

Menard Electric Cooperative's

# Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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## Celebrating membership

*October is Cooperative Month*

**Y**ou are not a customer of Menard Electric. Surprised? You are a member. It's a subtle change in phrase but a big change in meaning.

Yes, you receive a bill from us for electricity just like customers of investor-owned or municipality-owned utilities do. But we are a cooperative, and that means we are owned by those we serve—that's you.

And you're among 42 million people across the nation served by an electric co-op--252,000 in Illinois alone.

Being a member matters.

It matters because we are a non-profit organization, committed not to making profits for distant stockholders, but instead existing to provide safe, affordable and reliable service; any margins we earn are returned to you as capital credits.

Membership matters because you elect directors to govern the cooperative. They are members too, living in the same communities you do. So do all of our employees by the way, because our office is local. You can stop in or call us and talk to someone in person, not just a machine.

Our employees and directors care about the local economy, schools and businesses. From offering scholarships to taking donations for the food pantry, we invest in the local communities where you live.

Membership matters because when we see a need, we try to meet it. Take the Co-op Connections Card for example, which gives discounts on prescription drugs, something many



*The Co-op Connections Card is just one example of why membership matters.*

of our members benefit from each month. It also offers discounts on other health care items like eyeglasses and at national and local restaurants and stores. Check out connections.coop for more information.

Membership mattered 75 years ago when neighbors banded together to light up the countryside when no one else would. Those founders felt that membership mattered and the cooperative business model was a good one. We agree—it's as valid today as it was then.

We were formed, like other cooperatives, on seven Rochdale principles. These principles require a co-op must be open for anyone to join and that every member retains one voice, one vote. Electric co-ops like us hold business meetings annually to allow members to vote for directors to lead the co-op.

Co-ops have to offer real member benefits as well--remember those capital credits we mentioned before? We've returned more than \$6.8 million to our members.

Education is another principle, of our employees and our members, from providing safety information to schools to sharing ideas to make your home more energy efficient, to educating elected officials and opinion leaders about the co-op business model. And because there is strength in numbers, we tend to stick together with other co-ops when tackling regional and national issues.

Perhaps most important of all, our principles state we must be independent and community-focused, not tied to the purse strings of far-flung investors. As a co-op we help drive local economic development and work to make life better in the areas we serve—it's what we often call the cooperative difference.

These things are what we celebrate in October for National Cooperative Month. We hope you agree that membership does matter, and you'll proudly call yourself a *member* of Menard Electric, not a *customer*!

# 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 us on your behalf. The payment is based upon the number of people in your household and their combined 30-day gross monthly income. Family of one-\$1,396; two-\$1,891; three-\$2,386. Call your local office for additional amounts and information.

The process can take 30 days once you have completed an application. The LIHEAP program can also help with natural gas, propane, wood and heating oil payments.

Applications accepted in September for persons age 60 and over and the disabled; in October additionally for families with children under five and those disconnected from service; and in November for the general public.

If you think you are eligible please contact an agent in your area.

## Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)

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  
Dewitt & Piatt counties  
served as well.

## Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

1122 E. Marietta St., Decatur, IL  
62521; 217-428-0155 ext. 219;  
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

## 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

## Tazwood Community Service, Inc.

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



## Keep Track of Your Electric Usage

An easy way to keep track of the electrical usage a particular appliance uses is to use a Kill-A-Watt Meter. You simply plug your appliance into the meter and then into the wall and it will measure how much power that appliance uses. Menard Electric has these meters available to loan to our members. Just contact our office to sign up to borrow one of these handy devices.

## Your Bill This Month

Around the 7th of this month you'll receive your bill as usual. Please remember that this month's is for electricity used in September, the month our rate increase went into effect. The increase was approved by your Board of Directors at their February board meeting. If you have any questions about your bill call our office. To read the newsletter article describing the increase with a chart of all rate classes affected, visit [www.menard.com/newsletters.asp](http://www.menard.com/newsletters.asp) and click on the June 2012 issue.

**FOR SALE**

**1987 GMC with 165,770 miles.**

Features an older A-frame boom and winch. Sold as is. Sealed bids are accepted through 4:30 p.m. on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

# Don't Let Your Electronics Make Your Energy Costs Soar



## Stop vampire electronics dead in their tracks!

Even at night, items such as **microwaves, coffee makers, phones, computers, MP3 players, and power tool chargers** are alive, silently draining your home of energy and money. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, these "vampire electronics" can add 8 percent to your annual electric bill. Stop wasting money. Cut these "vampires" off at the source. **Unplug fully charged battery-operated devices and plug appliances into powerstrips that can be switched off when not in use.**



To find more ways to take charge  
of your energy costs, visit  
[www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com)



# Board Meeting Report

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

Present were Manager Lynn A. Frasco, Attorney Charles K. Smith, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, and Directors Gary Martin, Jerry Brooks, Michael Carls, Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Steven Worner.

Hinton and Frasco reviewed 2011 Federal Form 990 and 2011 CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis Report.

Frasco advised that he received a letter from a member upset about what he claimed was a "brown out" that had damaged his equipment.

He reported on the statewide managers' meeting and discussed Wayne

White Electric Co-op's new form of irrigation rate.

Frasco presented a Summary of Load Control for the year and reviewed the LIHEAP 2012 Summer Cooling Assistance Program.

Martin called the Board into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

Frasco discussed allocation of transmission costs among members of Prairie Power, Inc.

He reviewed Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Goetsch reported on most recent By-Law/Policy Committee meeting. He advised there would be a report at next

month's meeting with regard to proposed changes to certain Policies. It was suggested that a member of the Labor Committee, as well as the By-Law Policy Committee meet with NRECA Field Representative Tom Hogan.

Year to date margins were \$436,395 compared to \$208,694 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of June was 33.69% and the number of members served was 10,568 compared to 10,527 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of June was \$38,070,694 compared to \$35,953,927 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

## Beyond the BULB

**A monthly tip to help you use electricity safely and efficiently. See [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org) and [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com) for more ways to go "beyond the bulb" to keep your family using energy wisely every day.**



Using lights or other Halloween decorations to guide trick-or-treaters to your door? Keep your home and visiting goblins safe by using GFCI-equipped extension cords or outlets, following all decoration instructions, keeping flammable objects away from candles and lights, and turning everything off before you call it a night. Use a programmable timer to ensure the lights are only on when needed to save electricity; and consider buying LED bulbs for light strands.

