

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Together We Serve & Together We Save

Fourth Annual Food Drive

Bring in a non-perishable food item to our office by December 20. We'll donate it to the Menard County Food Pantry and in return we'll give you an LED light strand (While supplies last, limit one per membership.)

The LED lights will help you save on your holiday bills this year. The strands feature 70 multi-colored lights (they are the same light strings as previous years and can connect to those strings). LED lights provide thousands of hours of illumination, won't fade and can save 75-95 percent over the costs of traditional strings.

Our office is located at 14300 State Hwy 97 in Petersburg, one mile south of New Salem State Park. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Menard County Food Pantry

About 60 families a month show up at the Central Presbyterian Church on Douglas Street in Petersburg on a Tuesday or Thursday from 1-3 p.m. to use the Menard County Food Pantry. (In 2012 724 families, or 1,994 people, were fed from its shelves.)



Recipients must be referred in advance to the pantry through a social agency such as Menard County Housing, Community Action or Senior Services, among others. They are allowed to use the pantry once every two months and most leave with about six bags of food. Foods include a variety of canned and boxed non-perishable foods and frozen hamburger, bologna, hot dogs and bread.

If families want to use the pantry more often they must first meet with the Menard County Housing Authority and complete a budget plan.

"It's unpredictable how many people we'll have on a given day. Some people come as often as they can, others come just when money has gotten tight for a specific reason," says Mary Jane Hurie, President of Menard Caring, Inc., which operates the pantry.

The pantry is a choice pantry, which is different than others in the county. Volunteers come in and help people

choose items they would like. Mary Jane says easy to prepare items are popular, such as hamburger helper, canned chilis and pastas, noodle/rice mixes, cereals, and of course canned vegetables and fruits.

Some personal care items such as toothpaste, soap, toilet paper and laundry detergent are also provided and are popular items.

It costs about \$2,000 a month to buy supplies at the pantry. All of that money, along with much of the food provided, is from local donations. The pantry is not part of the Central Illinois Food Bank, but does purchase food from them.

December is the biggest month for donations but they come in all year long. "We are very blessed to have a great deal of community support. Somehow it all works out and support comes in when you need it," says Mary Jane.





Electric Safety Naughty & Nice List

Naughty

- ✓ Connected several extension cords together to extend length
- ✓ Used nails and staples on light strings and cords
- ✓ Ran extension cords under rugs and chair legs
- ✓ Forgot to water the tree daily

Nice

- ✓ Kept all decorations three feet from heating equipment or fireplace.
- ✓ Turned off all decorations and space heaters before going to bed
- ✓ Plugged all outdoor decorations into a GFCI outlet or extension cord
- ✓ Read instructions on decorations and used indoors or outdoors according to their design

The Top 5 ...

Gift suggestions for energy efficiency and safety

1. Include a gfci-protected extension cord with power tool gifts
2. Send rechargeable batteries with electronics
3. Make sure appliances are Energy Star rated
4. Look carefully at the energy guide listings on large appliances and televisions
5. Send a smart surge power strip with big electronics to save on standby energy costs and protect against power surges



Reasons your winter bills may rise

1. Even a gas heating system uses electricity to power the blower or pump; as temperatures drop these circulation devices could run continuously
2. Favorite holiday light displays and baked goods are created
3. Livestock tank heaters and engine heaters are used
4. Holiday guests often mean more hot water for showers, dishes and laundry
5. Earlier sunsets mean families come inside and turn on lights, electric blankets or heaters, televisions and more

Ways to keep old man winter out

1. Weatherstrip or caulk all air leaks
2. Use plastic film kits to insulate single pane or leaky windows
3. Check your attic insulation for damage and settling
4. Service your furnace/heater and clean/replace filters as needed
5. Keep your fireplace damper closed when not in use



Ways to stay safe during winter outages

1. Be prepared: keep a flashlight, radio, blankets, water and ready-to-eat food on hand
2. Install a transfer safety switch on your generator or cut off power at your breaker box before operating to protect others from backfed power on our lines
3. Never touch a fallen line-- assume all wires on the ground

4. Don't use a gas or charcoal grill indoors due to carbon monoxide
5. Stay inside, dress in layers and close off unused rooms

Visit safeelectricity.org or redcross.org for more

Making A List? Checking It Twice?

Check off mailing your electric bill for next year too



The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is here! Sign up now for online bill pay or automatic payment (see form below) and mark mailing your electric bill off your to-do list this holiday season -and for good!

Online Bill Pay:

Visit www.menard.com and sign up to access your account, view usage records and pay your bill with a credit card.



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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: _____

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, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate, and Steven Worner. Warren Goetsch was absent.

Frasco introduced Brady Smith and Chris Hinton to review proposed revisions to 2014 Aid to Construction Charges. Changes were adopted.

Frasco reported on meeting with Spoon River Board to discuss joint tree trimming agreement with Spoon River and McDonough Power Co-ops. He discussed proposed terms/rates. Consensus of Board that Frasco proceed to investigate the program.

Advised pole testing was in progress; bad pole rate averaging 2.4%.

Discussed why necessary to review Rate 31 and Rate 70 and possible need to reinstate power cost adjustment.

Advised meeting scheduled with representatives from Cass Communications, who is expanding internet service, to discuss assisting in providing internet to co-op members.

Frasco advised co-op's expense model for workman's compensation rate would be 0.83, which was very low. This is because co-op had very few claims in last several years.

Smith reported on conversations with representative from U of I, Springfield Purchasing Department

regarding financial disclosure document. Advised information indicated document could be required under State Procurement Code and UIS insisting on before proceeding so Board members need to submit financial disclosure forms.

August year to date margins were \$2,111,749 compared to \$982,083 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of August was 34.84% and the number of members served was 10,678 compared to 10,569 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of August was \$40,966,506 compared to \$38,346,781 last year. Co-op continues to meet requirements of RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

LIHEAP

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides payment directly to us on behalf of those who qualify based upon household 30-day gross monthly income.

Contact your local county's office for information:

Cass 217-243-9404
Logan 217-732-2159
Macon 217-428-0155
Mason 309-543-2594

Menard 217-632-3878
Sangamon 217-535-3120
Tazewell 309-266-9941



2014 Scholarships

Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarships

4 \$1,500 scholarships for a 4-year university

2 \$1,500 scholarships for students enrolling in a two-year Illinois community college

1 \$1,500 Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship to the son or daughter of a co-op employee

1 \$1,500 LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship to attend the AIEC lineworker school

To learn more or apply visit www.menard.com. You may also call the office or visit with your school guidance counselor.

