

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



inside

- HomeE Program 16a-16b
- Youth Day..... 16c
- Home improvement safety 16d
- Safety tips 16e
- Summer cooking tips 16f
- Budget billing..... 16g
- Board Report..... 16h

Money available for energy efficiency improvements



We're always encouraging our members to make energy efficient improvements. And even though these improvements save money in the long run, you still have to pay up front to make them. Now, through the HomeE Program, we can help you with those up-front costs.

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives has obtained a grant from the Illinois State Energy Plan, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which will fund the HomeE program.

More information on page 16b.

HomeE Rebates

\$1,500	Geothermal heat pumps closed loop (14.1 EER or 3.3 COP)
\$1,500	Geothermal heat pumps open loop (16.2 EER or 3.6 COP)
\$1,000	Air source heat pumps (16 SEER)
\$350	Natural Gas or LP furnace (95% efficiency)
\$350	Central air conditioner (16 SEER)
\$250	Heat pump water heater (2.0 Energy Factor)
max of \$500	30% of cost of insulation and weatherization

Maximum rebate per household is \$1,500. Rebates began May 10, 2010, and will continue until the money is exhausted.

73rd Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 5
 PORTA High School, Petersburg
 Visit www.menard.com for more details

Office Closings

Independence Day.....July 5

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

1-800-872-1203
 217-632-7746
www.menard.com



1. Contact our office to set up a personal Energy Assessment of your home. This program is conducted on a first come, first served basis. We'll verify your eligibility and take your name and contact information and the date of your request.
2. We'll schedule a time to meet with someone at your home to perform the assessment and tell you where you can save money with energy efficiency improvements. The cost of the assessment is \$25. We'll conduct these Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. as scheduling allows.
3. Based on the recommendations we make, you decide what improvements you wish to make. You'll submit a proposal form to us and we'll send you a signed copy letting you know that we are setting aside funds for you for 60 days.
4. Once you have completed your project, you'll send us a completion form and receipt. We'll verify the work and send you a rebate check.

Who's Eligible?

You must be a member of Menard Electric and live in the home as your primary residence. You must not qualify for the Low Income Community Weatherization Program through your local Community Action Agency. The Weatherization Program provides more assistance than this program – if you think you may qualify contact your local Community Action Center. The income guidelines for the Weatherization program are based on family size and annual income as follows: 1-\$21,660; 2-\$29,140; 3-\$36,620; 4-\$44,100; 5-\$51,580; 6-\$59,060; 7-\$66,540; 8-\$74,020 (over 8 add \$7,480 per person). Visit www.capcil.org for more information.



Add It Up!

Combine your rebates to save big

Don't forget about the tax credits and additional rebates you can earn for some of the same energy efficiency measures mentioned in the Home program.

Tax Credit:

You could be eligible for a federal tax credit of 30 percent of your project, up to \$1,500. Tax credits include geothermal, air source heat pumps, central air conditioners,

insulation and more. Ask your tax preparer for the specifics of this program.

Menard Electric Cooperative Rebates:

\$600	Geothermal heat pump
\$200	Air source heat pump
\$75-\$100	Electric water heater

Call and ask us about the specifics of each rebate or visit www.menard.com.

Youth Day in Springfield

Menard Electric Cooperative sponsored 14 students on the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative's Youth Day in Springfield on April 21. Students met with Senators John Sullivan and Larry Bomke and Representatives Richard Myers, Rich Brauer and Jil Tracy on the floor of the House of Representatives Chamber at the State Capitol.

The students had an opportunity to view

state government in action on probably one of the busiest days this year at the state capitol. More than 200 interest groups and an estimated 15,000 people converged on the statehouse to ask lawmakers to approve a tax hike in order to avoid major budget cuts. The students also heard from State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas during their lunch break and visited the Old State Capitol.



