reviewed co-op Performance Survey, co-op had another zero claim year, and discussed effects on premium cost.

Approved adjustment to inventory as a result of physical inventory, resulting in net gain of \$588.66.

Adopted Frasco's proposed changes to 2012 Sick Leave Bonus Program.

Adopted Policies Section I, II and III as revised.

Year to date margins were \$948,322 compared to \$1,071,328 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of Nov. was 34.29% and the number of members served was 10,543 compared to 10,522 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of Nov. was \$36,130,282 compared to \$35,487,935 last year. The co-op continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

**WIN
\$75!**

Trivia

Every few months we'll have a trivia question concerning our history (you'll have read the answer in past issues). Please mail us your answer by the 28th. We'll put all the correct answers in a drawing each month and one lucky winner will receive a \$75 credit on their next month's bill.

Fill in the blanks.

How many additional linemen came to help with the 1978 ice storm?

Answer _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



Congratulations!

John Schmuck of Virginia is the winner of the January Trivia Question. His entry was drawn from all submitted. Answer: The cooperative first energized its lines in 1937. The first lines stretched approximately 116 miles. Today we have approximately 2,580 miles of line. John will receive a \$75 bill credit this month. Thanks to all who entered.

Monthly Safety Tip

Detector date

It's Daylight Savings Time on March 11. Use this date as a reminder to replace smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries and review a family fire escape plan.

Make One Change

We encourage you to make one small, no-cost change each month to save energy. To find out how all the little changes add up visit www.togetherwesave.coop.

Insulation investigation

As Spring weather arrives it's a good time to investigate your attic's insulation, before it gets too hot. Make sure your insulation hasn't been moved about or damaged, leaving unprotected areas.

Mark the Date

75th Annual Meeting
Saturday, June 2, 2012

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