

Menard Electric Cooperative's

# Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Member Spotlight

## Precision Tank

The stainless steel tanks here are nurse tanks, used on trucks. The steel comes in large sheets and is rolled and then welded together.

Precision Tank, headquartered just on the outskirts of Virginia, IL, is a member of Menard Electric. We'd wager to say it would be hard to find any member of ours who hasn't seen a tank like the ones built by Precision Tank when traveling around this area.

President/CEO David Hemming says the company began quite simply with a conversation between founders Glen Brandt, Larue Jacobs and Tom Sutton that turned to the trouble they were having finding good quality tanks for their businesses. An abandoned building once used as an oil pumping station was for sale in Virginia and seemed particularly suited to building tanks because of its high ceilings. It didn't take long for a simple conversation to turn into a business that today produces mild steel, stainless steel and fiberglass tanks along with fertilizer applicators

and parts supplies.

The Virginia location is still the home office, and mild steel and stainless steel tanks are both built in that once abandoned building. It's this location that Menard Electric provides electricity to power a 75 horsepower compressor for the sandblaster, 15 welding machines, and other equipment.

The company seems firmly planted by its roots in Virginia as it continues to change and grow to meet its customer's needs and stay competitive. For instance, David says the company noticed mild steel didn't perform as well in some areas as in others. They discovered an element in the fertilizers used in those areas was damaging to the steel.

The solution was to build a factory in Ligonier, Indiana that could manufacture fiberglass tanks as well as

stainless. You can see the process of building the fiberglass tanks on a video on the website [www.precisiontank.com/News](http://www.precisiontank.com/News). The fiberglass looks like strings being wound. "The finished tanks look a lot like our mild steel—the untrained eye won't notice a difference," David says.

The company's 50 employees build about 1,000 tanks a year. A standard mild steel tank takes about three days to build. Many of the company's tanks are used for agricultural purposes such as storing, transporting and applying liquid fertilizers and chemicals.

They also build nurse tanks (tanks on trucks) for rural fire departments. "You don't have fire hydrants in rural areas so the fire fighters need to get the water from the station to the fire," says David. It's a small part of their business but one certainly important to rural areas.

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All of Precision Steel's tanks are built in a shop and transported to the customer's site; delivery is coordinated with the customer to have a crane available to set up the larger tanks, which can be over 12 foot in diameter, 36 feet tall and hold more than 30,000 gallons.

The company also has diversified with a location in Athens, IL that builds wet and dry fertilizer applicators and houses the parts division.

High freight costs were key in the decision to expand again with a plant currently under construction in Humboldt, IA. It will open this summer and mirror the Indiana plant to build fiberglass and stainless steel tanks.

"Geographically we are spacing our plants out to be closer to our customers. It's tougher to compete with high freight costs. It can cost \$2,000 to ship a tank. We're going with a hub and

*Precision Tank had a bit more inventory than usual when this picture was taken; the unusual winter weather caused many companies to ask that deliveries be delayed. This mild steel tank is headed to an FS plant*

spoke concept; we want to be closer," says David. He says the company's primary market is the "corn belt" states, but adds that tanks have been sold coast to coast—from California to Maryland to Georgia and Texas and in between.

We wish Precision Tank the best on



*David Hemming is proud of the company's newest equipment, a water jet machine that allows the company to cut more of its own parts, like the steel pieces shown on the ground on the left.*

its new plant in Iowa and its efforts to continue to grow to meet the needs of this agricultural area. Check out their website at [www.precisiontank.com](http://www.precisiontank.com) for more information or call 217-452-7228.

## Location, location, location Plant trees in the best spots

"It's all about location" is something you hear in conjunction with real estate, but the same phrase applies to trees. Planting the right tree in the right place can give you a beautiful, shade filled area that could even help reduce your energy bills.

Consult your local arborist, tree nursery or U of I Extension office expert for assistance in finding the right tree for the right place in your yard. And always call JULIE at 8-1-1 at least 48 hours before digging.

### Plant for energy savings

The U.S. Department of Energy says planting trees in the right place can save you up to 25 percent of your

heating and cooling costs by blocking summer sun and winter winds.

They suggest homeowners plant deciduous trees with high leaves and branches on the south side of the home, and those with low branches on the west side, to shade your roof during the hottest part of the day and block the afternoon summer sun. And they note that shading your air conditioner may improve its efficiency as well.

