

Menard Electric Cooperative's

# Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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## The Power of Membership

Now, as always, it's a good time to be a member of an electric cooperative.

Not only are co-ops locally owned and controlled — by you, our members — they are locally run to serve your needs.

While many Illinois electricity consumers pay power bills to companies that answer to far-away stockholders who demand a healthy profit every quarter, local members call the shots at electric co-ops like ours. We aren't under pressure to keep rates high enough to generate big profits. Instead, co-ops try to keep your bill as low as possible while providing high-quality service. We invest money in excess of operating costs back into the business locally or return the excess (known as margins) to you in the form of capital credits.

And unlike the boards of directors of investor-owned utilities who keep an eye on generating profits for people living far away, your co-op's directors (fellow members, by the way) have only one thing in mind: keeping lights on safely and reliably while keeping costs affordable in our local community. That's why you elected them. And that's what's so great about co-ops. If you don't like the direction we're taking, you have the power to change the leadership through democratic means.

You may know the history of the electric cooperative movement, how seven decades ago rural residents banded together to bring the conveniences of electricity to their communities when investor-owned utilities would not extend service. The associations they formed, on the same democratic principles as this great nation, are as strong and relevant today as they were back then.

But co-ops are not just products of a proud past. These days, Americans from all walks of life have come to recognize the co-op approach — members working together to achieve price and service benefits — can work for other needs just as effectively as it delivered affordable power to rural Americans.



The seven principles upon which electric co-ops were founded — voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, and members' economic participation, among others — are as meaningful today as they were when electric co-ops began in the 1930s.

Leadership at Menard Electric Cooperative shares the same concerns as you, our members. We are accessible. You can give us a call or send us an e-mail and know someone here is listening.

In these days of economic turmoil, folks who receive electricity from co-ops are lucky. As locally owned and operated businesses, electric co-ops understand the people they serve. Directors and employees at your co-op share the same values and have the same pride of place as you do because it is our community, too. We act like neighbors because we *are* neighbors.

That's the cooperative difference.

## Daylight Savings Time

November 7 marks the end of Daylight Savings Time. Move your clocks back one hour before you go to bed November 6. If earlier sunsets leave you traversing your yard in the dark it might be time to contact us about a security light.

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P.O. Box 200  
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217-632-7746  
www.menard.com

## Pumpkin Time



What would October be without pumpkins? Whether you're carving them, using them as decoration or baking them into pies, pumpkins symbolize fall for many of us. Did you know that Illinois grows more than 25,000 acres of pumpkins and produces about one-third of the nation's crop?

Some of Menard Electric's members are into the pumpkin growing business. Some grow for large companies but a few for their own farmer's market applications. This year is unique as all the rain has caused problems for some growers — phytophthora blight (a pathogen that affects fields and ruins the pumpkins for carving or eating) and fast moving downy mildew disease. At press time it's unclear how much damage the blight and mildew may or may not do to the industry this year. Jim Orr of The Berry Patch in Kilbourne and Fornoff's Farm Market in Havana told us their fields were severely affected by the blight and they won't have pumpkins to sell this year.



Here's a listing of a few of our members who say their pumpkins are looking good! Check them out this year.

### Cross Plains Market

Located on Route 97 just south of Salisbury, Karen Impson says the market will have pumpkins, gourds, miniature pumpkins and other ornamentals for sale this fall.

### Hodgson Produce

Located right off the highway in Kilbourne Illinois, Dale Hodgson will have pumpkins for sale, though perhaps less than last year. The Kilbourne area was hit hard by the blight pathogen but Dale says they planted late and at press time he was expecting some crop to make it. Other produce is available throughout the year. Call 309-538-4207 for more information.

### Jefferies Orchard

Located on 1015 Jefferies Rd, just north of Springfield, Harry and Ruth Anderson continue a 200-year plus growing tradition. Check out their web site at

[www.jefferiesorchard.com](http://www.jefferiesorchard.com) or call them at 217-487-7582 to see what produce they have available each season—the list is large! In the fall apples, pumpkins, squash and Indian corn abound.

### Meyer Country Gardens and Produce

The Meyers plan to have pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn, mums and straw for sale at the shop located at 307 S. Adams in Manito. You can reach them at 217-968-6195.

