

Menard Electric Cooperative's

# Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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## 75th Anniversary

### The Start of It All

In 1936 lights illuminated cities across Illinois. But outside of their borders the countryside remained dark. Farmers and their wives were still completing chores as their grandparents and great-great-grandparents had done: hand hauling, chopping, washing, and other labor intensive chores.

Stoves were heated with wood, water was hauled in from the well, clothes were washed in tubs, grain was ground by hand, ice was hauled in to keep milk cold, bathrooms were located in outhouses. The list goes on and on. Many of those rural residents longed for electricity and the lights, motors, pumps, irons, stoves, and washers it could bring, saving them backbreaking labor.

But the companies that served the cities with electricity refused to run lines into the country where population was sparse and profits seemed small. They balked at loan offers from the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA was created in 1935 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and could provide engineering assistance and low interest loans to build lines in rural areas.

On June 13, 1936, Lloyd Chalcraft, the Menard County farm advisor, called a meeting at the Farm Bureau Building in Petersburg to discuss the



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formation of an electric cooperative, one of the first in Illinois.

Nine men were elected that first night as incorporating directors of the co-op. They were: Abram (A. E.) Becker, Henry Colby, Henry Graham,

A. E. Hurie, J. C. Lounsberry, W. H. Montgomery, Arthur Moore, Carroll Stone, and H.G. Winkelmann. Becker was elected President and

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would later serve as the first manager of the co-op and of the statewide association. These men understood the way electricity would change lives.

Chalcraft said that one of the most discussed topics of the evening was membership dues. "We felt a membership fee should be assessed to help meet sundry expenses. But many of the people present at the meeting feared a \$2.50 fee would cause potential members to turn down the proposition," he said. \$2.50 was finally agreed upon.

The group of nine men worked quickly to gain a REA loan of \$135,000 on September 12, 1936, to build the first lines. Those lines were energized just five months later and rural residents began to see their lives change.

Our goal defined in 1936 is the same as today – to improve the lives of our members. And we're still governed by a group of nine board members who recognize the importance of having this cooperative as part of our community.

Menard Electric Cooperative was formed on seven principles: voluntary/open membership; democratic control; members' economic participation; autonomy/independence; education, training, information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community. We still operate by these principles today.

October is Cooperative Month, and we salute all cooperatives – businesses formed by people seeking to improve lives, run by and for their members.

## Call for old appliances

**D**o you have an old electric appliance? Send us a photo of you

with your treasure, along with a description of it and how you acquired it. We'll include as many photos as possible with our 75th anniversary celebration. Send to: Appliance photo, Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675 or e-mail high-res photo to [info@menard.com](mailto:info@menard.com).

## Call for member stories

**D**o you remember when the lights first came on? Or do you have stories told/written down for you by a loved one? We would love to hear them. Send us a written copy of your memory and we'll include it with our 75th anniversary

celebration at our 2012 annual meeting. We will also include as many as we can in upcoming center sections. Send to Early Memories, Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675 or e-mail to [info@menard.com](mailto:info@menard.com).



## 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).*



## Vanquish vampires

Energy vampires may be lurking in your home this Halloween. Put away the garlic and instead shut off and unplug appliances and electronics not in use. Shut off all the lights tonight and walk around your home-see any power indicator lights? Those items are using energy even when turned off. Energy Star says the average house has 40 energy-users always plugged in.



## Pole Parole

### *Attaching Objects to Poles Puts Lives on the Line*

**W**hat do yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes, and birdhouses have in common? They're often found illegally attached to utility poles. But this isn't only a crime of inconvenience. Safety issues caused by unapproved pole attachments place the lives of lineworkers and the public in peril.

"Our line crews climb utility poles at all hours of the day and night, in the worst of conditions," explains Bob Burris, Operations Manager for Menard Electric. "Anything attached to utility poles can create serious hazards for our line personnel. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples, or barbed wire can puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making linemen vulnerable to electrocution."

Our lineworkers have reported more poles used as community bulletin boards, satellite mounts, and even support legs for deer stands, lights, and carports. Not only do these attachments put line crews at risk — anyone illegally placing these items on poles comes dangerously close to energized power lines with thousands of volts of energy pulsing overhead. It's always wise to keep any structure at least 10 feet away from utility poles.

Please help us keep our linemen — and our community — safe. Remove any unauthorized items attached to utility poles. Fixtures not belonging to the cooperative or another utility will be removed by Menard Electric line personnel; the co-op is not responsible for any losses if an item is damaged or destroyed during removal.

## Monthly Safety Tip

### Keeping Halloween safe

Many homes use lights to decorate and guide trick-or-treaters to their doors. Keep your haunted house safe by using GFCI-equipped outlets or extension cords, keeping flammable objects away from candles and lights (which can get hot) and turning everything off before you call it a night.



# Board Meeting Report

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

**P**resent were Manager Lynn Frasco, Attorney Charles Smith and Directors Gary Martin, Jerry Brooks, Michael Carls, Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Steven Worner.

Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton reviewed 2010 Federal Form 990. Frasco and Hinton reviewed 2010 CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis

Frasco advised crews are working four, 10-hour days a week.

Co-op now sending multiple bills in one envelope to save on postage.

Advised that Spoon River Electric Cooperative starting negotiations with

IBEW and that many co-ops were, or had, implemented rate increases.

Discussed correspondence from member requesting heat pump and electric water heater rebates five years after installation. Board discussed time limitations on rebates. Program language changed to include provision that any member must make application for rebate within one year of installation of equipment.

HomE Program rebates totaled \$90,484.

Cost of Survey Study just received. Draft will be sent for review and discussion at next month's meeting.

Summary of Load Control for year discussed. Problems activating load

control system addressed.

Year to date margins were \$208,694 compared to \$786,427 a year earlier.

Equity as of the end of June was 33.44% and the number of members served was 10,527 compared to 10,512 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of June was \$35,953,927 compared to \$35,083,402 last year. The co-op continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

President and Secretary authorized to complete materials for US AgBank merge with CoBank.

ByLaw and Policy Committee Meeting scheduled August 16, 2011, to review current ByLaws and Policies.

## Automatic Payment: One less thing to worry about!

You can have the net amount of your bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 17th of each month. Just get us this form by the 20th of the month prior to when you wish payments to begin.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SS No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Map Location No. \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank Account No. \_\_\_\_\_

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 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: \_\_\_\_\_