Front row from left are: Haley Adams-Huynh, Haley Pfaffe, Hannah Grebner, Torrie O'Connor, Kari Allen, Courtney Schroeder and Hailey Kaufman. Back row from left are: Brandon Clark, Hannah Allen, Sen. John Sullivan, Rita Nickell, Grant Leinberger, Jonathan Kraft, Nathan Ring, Drew Hoffman, Rep. Richard Myers and Menard Electric chaperone Michelle McNeal.



Rich Brauer took time to speak with the students and answer questions. He asked some hard questions of his own, inquiring of the students where they plan to attend college, what they will study, how much it will cost, who will pay for it, and how much they expect to earn after college in their chosen profession. None of the students could answer all of his questions. He also told students why it was important for them to be informed on and involved in politics and how they could do so. He also talked about state spending and schools and other current events that directly impacted the students.



Youth tour winners selected

Menard Electric Cooperative will sponsor Grant Leinberger of Petersburg and Nathan Ring of Virginia on the 51st Annual Youth to Washington Tour this June. Hannah Allen of Mt. Pulaski and Haley Pfaffe of Ashland were chosen as first and second alternates.

Nathan and Grant were chosen for the trip from among the 14 students who participated in the Youth Day.

They will tour Washington, D.C. for one week with 65 other Illinois students as well as students from across the country.

Nathan and Grant will visit the U.S. Capitol Building and meet Illinois Congressmen, Senators and their staff. They will also visit places that include Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, Iwo Jima, the Holocaust and Smithsonian Museums, the Saudi Arabia Embassy, the Washington Monument and the Memorials of Lincoln, Jefferson, Korean War, Vietnam War, World War II, U.S. Marine Corps and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.



Nathan Ring



Grant Leinberger

Home improvement safety

Summer is a great time to do some home improvements. Be sure to check out the information on page 16b if you're doing any energy efficiency improvements. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind for many home improvement jobs.

- Use only extension cords that are rated for outdoor use when working outside. Make sure outlets have ground fault protection. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) cord if your outdoor outlets don't have GFCIs.
- Look up and around you. Be sure to lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible. Remember, aluminum ladders, as well as wooden ladders, can conduct electricity. Fiberglass provides better protection against electric shock.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.
- Use heavy-duty, three-prong extension cords for tools with three-prong plugs. Never remove or bend back the third prong on extension cords. It is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of electrocution or shock.
- If it's raining or the ground is wet, don't use electric power yard tools. Never use electrical appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you're wet or standing in water. Keep electric equipment at least 10 feet from wet areas.
- Make certain home electrical systems and wiring are adequate to support increased electric demands of new electric appliances, home additions or remodeling projects. Home electrical systems age and deteriorate over time, which means they're less efficient and costly than newer means available today. Replace worn and outdated wiring, and add enough outlets for appliances and electronics. Safe Electricity strongly recommends this NOT be a do-it-yourself project.



Know what's below: Call before you dig

Whether it's a dreamed up deck addition or a landscaping masterpiece, summer weather is a great time for outdoor improvement plans to actually play out.

But if your planned projects include digging, like planting a tree or bringing in a backhoe for trench work, you'll have to wait a few more days so the job can be done safely. Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water, and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a summer project into a disaster.

To find out where utility lines run on your property, dial 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging. Your call will be routed to a local "one call" center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes, and cables with flags or marking paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

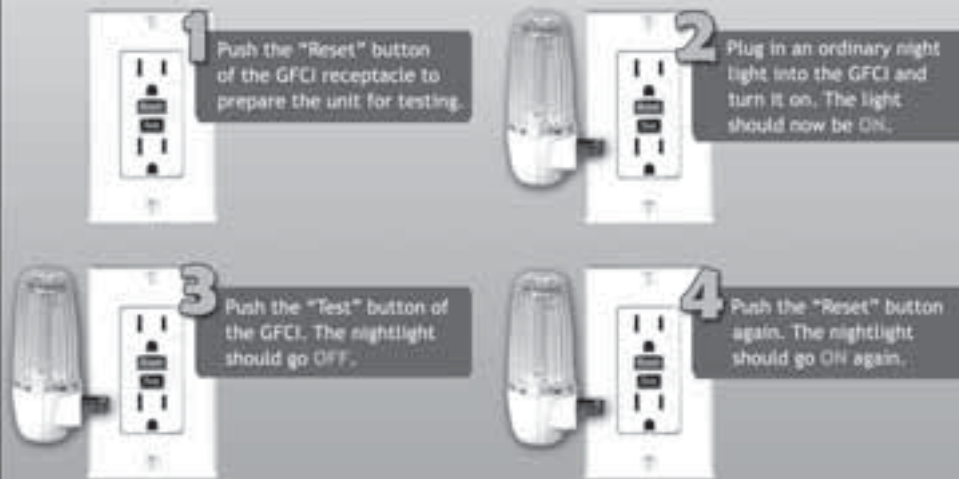
Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information about local services, visit www.call811.com.

