

# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Annual Meeting of Members at cooperative headquarters – June 10

**Pre-meeting activities include a pancake/sausage breakfast, music and fun for the kids**

The day is almost here for Monroe County Electric Cooperative's 79th annual meeting of members to be held on Saturday, June 10, 2017. This year's meeting will again be held at our cooperative headquarters, located two miles south of Waterloo at 6132 State Route 3 and 5960 Old Red Bud Road, Waterloo.

Please make sure to bring your registration card from the back of your annual meeting notice. It is barcoded so that we can scan it to register you more quickly. This registration card will then be entered in a drawing for cash prizes announced throughout the day as well as a "grand prize" at the end of the day.

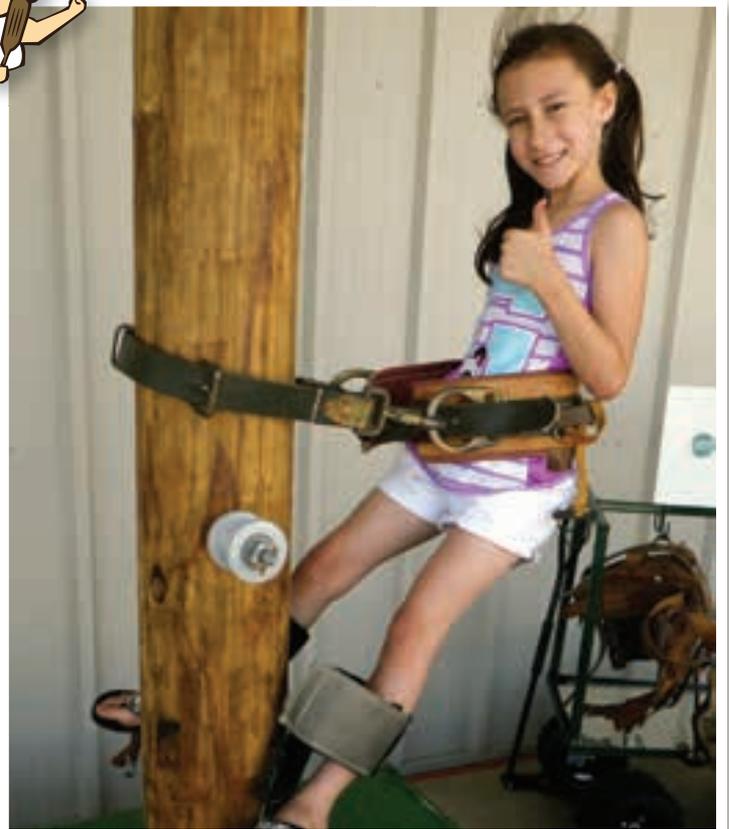
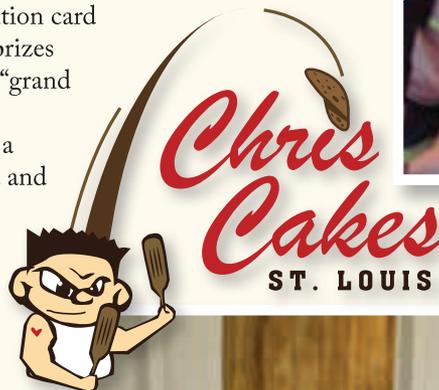
Each registered membership will receive a beautiful umbrella with a 48" coverage area and an oak wood handle as a door prize for attending.

We will have a few health care vendors set up for information and hopefully blood pressure checks.

Fun activities from last year will again be available for the children, such as two bounce houses, balloon artists, face painting and a pole climbing display where they can have their picture taken in lineman gear. New this year will be a petting zoo for the children to enjoy!

Registration begins at 7:00 a.m., and a pancake/sausage meal from Chris Cakes will be served between 7:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Music entertainment will again be provided by Duane Grapperhaus on the organ. Attendance prizes will be announced throughout the morning. The business meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. The five \$500 scholarships will be drawn after the business meeting, as well as the \$100 grand prize for the day.

We hope to see you Saturday, June 10, 2017 at the cooperative headquarters for our 79th Annual Meeting of Members! Stay for our business meeting at 11:00 a.m. and learn what has happened at your cooperative the past year and what the future holds for you as a valued member of our co-op!





Alan W. Wattles

## Across The President's Desk



## Democracy is the co-op way

**The more you put in, the more you get out.**

Every year, Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) has an annual meeting. One of the most important activities we conduct is the election for the board of directors. These are the nine people we entrust to give strategic direction and ensure the co-op has good governance.

In 1844, when the 28 Rochdale pioneers created the modern cooperative movement, they were insistent that all members have the right to vote. Unless we consistently remind ourselves about how precious this right to vote truly is, we can easily take it for granted.

At MCEC, we try to make it as convenient as possible for members to participate in the election by voting in person at the annual meeting or by proxy. As the utility industry is experiencing some of the biggest changes since its founding, electric co-ops need your

active participation. As a member of a co-op, you have the right, and some may even say the obligation, to help set the direction for the co-op. This is a critical difference between co-ops and other electricity providers, such as investor-owned utilities (IOUs) or municipally-owned systems.

With IOUs, you are a customer and there is no required ownership. IOU stockholders live far away and have no direct attachment to the organization other than seeking a return on their investment. Communities served by municipally-owned systems may vote for the mayor or city council, but the connection to the electric service is very indirect.