### The Farm

Gail Adamski runs The Farm, located at 21648 Old Farm Avenue, off Rt 97 between Petersburg and Salisbury. This October she'll have pumpkins, bittersweet and other fall decorations. Visit her at her open house the first Saturday in October. She's also open Tuesday through Saturdays 10-5 in October. Visit her website at [www.visit-thefarm.com](http://www.visit-thefarm.com) for more information about her gardens, primitive and vintage gifts and other opportunities available at this unique shop year round.

## Vampires are among us

Vampires are lurking in your home. Really, they are. But you can throw down your wooden stake and put away the garlic – it's not what you think. These vampires can be vanquished with a quick flick of your wrist. (And no, don't call your daughter; it's not Edward from the popular series, either.)

We're talking about vampire electronics (as we call them) – devices in your home that lurk in the shadows, often undetected, but that continue to suck power long after the rest of the household is asleep.

Go on a vampire hunt in your home tonight. Turn off all the lamps. Chances are your home is still lit from the glow of digital clocks and tiny red and green lights in every room.

The Department of Energy estimates these electronics add up to 20 percent to monthly energy bills and cost U.S. consumers more than \$3 billion every year.

In a flash you can unplug these menaces

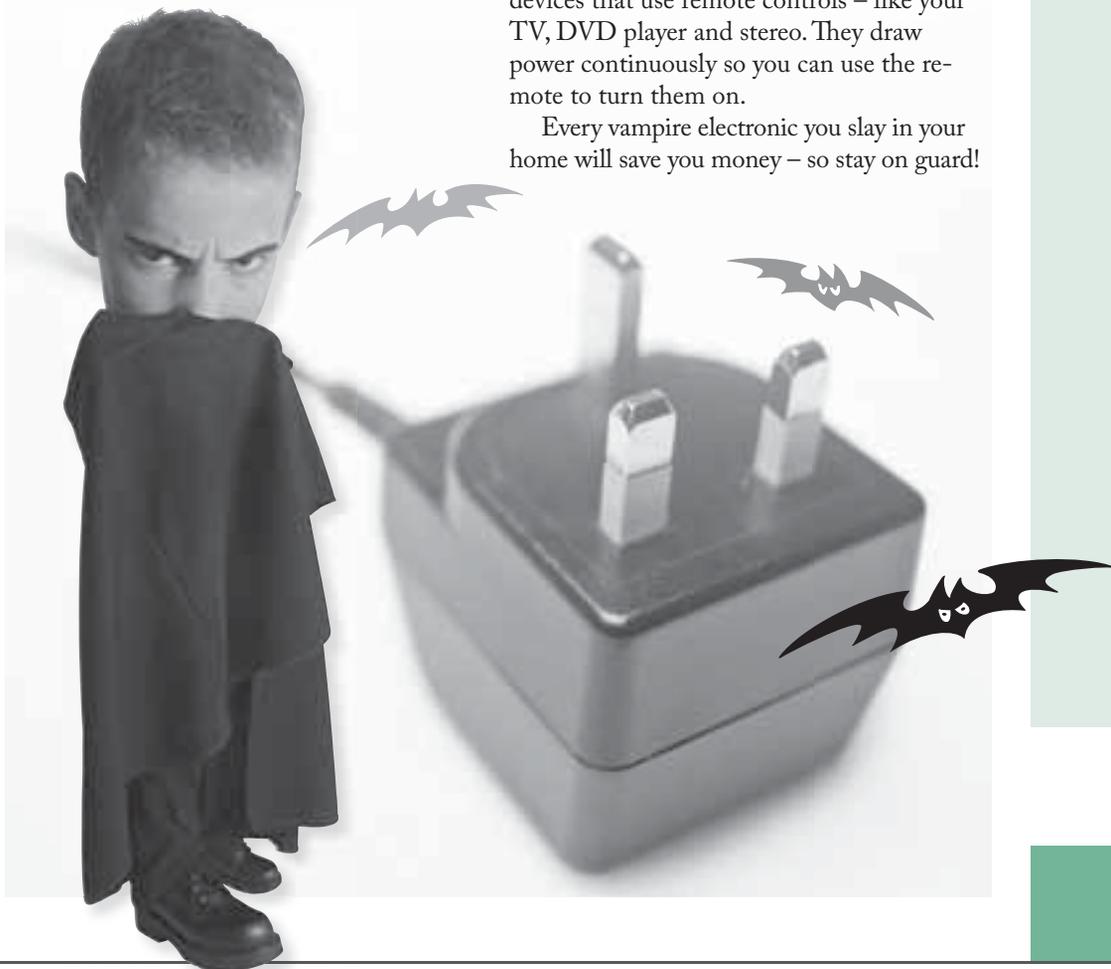
and regain control of your nightly energy usage. To make it even easier, combine like appliances on a power strip you can simply switch off when not in use, such as your microwave, kitchen radio and coffee maker; or your computer, printer and modem.

