

Menard Electric Cooperative's

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



www.menard.com

It's time to weatherize your home

Seal Air Leaks

Those small drafts you may not even notice can account for 5-30 percent of your heating costs! Energy Star recommends starting with air sealing to save money and says that sometimes leaks are at the root of high bills over an older heating or cooling system.

Keep this in mind: a 1/12-inch gap around a door is like having a 4x5' hole in your wall. Add that to smaller cracks around doors and windows and your home could be letting in a lot of cold air.

Check your doors and windows for weather stripping by shutting them on a piece a paper – if you can pull the paper out without tearing it air can probably get in.

Check all holes/penetrations for faucets, pipes, outlets and wiring. Look at exterior corners, siding and chimney junctures; the joint between foundation and exterior brick or siding; and cracks in mortar, foundation or siding for leaks. Use caulk to seal cracks that are 1/4 inch or smaller; spray foam might work better to fill gaps from ¼ to 3 inches.

Check outlets and wall switches on exterior walls. Buy gaskets to insulate behind the plates, caulk around the opening, and insert child safety plugs.

Seal gaps between the attic ceiling and the rooms below, including holes for wiring, lighting and the attic door. Look for dirty insulation—it's a sure sign that air is moving through the area.

Look for gaps and cracks where your cement or block foundation meets the home frame. EnergyStar suggests sealing the top and bottom

of cavities around rim joists and gaps between the basement ceiling and the floor above, like holes for wiring and water pipes.



Add Insulation

Walls, floors, ceilings and attics are prime areas of a home that need insulation in order to maximize energy efficiency. When your home was built, the builder likely installed the amount of insulation recommended (if any) at that time. Your insulation might be inadequate, especially if you have a home over 20 years old.

According to the Department of Energy, adding insulation to your home is a sound investment; they estimate you can reduce your heating and cooling needs up to 30 percent by properly insulating and weatherizing your home.

Heat flows naturally from a warmer space to a cooler space and proper installation of insulation creates resistance to heat flow. During winter months heat moves directly from heated living spaces to adjacent unheated attics, garages, basements and even outdoors.

Heat flow resistance is measured or rated in terms of its R-value—the higher the R-value, the more heat flow resistance your insulation provides and the lower your heating and cooling costs will be.

Pop up into the attic with your ruler; do you have less than 11 inches of fiberglass or less than 8 inches of cellulose? That's approximately an R value of 30. An R value of 40-50 is a good goal for our area.

Now look at the insulation itself—does it cover all the areas or has it gotten shifted around through the years? Is there damage due to water leakage or rodents? Check the dropped soffits (part of the ceiling lowered for lighting) to be sure they are properly sealed and all the cavities surrounding the soffit have been insulated.



**Our office is closed
Sept. 7 for Labor Day**

Look up for hazards during harvest

After working in a field on a neighbor's farm, Jim Flach parked his equipment and stepped out of the vehicle. Sadly, Jim did not realize his equipment was touching an overhead power line, and he became a path for the electrical current as he placed his foot onto the ground. Jim received a severe electric shock that ultimately resulted in his death a few months later. To stay safe around overhead power lines, Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.



- If a power line is sagging or low, call us immediately.

If contact is made with a power line, stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away, and call 911. Do not leave until the utility crew says it is safe to do so. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the

equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

“You need to double check, even triple check, to see what is above you,” says Marilyn Flach, Jim’s widow. For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Grain bin safety checklist

- ✓ Do not enter bins during active loading/unloading
- ✓ Never work alone
- ✓ Wear proper safety equipment—including a mask or filter respirator
- ✓ Be sure the ventilation system is working properly
- ✓ Clean regularly to keep grain dust accumulations to a minimum
- ✓ Do not smoke or ignite other open flames while in a grain bin
- ✓ Store fully dried grain at the proper moisture
- ✓ Try to keep animal and insect infestations to a minimum



Visit us at the
Farm Progress Show
September 1-3 in Decatur

- Touchstone Energy is in the Varied Industries Tent
- The Live Line Safety Demo featuring 7,200 volts is just outside the tent
- Bring your Co-op Connections Card to the exhibit for a free gift
- Learn more at www.farmprogressshow.com & www.livelihooddemo.com

Time to tackle that to-do list with safety in mind

Busy schedules, rainy weather, and some hot temperatures may have been good reasons to delay all kinds of projects this summer. But don't delay too long--winter will be here before you know it, giving you cold temperatures and busy holiday preparations as excuses. Keep these tips in mind to stay safe around electricity as you tackle that always growing to-do list.