Sources: Common Ground Alliance, SafeElectricity.org

How to test electrical outlets

Since the 1970s ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) have saved thousands of lives, helping cut the number of home electrocutions in half. The safety devices prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs from the amount returning. The safety devices should be used in any indoor or outdoor area where water may come into contact with electrical products.

GFCIs should be tested once a month to make sure they're working properly. To test a device, follow these four steps:



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

Pools and hot tub safety tips

Keep outlets near hot tubs, spas and pools covered and dry between uses. New outlet covers are available that offer weather protection while a plug is inserted into the outlet.

Keep cords and plugs away from hot tubs, spas, pools and puddles from wet bathers. Never handle electrical items, plugs or outlets when wet. If an electrical product falls into water, do not reach into the water for it. Make sure you are dry and not in contact with water or metal surfaces, and unplug it

immediately or shut off the circuit powering the item.

Outlets on or near hot tubs, spas and pools should be protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Many older swimming pools that pre-date the introduction of GFCIs in the 1970s should be upgraded to add GFCI protection for branch circuits supplying power to underwater pool lights operating above 15 volts, and outlets within 20 feet of the pool.

Summer laundry

During summer months when air conditioners work hardest, do energy-intensive tasks such as laundry and dish washing during off-peak energy demand hours, usually in the early morning or later evening.

Source: Alliance to Save Energy

How to Clean Up a Broken Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL)



- 1 Ventilate the room. 
- 2 Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag. 
- 3 Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder. 
- 4 Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands. 
- 5 Discard any clothing or bedding that comes in direct contact with broken glass or powder from inside the bulb. Washing tainted items may cause mercury fragments in clothing to contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage. 

To learn more about CFLs and why you should be careful when cleaning up a broken bulb, visit www.epa.gov.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation Institute, YASLY

10 hot tips for green summer cooking

By John Bruce

Keep your cool this summer when preparing meals. You can save money and reduce your carbon footprint with these 10 easy tips for going green when cooking summer meals (and year round, for that matter).

1. Cook outdoors when possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner. Try a solar cooker or oven. Solar cookers and ovens are by far the most energy-efficient cooking appliances. They require no fuel, reduce unwanted summer heat in your home by taking cooking outside and can accommodate any food a slow cooker can. Some solar ovens can reach 500 degrees. To learn more, visit www.solar-cooking.org.
2. Toaster ovens, convection ovens, and slow cookers get the job done with less energy than conventional stovetops or ovens, especially when preparing smaller meals.
3. Use as small a pan, as little water, and as little pre-heating time as possible.
4. Bake in glass or ceramic ovenware instead of metal. You can turn the temperature down by 25 degrees, and foods will cook in the same amount of time.
5. Avoid thawing food in the microwave. Thawing food in the fridge is far more energy efficient, contributes to the fridge's cooling, and is safer than thawing food on the countertop or in the sink.
6. Don't open the door and peek in the oven. Use the oven window instead!
7. Clean burner pans (the pans under the burners that catch grease) regularly. They'll more effectively reflect heat to the cookware. Dirty burner pans absorb heat and reduce efficiency.



