

Menard Electric Cooperative's

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



www.menard.com

Want to be a director?

Nominating petitions due April 20

Petitions are available now at the office for directors in Districts 1, 4 and 6 on the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative. Petitions must be signed by no less than 10 members and must be received in the co-op's office by 4:30 p.m. on April 20, 2016.

One co-op member will be elected from each district to serve a three-year term. Seeking re-election are incumbent directors Roy Seaney of Tallula, District 1; and Steve Worner of Manito, District 6.

Current District 4 Director Jerry Brooks will retire from the Board after 21 years of dedicated service.

Interested in becoming a director? Your primary residence must be within District 1, 4 or 6. See a map at www.menard.com or call the office for details.

Below is a brief synopsis of duties. Additional details can be found in our bylaws; please notify us if you need a copy.

A director must:

- Establish policies and employ a General Manager who is responsible for all operational details of the co-op.
- Receive electric service from the co-op at their primary residence within the district, be a member in good standing, and not have conflicting business interests. (They pay the same rates for service and follow the same policies as all other members.)
- Be able to spend adequate time on board work and attend most regular board meetings held the fourth Tuesday evening of each month for several hours at the co-op office.
- Attend our annual meeting each year and other special board meetings, committee meetings, director's conferences and educational seminars as necessary.
- Be accessible to members within the district and willing to represent all members of the co-op.
- 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.)



District 1
Roy Seaney

Tallula,
Salisbury,
Pleasant Plains,
Berlin

**Open
Seat**

District 4
Open Seat

Chandlerville,
Oakford,
Greenville,
Petersburg



District 6
Steven Worner

Manito,
Forest City,
Topeka,
San Jose

Mark Your Calendar

**Plan now to attend the Menard Electric Cooperative
Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 4th.**

2016 Right-of-way clearing

We strive to provide safe, reliable service for all of our members. One of the ways we do that is to control vegetation within the right-of-way along our 2,600 miles of distribution line. Right-of-way is the strip of land underneath and around power lines that we have the right and responsibility to maintain and clear.

To keep our right-of-way clear we partner with Spoon River Electric Cooperative's forestry department and employ multiple contract crews in an attempt to trim each area of our service territory once every five to six years.

Throughout 2016 and into 2017, crews will perform cutting and mowing on circuits from the Lanesville, Barclay, Sherman, Virginia and Topeka substations (shown on the map in blue).

Menard directs all tree crews to trim to the American National Standards Institute requirements to assure continued health of trees. Some members may not view these standards as the most visually appealing, but they are healthier for the tree in the long term and safer for all members and employees.

Our goal is to clear single-phase lines at least 15 feet and three-phase lines at least 25 feet on either side of the lines. Smaller trees and brush under lines are removed to allow access, and eliminate future growing problems.

Contract crews will also selectively apply herbicide to brush as needed in areas that were trimmed in 2015 in order to control problematic regrowth. These areas include Petersburg, Middletown, Mason City and Barclay

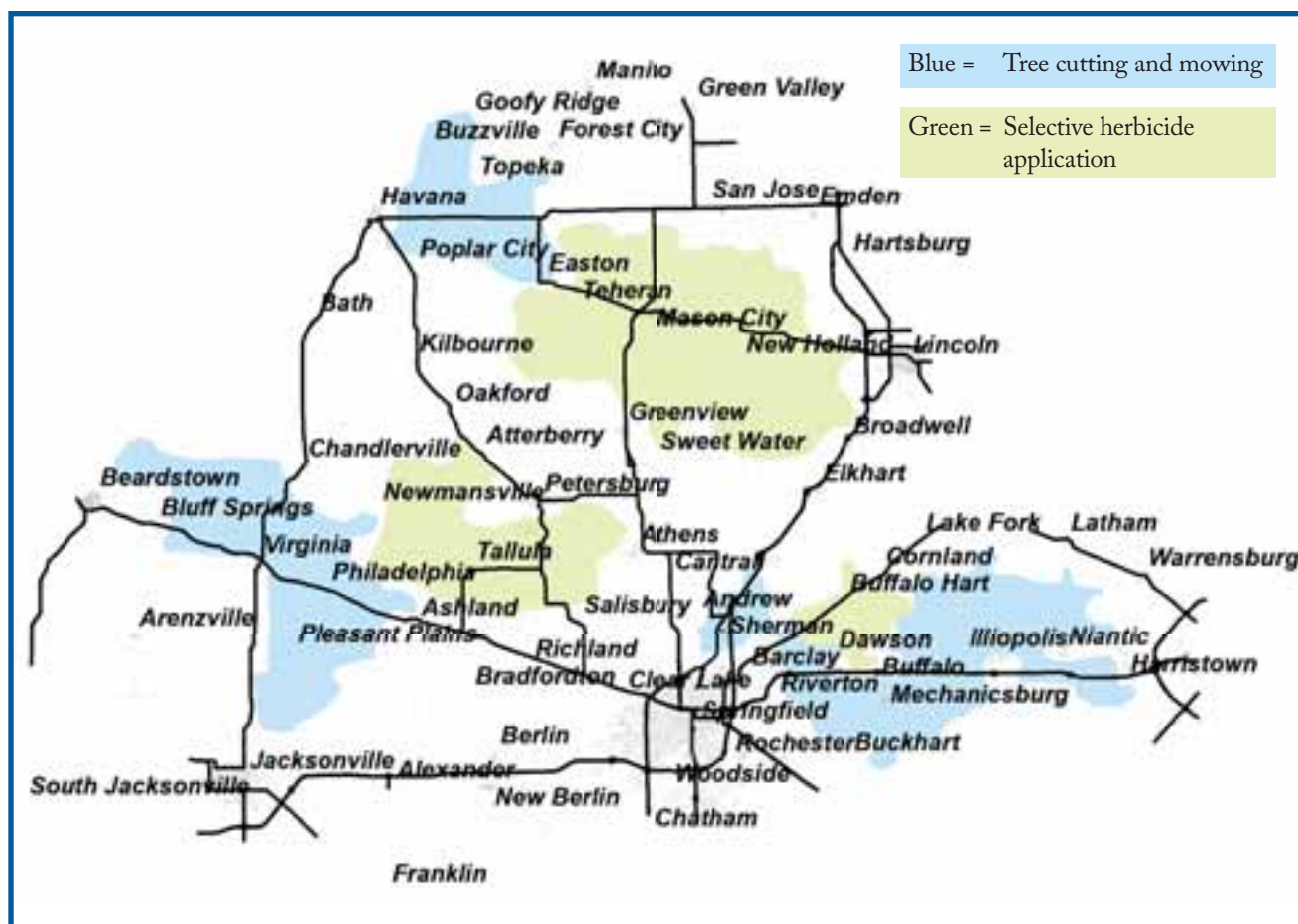
substations (shown on the map in green).

