

Menard Electric Cooperative's

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Youth Tour

Each Spring Menard Electric chooses two students from our Youth Day event to sponsor on the Youth to Washington Tour in Washington, D.C. This year's winners were Nicholas Shaul of Pleasant Plains and Abby Clayton of Sherman.

Nicholas and Abby were joined by Katie Worner of Manito, who attended as a Willie Wiredhand student.

The three were able to meet with Congressman Aaron Schock during their week in the nation's capitol in June.

The event has been sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, and is an introduction for rural youth to our democratic form of government and the cooperative business model.

Our three students were among 75 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined more than 1,600 young leaders from across the country

from 44 states. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, The U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and

Roosevelt, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum, and a number of other historical sites.

Nicholas, Abby and Katie all wrote thank-you notes to the cooperative board members saying they learned a lot, made some great friends, and citing the experience as unforgettable.



Pictured from left are Nicholas Shaul, Congressman Schock, Abby Clayton and Katie Worner.



Member Spotlight The Farm

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of The Farm, owned by Menard Electric members Gail and Eric Adamski. Located between Petersburg and Salisbury, The Farm is a garden, greenhouse, gift shop, wedding venue, and more.

"We were just drying some herbs and flowers in the beginning. We started small and opportunities came to us," says Gail. She began by selling items out of a few stalls in the horse barn; soon after, the horses were moved to a new barn to make room for a large shop that now sells herbal soaps and candles, unique garden giftware, pottery, jewelry, and much more.

Services have been added as people have requested them; hayrack rides after a church's youth group inquired about them, a wedding venue after a request from a customer, and a greenhouse when requests for plant starts came in.

The horses were moved again in 2011 as the new horse barn was converted and the upstairs became The Loft, a bed and breakfast. "The Loft is a guest house with its own kitchen—it has been popular with groups traveling through the state and especially with ladies traveling together," says Gail. "Last year we had seven ladies from France traveling to a quilt show down south that stayed at Bed and Breakfasts along the way. They were a lot of fun."

Dried flowers are still the "bread and butter" of The Farm. Gail harvests from the display garden, which is about the size of a football field. It is broken into many separate small areas with names such as 'ring around the roses', 'lover's garden', 'cook's garden', and 'checkerboard.' Visitors can spend time meandering through the garden and it has proven a popular place for family photos and events.

You'll find Gail at the shop most of the time; it's a labor of love and has been a family affair. "My husband is a builder and has built everything we've needed. And of course our children helped when they were home." She also says she has had wonderful employees. "Cheryl Pippin has been with me 16 years; she even moved down the road to be closer," says Gail.

"We didn't have a master plan - like everyone says you are supposed to have. We have a solid faith and we believe that God has blessed us with many open doors. It is not from our own expertise or knowledge that we've succeeded and we give Him all the credit."

Want to visit? The Farm is open Tues-Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. March 1



"We never want to get away from how we started--by making our own handmade creations," Gail says.

through mid December. They are located at 21658 Old Farm Avenue in Petersburg (off of Hwy 97 between Salisbury and Petersburg). You can learn more about what's offered at www.visit-thefarm.com, visit-thefarm.blogspot.com, or on Facebook at VisitTheFarm; phone is 217-632-2888. We've also posted more photos on www.facebook.com/MenardElectric.

Scholarship Winners

Two young men in the Petersburg area, both sons of Menard Electric members, are heading to Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) this month with scholarships they learned about in this magazine last fall. We are happy to have been a part of helping them achieve their goals.

Matthew Price is one of seven winners of a \$1,500 Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship.

Price competed for the scholarship with 276 other students from across the state.

Candidates were judged on grade-point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities and a short essay demonstrating their knowledge of energy cooperatives.

Levi Vogt was awarded the 2014 LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship. This \$1,500

scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school this fall conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with LLCC.

The scholarship was endowed by LaVern and Nola McEntire; LaVern served as a lineman for McDonough Power Electric Cooperative from 1949 until 1991.

You can find out more about these scholarship opportunities in this publication next fall and on our website at www.menard.com.



▲ *Levi Vogt*

Matthew Price ►



Employees Support Relay for Life



Early this spring several of our employees and their spouses formed a Relay for Life Team for the American Cancer Society. They named themselves: The MEC Walkers: Pulling the Plug on Cancer.

The event itself is a team walk around a track from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.; but a large part of the event is fundraising efforts that occur before. The MEC Walkers set their fundraising goal at \$1,000.

An employee lunch fundraiser was held and included a 50/50 drawing and a live auction of one giant steak. The turnout was amazing and our employees really stepped up to support the great cause! Outside donations came in as well throughout the spring and early summer.

All in all, The MEC Walkers raised \$4,506 dollars, far surpassing their goal!

Connect
to MEC

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at 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, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate and Steven Worner.

Frasco advised he had submitted to CoBank the grant application for work co-op crews completed at Menard County Fairgrounds.

He reported that all requested construction had been completed; the co-op had constructed 49 irrigation systems.

He reviewed results of the 2014 General Retirement of Capital Credits.

He reviewed a chart comparison of average revenue per kilowatt hour among Illinois cooperatives. The Board voted to obtain a bid for performing a cost of service study by the AIEC.

Frasco reviewed the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for 2014.

He discussed the status of the Action.coop letter; the co-op had a high number of responses.

Board approved two-year Audit Agreement with Dreyer and Kelso, C.P.A., at cost of \$11,400.00 per year.

Motion carried to hire NRECA to conduct a manager search.

Board approved AIEC's recommen-

dation to include the Illinois Public Utility Revenue Tax on security lights.

Goetsch gave policy committee report concerning policies on medical marijuana and concealed carry of firearms; policies will be voted on at the next meeting.

April year to date margins were \$1,175,001 compared to \$1,388,402 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of April was 35.61% and the number of members served was 10,727 compared to 10,620 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of April was \$41,813,521 compared to \$39,965,393 last year. The co-op continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Automatic Bill Payment Authorization

Send us this form to have your bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account each month. The amount deducted will be the total amount due on your bill. Deductions are taken the 17th of each month. You'll still receive a bill statement in the mail so you'll know exactly how much to deduct each month. This form must be received in our office by the 28th of the month for your next month's bill to be drafted. Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS # (last four digits) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Map Location #: _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account #: _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) 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 MEC in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that MEC 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 MEC account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____