


# Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.menard.com

1 2 3 4 5

## 5 great reasons to attend the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

1. You don't have to cook! Load up the family and have dinner on us – the pork chop dinner served by the Mason County Pork Producers is always delicious!
2. Each member receives an attendance gift and a chance to win one of many prizes!
3. Life gets busy – reconnect with neighbors and friends who will be there too!
4. Meet the new general manager as well as all of our employees and directors!
5. Take a bucket truck ride (weather permitting) – *you know you want to!*

## Hild completes apprenticeship

Operations Manager Dalton Whitley congratulates Sebastian “Stormy” Hild for completing his four-year apprenticeship to become a journeyman lineman with Menard Electric Cooperative.

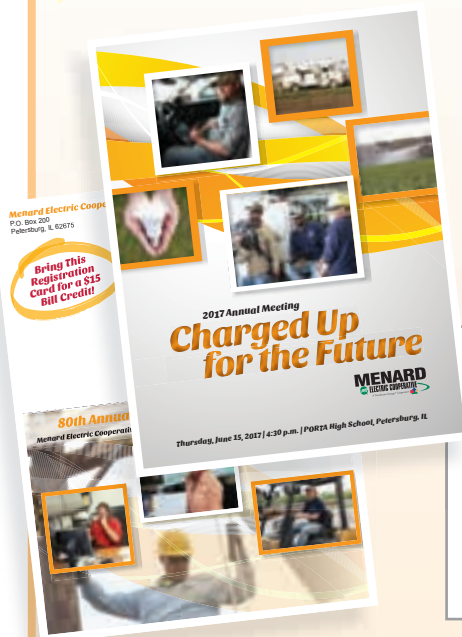
Stormy came to Menard Electric as a first-year apprentice lineman after graduating from the lineman training program at Lincoln Land Community College. He completed the remainder of his coursework at Northwest Lineman College.



## EFFICIENCY

### On vacation!

- Use timers for lamps
- Lower water heater temp.
- Unplug chargers/electronics



See your Official Notice for details and bring the registration card it includes for a \$15 bill credit. Visit [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) and [www.facebook.com/MenardElectric](http://www.facebook.com/MenardElectric) for highlights before and after the event.

**Thursday, June 15, 2017**  
**PORTA High School, Petersburg**

# Bringing the light

## Menard Electric helps electrify rural Bolivian villages

Menard Electric Area Serviceman Troy Shafer traveled with 11 other linemen from Illinois electric cooperatives to Bolivia, the poorest country in South America, as part of the National Electric Cooperative Association International Program.

The men worked with 14 linemen from the Cooperativa Rural de Electrificación (CRE) to install eight miles of line and 21 transformers to electrify a part of Bolivia for the first time.

By the time the men made their way from the airport to the small rural village that would be their home for the next three weeks, they had a good idea of the difficult work that was ahead of them.

"The area was just beautiful, but you were either looking up or looking down," Troy said. "The ravines were steep. It was more than we had expected. The roads wound either left or right, you didn't seem to ever go straight."

Every task was made more difficult by the language barrier, difficult terrain and lack of equipment. Projects were planned using drawings and hand signals or an interpreter. Wire was slowly and carefully strung between wide, deep ravines that required the linemen to rappel with ropes and get creative in how to complete the job. "It was very physical work," Troy said.

Utility poles made of concrete were accessed with long ladders instead of bucket trucks, wire was spooled by hand, and many tasks were done "old school," without the utilization of modern equipment to make the job faster, easier and safer.



See a video at our Annual Meeting on June 15th.

"We kept trying to tell them to use the equipment that they had more," Troy commented.

Despite the difficulties, the men diligently worked through every challenge to complete the project on time. All were aware that what they were doing would change the lives of everyone within the region.

Troy and the other linemen worked to bring electricity to four villages that included two schools, a handicapped facility and 62 homes. The Illinois linemen knew before they agreed to go to Bolivia that the project would change the lives of the people, but none had a full grasp of just how much until visiting the region.

They were particularly touched by the story of a man living next door to one of the schools. He was eager to share with the crews his excitement over gaining refrigeration. "He was 96 years old and raised cattle, and all he wanted was to have fresh meat," Troy said.

During a lighting ceremony, Troy and the others witnessed the rejoicing of the children and teachers at the schools, the individuals providing care for those at a handicapped facility, and the families living in homes nearby. All of whom were now provided new opportunities and an easier way of life.

"It's not often someone gets the chance to use their skills to truly change another's life. Troy has had that honor, and we at Menard Electric Cooperative are fortunate to have been a part of NRECA's International Program," said General Manager Alisha Anker.