Don't forget about those battery chargers as well. Your cell phone, power tool and MP3 player chargers continue to draw power even after your devices' batteries are full.

And keep an eye on the silent energy suckers, those

devices that use remote controls – like your TV, DVD player and stereo. They draw power continuously so you can use the remote to turn them on.

Every vampire electronic you slay in your home will save you money – so stay on guard!



# Why do we encourage our members to use less electricity?

You've read, and will continue to read, articles from Menard Electric suggesting ways in which you can use less electricity. You may have wondered why we would recommend such a thing. After all, the more electricity the cooperative sells, the higher the revenue right?

Actually, that's not really the case. There are two reasons why not-for-profit electric co-ops like us believe using less electricity is a good thing!

## More isn't better

The first is that using more electricity isn't helpful from a financial standpoint. Our cooperative does not generate the electricity our members use. We buy electricity from a wholesale power provider, Prairie Power, Inc., a not-for-profit cooperative as well. PPI works with other co-ops as well to obtain the best prices and most reliable supplies.

PPI estimates how much electricity this pool of cooperative members will need and then enters into agreements to generate or purchase that electricity. But if our members need more electricity than we predicted, like if there is an un-

expected heat wave during the fall, we may have to buy more electricity from the wholesale power market.

Because other power suppliers also need more electricity at those times, the increased demand drives the cost of that power up and we have to pay more for it.

Also, as a whole, Americans are using more electricity with each passing year. For example, some are replacing smaller televisions with plasma sets that deliver more dramatic pictures by using dramatically higher amounts of power. Just look around your house and you'll see all sorts of conveniences that didn't exist 20 years ago, nearly all of them powered by electricity.

Since the supply of electricity isn't growing as quickly as America's appetite for it, that demand will continue to drive power costs higher. Climate change and additional government regulations could increase costs even more in coming years.

By helping our members make wiser, more efficient uses of electricity, we can reduce the amount that we need to buy and keep your costs

low. In addition, we know that using and generating less electricity is better for the environment, which is also important to our nation and the communities we serve.

## We don't earn a profit

The second reason we encourage members to use less electricity is just as important. We're not in business to earn a profit.

Our co-op exists to serve the needs of our members. Unlike investor-owned utilities we don't have to worry about making profits for shareholders, so there's no reason for us to encourage members to use more electricity.

Instead, we work to help our members make the most of their energy dollars while improving the comfort of their homes. Why? It improves the quality of our members' lives and lets them keep more of their hard earned money.

You can count on Menard Electric to continue spreading the word to you, our members, on ways you can make more efficient use of electricity in your home.

## Monthly Safety Tip



### Know your fuse box

This month take a close look at your fuse/breaker box and answer these questions.

- Do you and other family members know where it is located and how to turn off the main switch?
- Is there still a door that can close? There needs to be.
- Can you access the area easily during an emergency?
- Are all breakers/fuses labeled correctly? Make sure they are; shutting off the correct fuse/breaker during home repair work is critical.

# Make One Change

We encourage you to make one small, no-cost change each month to save energy. To find out how all the little changes add up visit [www.togetherwesave.coop](http://www.togetherwesave.coop).

## Don't drain your savings

This month look at your water heater. What is the temperature set at? It should be 120 degrees or less for optimal energy savings. If your heater doesn't list degrees use a thermometer to test the water temperature. If it's set too high, you're just letting money run down the drain! Also consider draining one to two gallons each year to clean out the bottom of your tank and help it operate more efficiently.



## Time running out for energy efficiency tax credits

Only three months remain to tackle home improvement projects if you want to take advantage of energy efficiency tax credits authorized under the federal stimulus bill. Measures that qualify include replacing windows, doors or roofs with materials that reduce your home's heat loss or gain, adding insulation, replacing certain air conditioners, and installing air-source heat pumps, hot-water boilers and biomass stoves.