Evergreens and shrubs placed on the north/northwest sides of the home make a winter windbreak, and shrubs and vines near the home can help to insulate it. Evergreens on the south side could block the sun from warming your home in the winter.

### Plant safely

Don't forget to carefully consider a tree's size when it's fully grown. Don't plant large trees near overhead power lines. Branches coming into contact with lines cause blinks and power outages. We have a tree trimming plan in place to reduce service disruptions from trees. Planting a tree too close to our lines could mean we'll have to trim it in the future. See our website for more information and contact us if you have a tree that needs to be trimmed.

Also consider how wide the roots of the tree may grow near underground utilities.

## Discover how you use electricity

Check out our new application to view your monthly, daily or even hourly usage online through our bill pay portal. Readings are updated daily so you can check your usage while any lifestyle or weather changes are still fresh in your mind.

Sign up for online bill pay by clicking on the link on our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com). You'll need your account number, which can be found on a recent bill, an email address and the social security number associated with the account.

Once you're signed in click on Billing History, then select the blue SmartHub link on the right hand side of the screen next to the month you want to see. Once you're in the SmartHub program, you can click on the days of the month to see more details.

If you have trouble creating an online bill payment account or navigating SmartHub let us know at 800-872-1203.



**Menard Electric Cooperative**

**We are on Facebook**

Menard Electric Cooperative is excited to begin utilizing a new Facebook Page as a tool to interact with you, our members. Visit [www.facebook.com/MenardElectric](http://www.facebook.com/MenardElectric) or find the link on our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) to connect with us.

We hope you'll appreciate the new opportunities this Page gives us. We plan to use it to post timely energy efficiency and electrical safety information as well as news about your cooperative.

We are also looking forward to being able to provide updates during outages that affect a large number of our members. However, we want to caution members not to use Facebook as a way to report outages. Calling outages into the office ensures our operations department quickly receives the information it needs.



## New employee

Menard Electric Cooperative welcomed Nick Schachtsiek in February as a Lineman. Nick comes from Missouri where he most recently worked with the City of Columbia as a Lineman. Nick states he's always wanted to work for an electric cooperative and is looking forward to moving to this area.



14300 State Hwy 97  
P.O. Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203  
217-632-7746  
[www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com)

**Our office will be closed  
Good Friday, April 18.**

## Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or contact our office.

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

Frasco advised that 2014 RUS Work Plan must be completed.

Frasco advised co-op had 40 new irrigation system requests, 15 of which were diesel conversions.

Reviewed LIHEAP Assistance Program.

Frasco advised Lineman Nicholas

Schachtsiek was hired.

Discussed letters to members of changes in rates 20, 21, 30, 31 and 70.

Reviewed summary of loan portfolio rates and advised final FFB Advance made.

Approved L.E. Myers 2014 Line Construction, Contractor Labor and Equipment Contract; they submitted the lowest bid.

Resolution approved to retire capital credits in 2014 to include the balance of 1986, all of 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and a portion of 1991 plus estates for a total not to exceed \$450,000.

Board Members asked to complete 2014 Conflict of Interest Certification and Disclosure Form.

December year to date margins were \$1,951,114 compared to \$1,209,188 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of December was 35.09% and the number of members served was 10,714 compared to 10,548 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of December was \$41,275,863 compared to \$38,642,879 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

## Spring planting

### Farmers should keep electrical hazards in mind

Planting season, with its long hours in the fields, is on its way. SafeElectricity urges farmers to take time now to notice power lines.

They recommend a 10-foot minimum distance between equipment and lines—that's below, to the side and above lines. Keep in mind field cultivators, sprayer booms and even tractor antennas can be

higher than 10 feet.

Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near lines. Inspect entrances to fields to ensure there is adequate clearance for

equipment. If there isn't, contact us. Always use a spotter to help verify clearance from a better vantage point. Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for more safe planting tips.

## Tip of the Month



Starting your landscape projects? You never know what underground utilities might be running through your yard. April is Safe Digging Month and we remind you it is a state law to call JULIE before you dig at 8-1-1, or visit [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com) to submit a request and get more information. Call by Wednesday afternoon if you are planning a weekend project.