

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



5th Annual Together We Serve & Together We Save Food Drive

Help us serve and we'll help you save. Bring a non-perishable food item to our office December 1-19 and we'll donate it to the Menard County Food Pantry; 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. LED lights provide thousands of hours of illumination, won't fade and can save 75-95 percent over the costs of



traditional strings. If you've brought food in each year you can connect all five strings and have quite a display this year!

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

A little about the Menard County Food Pantry

- All of the operational costs plus much of the food is provided through local donations; the pantry is not part of the Central Illinois Food Bank.
- Residents must be referred to the pantry through a local social agency and are allowed to use it once every two months.
- The pantry is a choice pantry, different than most, with volunteers who come in and help individuals choose foods they'd like; easy to prepare items like noodle mixes, cereals, canned vegetables and fruits are popular.



Thomas H. Moore IEC & Memorial Scholarship

Details & Applications at www.menard.com

Deadline 12/31/2014

5 scholarships to a four-year college or university

3 scholarships to a two-year IL community college

1 scholarship to the child of a co-op employee

1 scholarship to attend lineworker school *Deadline 4/30/2015*

Office Closings

Christmas – Dec. 24 & 25

New Year's – Jan. 1





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.

Director Jay Frye earns Board Leadership Certification



Menard Electric Director Jay Frye has successfully completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative

Association (NRECA) Board Leadership Certification Program.

The program recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director with 10 additional credits in advanced, issue-oriented courses.

Jay has been working on gaining the certification for several years. He has been a member of Menard Electric's board since 2000 and currently serves as Secretary. In addition to his regular duties he serves on the irrigation and

bylaw policy committees and chairs the capital credits committee. Jay also serves on the Illinois Cooperative's Workers Compensation Group (ICWCG).

"We are fortunate to have dedicated individuals who give of their time and expertise to serve our members on the Board of Directors," says General Manager Lynn Frasco. "NRECA's certification programs provide our directors with more knowledge about the complex electric utility industry and Jay Frye has been willing to invest his time in staying current on the important issues impacting the cooperative."

Menard Electric currently has seven directors who have earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director certification and now three directors with their Board Leadership Certification.

LIHEAP

While funds last the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can provide a one-time lump sum payment directly to us on behalf of those who qualify based upon household monthly income.

Call your county office right away for more information.

Cass 217-243-9404

Logan 217-732-2159

Macon 217-428-2193

Mason 309-543-6988

Menard 217-632-3878

Sangamon 217-535-3120

Tazewell 309-694-4391

New bill payment processing

Pictured is Assistant Accountant Sue Freeland, left, receiving



training on our new bill payment processing equipment. The equipment reads and endorses remittance stubs and checks automatically. This increases accuracy and saves our front office employees time each day that they used to spend individually entering and calculating the information.

Sue has found that the machine best reads checks written in blue or black ink

and that staying within the lines or boxes helps.

The majority of our members still choose to pay their bill with a check each month; however, the number utilizing our automatic bill payment and online payment options continues to grow each month.

Sue cautions that members who pay online through their bank need to continue to use their account numbers as in the past, not the statement ID number on their bills as this number will change each month.

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

Director of Member Services Trish Michels reviewed the current member bill collection process. She advised the goal was to reduce delinquent accounts by 25%. She reviewed changes being implemented with regard to the collection process. She advised these changes would result in a more efficient collection process and a reduction in delinquent accounts. She also reviewed the new bill design and new past due notices.

The Board reviewed a proposed Addendum to IBEW Bargaining Agreement. The Addendum proposed a change in what is called the "10 Mile Limit" to a "15 Mile Limit." This provision required an employee to live within a 10 mile radius of the co-op headquarters. There was a request to increase that limit to 15 miles. After review of the proposed language of the Addendum, the Board listened to comments from General Foreman

Bob Burriss as well as Union representatives as to the reasons for the change, and what, if any, impact the change would have upon the co-op. After discussion the Addendum was adopted.

Manager Frasco advised that the last L. E. Myers Crew had been released.

He advised that the co-op crews had constructed 8 new services with 14 upgrades, and had retired 34 services. He advised another 80 services were yet to be retired. Crew also completed 19 pole change outs and installed 4,000 feet of underground service.

Frasco advised that the co-op had the 4th highest number of e-mails submitted to the EPA through Action.coop.

He advised that he and Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton were reviewing a draft of a cost of service study and would meet with Brian Adams of AIEC to review and discuss it. Frasco advised he should be able to bring the study to the Board for its next meeting.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of

August. Year to date margins were \$1,164,896 compared to \$2,111,749 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of August was 34.8% and the number of member accounts served was 11,036 compared to 10,678 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of August was \$42,721,943 compared to \$40,966,506 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Martin called the Board into Executive Session. Martin reconvened the monthly Board meeting.

The Board discussed the proposed schedule for the NRECA search for a new General Manager. It was the consensus that the schedule would need to be altered. Martin advised that he would contact the NRECA Representative to discuss revising the schedule.

Frye asked that there be discussion with regard to strategic planning. After discussion, it was the consensus that Frasco put together a list of items and issues that needed to be addressed by the Board.

Martin presented to Frye his Board Leadership Certificate.

Tip of the Month

Do you own a standby generator? Make sure your home's wiring system includes a transfer switch. It will disconnect your home from our electric system before your generator operates. This prevents the generator from feeding electricity back onto our lines—a dangerous situation. See our website for more generator information.



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Updates during large outages
Winter energy efficiency tips
Electrical safety tips
Holiday decorating tips
News about your co-op