Other Illinois cooperatives involved in the program were Corn Belt Energy Corporation, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Illinois Electric Cooperative, Jo-Carroll Energy, McDonough Power Cooperative, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

## \$400,000 in capital credits recently returned

Your Board of Directors recently authorized a \$400,000 return of capital credits to members who had service in 1993 and 1994. MEC has returned \$9 million to date to our members – it's the cooperative difference.

Active members receiving credits less than \$75 saw a bill credit on their May 7th billing statement; above \$75 received a check. Inactive members were mailed a check.



### What are capital credits?

Unlike other utilities, Menard Electric does not exist to earn a profit. Any revenues more than the cost of doing business are considered margins.

These margins represent an interest-free source of operating capital by you and the rest of the membership to the co-op. This capital allows us to finance operations and new construction, with the intent that this capital be repaid to you in later years. We are currently on a 24-year retirement cycle.

### How are capital credits calculated?

Every member who purchases electricity during a year in which margins are earned is allocated capital credits. The amount of credits you earn in a year is based on the amount of capital you contributed to the co-op through payment of your monthly bill. The more electric service you bought, the more capital credits you earned.

The sum of your monthly bills for the year is multiplied by an allocation factor to determine your capital credits. The allocation factor varies from year to year, depending on the success of the co-op. Capital credits are only allocated for a year in which the co-op earns margins. Since credits are a member's share of the margins, no credits are allocated for a year without margins.

### Will I receive credits every year?

Each year the Board of Directors must approve a capital credit retirement after reviewing the financial health of the co-op. If the board determines that the co-op cannot afford to retire credits, they will not authorize a retirement.

What happens to my capital credits if I leave the co-op service territory?

Your capital credits remain in our system in your name until they are retired. Make sure we always have your current address so we can mail a check to you. We publish lists of names of members we are unable to find in this magazine each year as well as on our website.

### What happens to the capital credits of a member who dies?

Capital credits of a deceased member may be paid at a reduced present value without waiting for a general retirement or may be transferred to a surviving spouse if the membership was jointly held. Contact Michelle for details.

## The cooperative difference – it matters!

*In this series we'll explore all the reasons we are proud to be a cooperative*

### Cooperative Guiding Principle #3 Economic Members' Participation

Cooperatives are non-profit, member-owned and democratically controlled. As such, we differ from other utilities not in that we earn margins each year, but in how those margins are used to benefit the entire membership as a whole – not a few select individuals or shareholders.

Your economic participation in the co-op includes your purchase of electricity. Any money left over from that

purchase after all expenses are paid, called margins, are allocated back to you based on the amount of electricity you purchased.

Your elected Board of Directors determines how to utilize these allocated margins for the good of the entire cooperative membership. Margins are used for infrastructure improvements and other activities.

The Board then determines

when those allocated margins can be returned to the individual members who earned them. We call those returns capital credits.

Your Board is very committed to returning capital credits, and we are one of the top electric cooperatives in Illinois in doing so.

We are proud to be a cooperative owned by members who work together for the good of the co-op as a whole.



## Board highlights

**March 28, 2017** For full minutes visit [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or contact the office.

- Present were Directors Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; Interim Manager Lynn Frasco, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith.
- Worner: Irrigation committee meeting report.
- Worner & Engineering Manager Brady Smith: Reported on irrigation software vendors.
- Smith: Reviewed Wright Tree Service Inc. contract for 4/1/17-3/31/18. Board approved.
- Frasco: Discussed balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, irrigations, Federated Interest Compensation Trend Analysis & Field Audit results, CoBank patronage distribution statement & sharing success program, AIEC engineering conference, statewide outage map & emergency resources.
- Frasco: Gave February financial report. Year to date margins \$47,375 compared to \$75,736 last year. End of February equity 38.11%. Served 10,863 member accounts. Net utility plant \$46,043,860 compared to \$43,840,784 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB & NRUCFC.
- Resolution approved appointing Anker as representative for other co-ops, banks & government agencies.
- Approved: Membership in NISC.
- Patrick: Discussed Annual Meeting plans.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC activities.
- Goetsch & Frasco: Reviewed AIEC Board & Attorney survey; Board approved increased Attorney rate; also discussed travel reimbursement policy- meeting of policy committee scheduled.
- Martin & Anker: Gave Prairie Power Inc. report.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Frasco recognized for service as interim manager.



2001 Chevrolet



2006 Chevrolet



2007 Chevrolet

**Sealed bids due in our office by 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 30**

**2001 Chevrolet C7500**  
10 ft. dump body  
Caterpillar 3126 (210HP)  
Spicer 7-speed transmission  
80,000 miles

**2006 Chevrolet 1500 4x4**  
4.8L v8  
5-speed manual transmission  
115,000 miles

**2007 Chevrolet 1500 4x4**  
8L v8  
Automatic transmission  
123,000 miles