"We want to make sure our members know about these tax credits and can take advantage of them before they expire on Dec. 31, 2010," stresses Manager Lynn Frasco. "This is an incredible opportunity for folks to invest in residential energy efficiency and see energy bill savings right away."

You can recover 30 percent — up to \$1,500 — of costs associated with buying and installing heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and biomass stoves. Installation costs are not covered for windows, doors, roofing and insulation.

ENERGY STAR provides guidelines on what qualifies for the tax credit at [www.energystar.gov/taxcredits](http://www.energystar.gov/taxcredits).

If you're interested in renewable energy, the government also offers a renewable energy tax credit that expires Dec. 31, 2016. That credit covers 30 percent of the cost of materials and installation for solar panels, solar water heaters, and geothermal heat pumps, for both new and existing homes.

Be sure to keep your receipts and your Manufacturer's Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit) for your records. Then claim the credit on your 2010 taxes using IRS Form 5695.

For a list of state and local energy efficiency assistance available, visit the Database for State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency, a project funded by DOE, at [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org).

Source: ENERGY STAR, Database for State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency

## Energy Efficiency Rebates

Rebates for home energy efficiency improvements are available from Menard Electric and through our HomeE program. They include:

**Geothermal Heat Pumps:** \$600 from Menard Electric and \$1,500 from HomeE

**Air-source Heat Pump:** \$200 from Menard Electric and \$1,000 from HomeE

**Natural Gas or LP furnace:** \$350 from HomeE (may not be combined with air conditioner rebate)

**Central Air Conditioner:** \$350 from HomeE (may not be combined with furnace rebate)

**Electric Water Heater:** \$75-100 from Menard Electric and \$250 for a heat pump water heater from HomeE

**Insulation:** 30 percent of insulation and weatherization costs up to \$500 from HomeE

**Certified Comfort Home:** \$100 from Menard Electric for homes built to CCH standards

See page 9 for more information on HomeE Rebates or visit [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) for HomeE and Menard Electric rebate information.

## Winter energy efficiency tips

Old man winter will be trying to blow his way into your house too soon. But he doesn't stand a chance against a well insulated and weatherproofed home. Take these steps now before the first frost hits.

- Open curtains to let sunshine warm your home and close them at night to help keep the warmth in.

- Reverse your ceiling fans to a clockwise rotation and operate at the lowest speed to force warm air downward.

- Make sure fireplace dampers are closed when not in use.

- Find and seal air leaks inside and around the exterior of your home.

- Weatherstrip or caulk leaks between door frames and windows.



- Check your attic insulation to be sure it is adequate and still in good condition.

- Use plastic film kits to insulate single-pane or leaky windows.

- Make sure your furnace and heaters are in good working order. If you're looking to replace your furnace this year check out our Home rebates.

- Clean or replace furnace filters monthly. Furnaces run longer and work harder to move air through dirty filters.

- Consider a programmable thermostat. It can set the temperature lower while you're away or asleep, and raise it before you arrive or wake up.

## Member says thanks

Alan Horn, one of our staking engineers, received this letter from two of our members in Athens this June. We're proud of our employees and it's always nice to hear how much members appreciate their hard work. We thought we'd share this letter with all our members.

*Dear Alan:*

*Perhaps it was fortuitous that I had procrastinated in writing this thank you, as the transformer in our yard was struck by lightning on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Menard was here within 1/2 an hour and the crew located a replacement and had us up and running within 1 1/2 hours. It was impressive and very much appreciated.*

*However, it wasn't more impressive than the response time when a bird apparently knocked out a transformer in the middle of the night several years ago. You were right out here at three in the morning! You also seem to have fewer blackouts than other companies and take care of them promptly, even with the challenges you face here in tornado alley.*

*Alan, your response to my account questions and the comprehensive material you sent was equally impressive. I've never experienced services as good as yours. My sister, Joyce Taylor, who pays the bills, and I want to let you know we appreciate you.*

*Very truly yours,  
Joyce Taylor and Ann Taylor Farley*

*Thank you*

# Need help paying your electric bill?

If you qualify, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) would provide a one-time lump sum payment directly to Menard Electric Co-operative on your behalf. The payment is based upon the number of people in your household and the gross monthly income of everyone in your household. The process can take approximately 30 days once you have completed an application.