- Carry ladders horizontally whenever possible and always look up and around you for power lines before using.
- If you have overhead power lines attached to or near your home, keep yourself and your equipment 10 feet away.
- Never use a water or blower extension to clean gutters near electric lines.
- Choose a heavy-duty outdoor extension cord if running power tools outdoors.



- If your outdoor outlets aren't protected by a GFCI, use a portable GFCI cord or outlet to protect yourself against shock, especially in damp conditions. Use common sense; don't try to complete tasks if

it is raining or the ground is wet.

- You must call JULIE at 811 before digging to locate underground utility lines. Striking a line can be a deadly, or at the least a very costly mistake

Statewide survey

We strive to provide excellent service to our members. In order to do that we need your feedback! One way we get information is to survey our members every other year. The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) conducts a member survey project on behalf of all the electric co-ops in the state. We anticipate that survey

questionnaires will be distributed in September and October.

You may be randomly selected to participate in the project. We ask that you take the time to fill out and return the survey. It's a great way to be actively involved in your cooperative. In addition, you'll be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$100 bill credits provided by the AIEC.

The AIEC and the vendor used to conduct the survey do not sell or share your private information. They provide us with the blind results, and we evaluate the information that is gathered to improve how we serve you. The more completed surveys we receive, the more accurate the information we receive will be. Give us a call if you have any questions.

Tip of the Month

Get your furnace ready

Many members hope for open-window temperatures in September, but most end up needing their furnaces at least occasionally by the end of the month to stay comfortable. Furnace manufacturers recommend annual inspections and now may be a great time to schedule that appointment. Stock up on air filters too so you'll be ready when the cool weather comes.

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 K. Smith and Directors Jay Frye, Jerry Brooks, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Jodine Tate. Director Steven Worner was absent.

Hobbie presented the Manager's Report for May 2015. He and Frye reviewed committee and delegate

appointments for 2015/2016 with the board. All appointments were approved.

After discussion \$250 will be contributed to the CFC Integrity Fund.

Hobbie discussed the co-op's current net metering/renewal rate and load management system.

Hobbie presented the financial report for the month of May. Year to date margins were \$1,236,200

compared to \$1,258,207 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of May was 37.27% and the number of member accounts served was 10,792 compared to 10,753 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of May was \$43,331,694 compared to \$42,016,588 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Back to school: learn energy efficiency

School is back in session for kids across our service area. Each year brings a new set of skills to be learned. As adults, we may not be heading back to school, but we can commit to learning something new this fall. The options are limitless of course—you can take a class on about anything these days.

Commit to learning a few things about energy efficiency as well and you'll benefit all year long. In addition to articles in this magazine, we have a free online tool that will give you some great information and specific instructions on how to make your home more energy efficient. It's the HEAT tool from Touchstone Energy.

First you complete a quick and easy home assessment, then you are presented with ways you can save, including simple projects you can complete to improve your home. It will even tell you which areas to tackle first for the best savings and includes project sheets with the

information you need to be successful.

Some of the things you can learn to do are seal your basement wall and rim joists, increase your fireplace efficiency, install attic insulation, improve your lighting, keep your hvac system

running at its best and much more.

Take a look for yourself at <http://homeefficiency.togetherwesave.com/> and see if you can learn something new today that will help you save all year long.



Don't heat an empty home

Does back to school time mean your house is now empty during the day? Consider programming your thermostat to lower the temperature

of your home when it's unoccupied, raising it just before everyone is due to arrive home in the evenings. Why spend money heating an empty home?

Note for heat pumps: Keeping a steadier temperature is often recommended as dramatic shifts in temperature can cause strip heating elements to come on, increasing the system's energy usage.