The board of directors of a co-op makes important strategic decisions for the organization, while the operations (day-to-day running of the business) is entrusted to the

employees. Examples of decisions boards make that impact all the members are:

- the level of involvement in community economic development
- whether to offer renewable types of energy such as solar or wind generated power to the members
- offering other services such as broadband
- approving the budget for the co-op

So, when the next election for the board comes around, you may want to ask the candidates where they stand on these or other issues. As locally-owned businesses in the community, electric co-ops have the opportunity to introduce neighbors to neighbors and rekindle that spirit of democracy at the grassroots level. We can encourage respectful debate about the role we see our co-op playing in our community.

We know that democracy is not a perfect form of governing, it just happens to be better than any of the others. Maybe if we can practice doing it well at the local level, it will have a positive impact on our democracy as a whole.



*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at [aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop](mailto:aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop)*

## New Employee

Andrew Gotto was recently hired as a new tree trimmer apprentice for your cooperative. Andrew's first day of employment was on Monday, May 1.

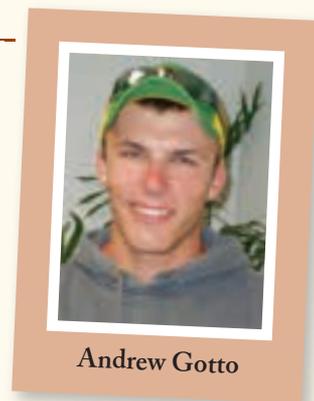
He was previously employed at HTC telephone company for the past three years and worked on the construction crew. Before that, he was employed by Lohrberg Lumber for two years.

Andrew was born in St. Louis, but has been a Waterloo native all his life. He is single.

He attends St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Church in Hecker.

Andrew enjoys spending time helping his grandfather on his farm. He is also an avid hunter.

President/CEO Alan Wattles said, "We welcome Andrew to the cooperative as an apprentice tree trimmer! He will be a valuable asset for us to help keep our power lines clear and our electric service reliable!"



Andrew Gotto

## Save with the Co-op Connections Card

Spring is just about over, but that doesn't mean the fun has to end! Did you know Monroe County Electric Co-Operative (MCEC) has a program in place to help you save on a variety of goods and services, from hotel discounts to fitness club memberships?

The Co-op Connections® Card is a free program that saves MCEC members money on everyday expenses. The card also gives you access to Cash Back Mall, where you can get money back for shopping online at over 3,000 leading online retailers.

Your Co-op Connections Card gives you access to discounts from tens-of-thousands of retailers because it taps into a national business community. But it doesn't just help you save at big box stores and chains. The card also provides discounts for businesses right here in our local community. In fact, it was created specifically to help businesses on our nation's Main Streets! And the program consistently adds new retailers to help improve our members' experience. One of the most popular features in the prescription discount benefit. Even if



you don't have insurance, the card will help you save up to 85 percent on your medications at more than 60,000 pharmacies across the country.

We know how important it is to save, and we want to make sure that you are taking full advantage of the programs we offer. The Co-op Connections card is an easy way to see the value of being an electric cooperative member. So don't let the end-of-spring blues get you down. Plan a trip for the family, get fit with a discounted gym membership or take advantage of other deals available to you. It really is the one card that does it all!

You can learn more about the discounts we offer by visiting [www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org) or calling our offices 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433.

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

## MCEC line outages – April 2017

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Description	Substation
04/05/17	1:48	144	Smithton South	Trees, Other	Smithton
04/06/17	0:56	45	Goeddeltown Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo
04/17/17	2:43	12	Brenner Rd	Vehicles or Machinery	New Athens
04/22/17	4:46	73	Ahne/Deer Hill Rd	Vehicles or Machinery	Waterloo
04/28/17	1:34	6	Nelson Ln	Large Animals	East Carondelet
04/29/17	2:32	25	LL Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo

# Don't put safety on autopilot

Accuracy and consistency when planting make for impressive straight rows that also help maximize potential productivity. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is helping farmers do just that. It can provide farmers with real-time, accurate location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance, and tractor guidance. While it can help with driver error, it does not mean that safety can be put on autopilot. Safe Electricity provides tips to help keep farm workers safe.

GPS systems with auto-guidance allow drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the tractor maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low light conditions, which enhances productivity.

Despite continuing technological advancements in agriculture, the Bureau of Labor Statistics continue to list farming among the top ten civilian occupations with high fatal work injury rates. In 2015, there were 252 fatal work injuries among farmers, ranchers and other agricultural managers in the U.S.

"There are many hazards on the farm, from tractor rollovers to chemical products. It's also important to remember that farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of their large size, height and extensions," says Molly Hall, director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. "Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents."

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on

steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with automatic steering, farm workers need to keep safety top of mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and appropriate safety steps. Drivers need to stay focused on the location of the tractor and its equipment while in the field and be ready to take action themselves if necessary.

Regardless of what technology you use on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines. A driver's vantage point from the cab may not be sufficient.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when raising any equipment such as ladders, front-end loaders or augers.

- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your utility.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



**PLEASE MOVE OVER FOR EMERGENCY AND UTILITY CREWS**

If you see police, firefighters, utility crews or other emergency personnel on the side of the road, please slow down and move over when possible.

Together, we can keep our crews safe.

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

## Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • 800-757-7433