If service has been shut off, you may be required to make a good faith payment to Menard Electric before LIHEAP can make any promise of payment.

The LIHEAP program can also help with natural gas, propane, wood and heating oil payments.

See the guidelines below for eligibility.



# of people living in the household	Gross income for 30 days prior to application must be at or below:
1	\$1,354
2	\$1,821
3	\$2,284
4	\$2,756

Please call your local office for additional amounts.

## If you think you are eligible to participate in the LIHEAP program please contact an agent in your area.

### Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)

[www.capcil.org](http://www.capcil.org)

- Logan County  
1800 5th Street, Lincoln, IL 62656  
217-732-2159
- Mason County  
301 S. Dale St, Havana, IL 62644  
309-543-2594
- Menard County  
1118 North Fourth St,  
Petersburg, IL 62675  
217-632-3878

### Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

1122 E. Marietta St., Decatur, IL 62521  
217-428-0155 ext. 219  
[liheap@dmcoc.org](mailto:liheap@dmcoc.org)  
[www.dmcoc.org](http://www.dmcoc.org)

### MCS Community Services

Cass & Morgan County  
345 W. State St., Jacksonville, IL 62650  
217-243-9404  
[www.morgancounty.il.com/MCS-Community-Services](http://www.morgancounty.il.com/MCS-Community-Services)

### Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

2833 South Grand Ave. East, Suite C100,  
Springfield, IL  
217-535-3120  
[www.co.sangamon.il.us/departments/resource](http://www.co.sangamon.il.us/departments/resource)

### Tazwood Community Service, Inc.

Tazewell County  
2005 S. Main St., Morton, IL 61550-1540  
309-266-9941

## For Sale: Truck Bed

White 2010 Ford F-250 truck bed.

All sealed bids should be received before 4 p.m. in the office on October 20, 2010.



# Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative  
From the Board Room  
July 27, 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, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Director Donald E. McMillan was absent. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton 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 of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton reviewed with the Board the FY-2009 IRS Form 990.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of June 2010. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report. Under the Operations Report Manager Frasco reported on the work the crews had done for the month.

Frasco reminded the Board that the AIEC Annual Meeting was scheduled for the following day. He distributed to the Board Members information received by him at the last Manager's Meeting about Illinois Counties that have the most potential for use of biogas as a renewable energy source. He discussed the status of union negotiations among Southern Illinois cooperatives.

He also discussed a summary he had on the status of Internet service provided by cooperatives around the State. He reported that a study by AIEC on Illinois cooperative Internet service would be completed in September and that the only project in Illinois that was awarded grant funds was Shawnee Telephone Company, a private telephone company. He advised that five cooperatives, that were members of AIEC, now offered Internet service and 20 did not.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board the Director/Attorney expense and per diem survey and he also reviewed a summary of the Home Rebate Program. He advised that 24 member audits had been completed and rebates presently in the payment process totaled \$5,296.

He advised that the ICG Mine Agreement had been executed and Prairie Power was finalizing design of the line extension. He advised that the line extension to ICG should be completed by the end of the year. 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 June. Year to date margins were \$786,427 compared to \$537,539 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of June was 35.06% and the number of members served was 10,512 compared to 10,496 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of June was \$47,445,790 compared to \$46,647,403 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC activities and advised that

there was no Board meeting due to the upcoming AIEC Annual Meeting. He reviewed the Continuing Education Program materials for 2010-2011.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. He reviewed the June Energy Charge as well as the President's Report. He also discussed the status of matters with regard to Prairie State.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Attorney Smith discussed with the Board the documents received from CoBank with regard to refinancing the RUS Note and the Line of Credit Renewal. It was moved and seconded that the President be authorized to enter into the CoBank loan documents. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco discussed the two candidates running for the CoBank Central Region Directorship. After discussion, it was moved and seconded that the cooperative cast its ballot for Kevin Still. Motion carried.

President Martin advised that the next regular Board Meeting was scheduled for August 24, 2010, at 6:00 p.m.

Under other business, the Board had previously discussed the AIEC Annual Meeting scheduled for July 29-30, 2010, and the NRECA Course 972.1 Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Demand Response scheduled for July 28, 2010.

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