8. Use flat-bottom cookware that rests evenly on the surface of electric coil burners, solid-disk elements, or radiant elements under smooth-top ceramic glass.
9. Use residual heat. Turn the stove or oven off before cooking is done to allow cooking to continue while reducing energy use. An electric burner element can be turned off two minutes before removing the cookware, since it remains hot. Ovens can be turned off 20 minutes before cooking's done.
10. Consider substituting one or more stovetop burners with an induction cooker. The typical efficiency of an induction cooker is 84 percent, gas stovetops are 40 percent efficient, ac-

ording the U.S. Department of Energy. What's more, induction cookers (which require magnetic cookware such as cast iron or enameled steel) produce as much heat as gas and are less costly to operate than a conventional electric burner. Visit www.theinductionsite.com to learn more.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Solar Cookers International, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

John Bruce is a freelance writer based in South Carolina. He writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Have a family budget?

Sign up now for our budget billing program



We know how much it can help some families to have a monthly budget for expenses. That's why we offer a budget billing program for your residential or farm electricity usage. Your bills will be the same each month for 11 months.

You'll never again be surprised by higher bills during heavy usage periods, like that cold snap we had early this year, or when your air conditioner runs on high to beat a summer heat wave.

Now's the time to sign up for the next budget billing cycle.

How it works

We'll calculate a monthly budget amount by estimating the average kilowatt-hour used in the previous 12 months. For new members, we'll use the best available data we have.

For 11 months, you'll be billed the same amount each month. Then, in the 12th month, you'll receive a bill containing either a credit (if you used less kilowatt-hours than expected during the previous 11 months) or an amount due (if you used more kilowatt-hours).

The next budget billing cycle begins with our July 7, 2010, billing and ends with our May 7, 2011, billing. The June 7, 2011, bill will contain the credit or amount due.

Give us a call if you're interested at 800-872-1203 and we can explain the program in greater detail and send you the necessary information.

Save Time and Money with Automatic Payment

Our Automatic Payment Plan allows you to have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 17th of each month. It's always on time and you don't need checks, envelopes or stamps! We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. This form must be received in the co-op office by the 20th of the month prior to the month you wish payments to begin.

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 17th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
March 23, 2010

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick and Roy H. Seaney. Director Steven L. Worner was absent. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of February 2010. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report. Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reviewed the status of irrigation construction for the year. He advised that the cooperative had received a letter from CFC advising that the Integrity Fund would not be requesting any contribution for the year because of a high fund balance.

He advised that he had hired a new Apprentice Lineman named Jason Beggs. He discussed correspondence received from Co-Bank, which included a patronage distribution of \$40,519.33 to the cooperative.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. He also discussed correspondence and a request from a member regarding an irrigation service. Manager Frasco also discussed with the Board the automatic vehicle location testing.

He advised that the cooperative would test the equipment one more month and would then proceed to buy the equipment, which would provide real time location of the Burton Tree Trimming Crews. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of February. Year to date margins were \$317,456 compared to \$81,503 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of February was 34.17% and the number of members served was 10,489 compared to 10,460 a year ago.

Net Utility Plant at the end of February was \$35,603,138 compared to \$34,879,182 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the

requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities and the AIEC Board Meeting. Director Carls reported on the Prairie Power, Inc. Board Meeting and reviewed the February energy charge.

Director Brooks reported on the status of plans for the June 5, 2010, Annual Meeting.

Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report. Manager Frasco reviewed the RUS Form 7 for 2009.

President Martin advised that next month's Board Meeting was scheduled for April 27, 2010.

President Martin discussed those who would be attending the Co-Bank Customer Meeting scheduled for March 29-30, 2010, at the Marriott Hotel in Normal, Illinois. He also discussed who would attend the NRECA Legislative Rally scheduled for May 2-5, 2010, in Washington, D.C. Director Frye advised that he would be attending the ICWCG Annual Meeting scheduled for April 8, 2010, at 11:00 a.m. at AIEC Headquarters.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.



Our Co-op Connections Card continues to save our members money every month on prescriptions. Just in April, members saved more than \$1,102, or more than 35 percent, on their prescription costs! Our members have saved a total of \$7,405.41 since the program began in October 2009.