This selective herbicide application is the most effective and cost effective method of right-of-way maintenance; and allows us to extend our trimming cycle, as well as reduce the overall amount of brush that needs cleared during the normal trimming cycle.

For more information about our right-of-way clearing programs see our website at www.menard.com or call our office.

Why we trim trees

Trees are a beautiful and important part of our area's landscape. Unfortunately, sometimes trees grow too close to our right-of-way, causing safety and reliability issues.



Safety

The moisture within a tree's limbs provides electricity a perfect path to cause electrocution. Tree limbs too close to our lines are dangerous for our linemen working on power lines, members working in or near trees, and children climbing trees near lines. Even if branches seem far enough away, additional weight, winds or broken limbs can cause them to unexpectedly contact lines. Safety is one of the major reasons for our tree trimming program. As a reminder, always be aware of the location of power lines when you are working outdoors, and teach your children about the dangers of lines.

Reliability

Tree limbs coming into contact with our lines are a leading cause of outages

during any weather, and are often the primary cause of outages during storms producing high winds, snow or ice.

Trees are a primary cause of outages caused by weather events. For example, high winds cause branches to sway into lines or break and fall onto lines. Snow and ice accumulation weighs branches down until they come in contact with lines. Falling trees can cause poles and lines to break. During major storms trees can cause lengthy outages and costly damage to our system.

Branches could also suddenly come into contact with lines on mild days because of light winds, small animals, or age causing them to break or fall. This can cause outages or blinks (a momentary loss of power less than a second, or what causes your clocks to "blink" 12:00). A branch swaying into a

line is a common cause of a blink. Once it occurs three times in a short time period, the power will stay off until a lineman can investigate and remove the problem tree branch. Finding this problematic branch can be very difficult, time consuming, and cause extended outages for our members.

Trimming or removing trees too close to our power lines is the best way we have of preventing these outages and blinks. This will result in more reliable electric service as well as lower restoration times and repair costs during severe weather events.

Wondering how far away to plant a new tree? Take the diameter of the tree when full grown (available on its care tag or from the nursery), divide that number in half and add 15. Then plant your tree that many feet away. You want the outer edge of the branches (not the trunk) to be at least 15 feet from our lines when it's full grown.



Board Meeting Report

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

Present were Manager Eric Hobbie, Attorney Charles Smith and Directors Jay Frye, Jerry Brooks, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate and Steven Worner.

2016 Financial Budget was discussed and approved.

Hobbie discussed status of delinquent State of Illinois accounts. He advised an Illinois co-op had cut off service to certain State of Illinois services in its territory.

He advised Dalton Whitley was

hired as Operations Manager and the Area Serviceman position was posted.

Hobbie discussed and Board approved the yearly Physical Inventory completion and an adjustment of negative \$2,463.07.

Hobbie presented the financial report for the month of November. Year to date margins were \$2,241,785 compared to \$2,148,706 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of November was 38.96% and the number of member accounts served was 10,827 compared to 10,782 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of November was

\$43,943,760 compared to \$42,831,385 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Martin reviewed the Prairie Power, Inc. November energy charge and Hobbie discussed the technology committee.

Hobbie reviewed 2015 Sick Leave Bonus Plan summary. Board approved the Sick Leave Bonus Plan for 2016. Board reviewed and approved revisions to Policy Section VII Vacation for non-union employees.



Office Closed
Good Friday • March 25

Tip of the Month

Call before you dig



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Because the depth of utility lines can vary for many reasons, notify JULIE before you do any digging, even just a few inches. Striking a line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and outages. But it is not just a good safety tip, it's the law in Illinois to notify JULIE before any digging project! So plan ahead and call 8-1-1 or visit www.illinois1call.com.