



Menard Electric News

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE • 1-800-872-1203 • 217-632-7746
<http://www.menard.com/> • PETERSBURG, ILLINOIS 62675

Co-op Comments

On Dec. 22, David and Sherita Crosnoe celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. David is the system engineer for your cooperative.

Dwaine Heyen will complete 15 years of service with the cooperative on Jan. 3. Dwaine is the area serviceman for the Kilbourne-Bath-Oakford areas.

Congratulations to both David and Sherita, and to Dwaine on these milestone anniversaries!!!

As a reminder, carbon monoxide patches are still available at the cooperative office. These patches will help identify any carbon monoxide present in your home, hopefully giving you early warning against this silent killer. Should you like to have a carbon monoxide patch, please feel free to contact the cooperative office at your convenience and we will send one to you as soon as possible.

A Guide to Energy-Efficient Home Construction

A Guide to Energy-Efficient Construction Standards is a book available to Menard Electric's members who are building or planning to build a new home. This book gives construction tips for building energy-efficient walls, ceilings, doors, and windows. It also discusses moisture control, heating, ventilation, air conditioning systems, and domestic water heaters. The intent of the book is to provide the new home builder with some alternatives to conventional construction methods and to make the home more energy-efficient. In many cases these alternative methods can add little or nothing to the cost of building the home, but they can significantly reduce energy consumption once the home is built.

For example, making sure there is adequate insulation and that it is properly installed can reduce infiltration, which lowers heating and cooling costs. These construction standard guides are available to Cooperative members at no cost.

In addition, following suggestions in the book and incorporating these techniques into your home may qualify you for our Certified Comfort Home Program. Under this program, qualified members receive a \$500 rebate. If you would like more information on the Certified Comfort Home Program, or would like to have a copy of the Guide to Energy-Efficient Construction Standards booklet, please feel free to contact the Cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

The Cooperative will also be closed on Thursday, Jan. 1, as we all ring in the New Year.

Happy Holidays to all of our members and Best Wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year.



Five easy ways to make your home safer

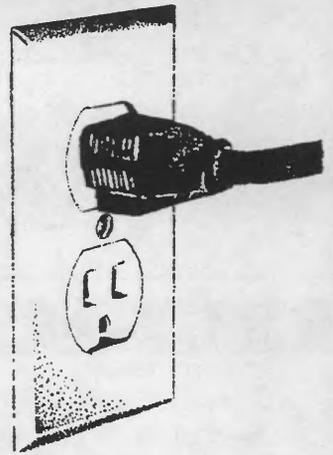
Take a few minutes for safety every day. Here are five ways to get you started and make your home electrically safe:

- Put safety covers on unused wall outlets so children can't explore the outlets with tiny fingers. Replace any broken wall plates.
- If cords are frayed or cracked, replace them. Never nail or staple cords to the wall or floor. And keep furniture off the cords — even if they're hiding under the carpet.
- Extension cords are meant to be used temporarily. It's not safe to use them as permanent household wiring.
- Use three-prong plugs in three-prong outlets. Never cut the third prong off to fit it into a two-prong outlet. And don't force plugs into outlets if they don't fit easily. You can start a

fire that way or get a shock.

- Install ground-fault-circuit interrupters in bathrooms and kitchens. They help prevent electrocutions where electricity and water might meet.

Do you have questions about electrical safety? Please call Menard Electric Cooperative at (800) 872-1203. As your member-owned utility, we will be glad to help you protect your home and family.

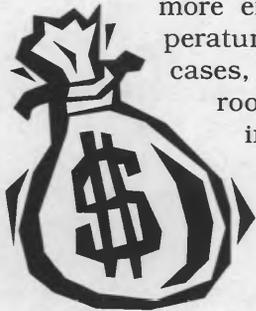


How to reduce energy use of water beds

For some people, crawling into a nice, warm water bed is the best way to survive a cold winter night. By following a few simple pointers regarding your water bed, you can stay warm and save money on your electric bill.

First of all, remember that a water bed uses more energy to maintain its temperature in a cold room. In some cases, however, turning down your room thermostat will offset the increase in the bed's electricity usage.

The average water bed uses 90 to 150 kilowatt-hours a month, which translates into a cost of \$9 to \$15.



Covering your water bed will reduce energy use. A partially unmade bed uses 30 percent more energy than one that is made.

If you have a standard water bed, insulate the bottom and sides with polystyrene insulation. Place it around the sides and underneath, between the wood deck and plastic liner. This can reduce your operating costs by about 25 percent.

An alternative to insulating is to buy an insulated liner. Tests have shown that these liners save about 13 percent on a standard king-size bed.

Keep in mind that the size of the water bed, the design of the mattress, the efficiency and size of the heater, as well as your life-style, will affect the water bed's electrical usage.

Standby power: Insurance against Mother Nature

Buying a standby generator is like buying fire insurance—you may never need it, but it is invaluable when trouble hits.

Although our electrical system is highly dependable and reliable, it is subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

How well are you prepared to handle a prolonged outage? Now is the time to take inventory of your home and farm. Determine how you would pump water, move grain, keep pipes from freezing, and provide heat and ventilation for livestock. How will you heat your home and keep foods from spoiling?

Now is the time to inventory your electrical needs. Assume you will experience long out-

ages that could cause you inconvenience and financial loss. The cooperative does not sell standby generators, but we do have personnel to help you analyze your load and make recommendations. And remember, standby generators are not normally stocked in any quantity, so don't plan on buying one after an outage occurs.

Remember, too, the installation of standby equipment requires a positive double-throw switch. Operating a standby generator without one is extremely dangerous and could result in financial liability.

Let us help you guard against any of those acts of God no one can foresee.

Most underestimate fire's power, speed

Your last guest has left your home and you have gone to bed. One of your guests unknowingly dropped a cigarette butt on the living room sofa earlier in the evening, and it's now smoldering between the cushions. How long do you have to escape between the time the cigarette fully ignites the sofa and the fire becomes deadly?

In reality, a typical living room fire can become deadly in two minutes or less after the smoke alarm sounds. Moreover, such a fire almost certainly has the potential to kill house-

hold members in as little as four and a half minutes after it began.

If you answered more than two minutes, you are not alone. According to a survey released today by the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association, 58 percent of 500 Americans surveyed believed they had more than two minutes to escape a home fire. Twenty-four percent of the respondents assumed they had 10 minutes or more before life-threatening conditions would develop.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance

If you need assistance to pay your electric bill, you may be eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). For details of this program you may wish to contact an agent in your area.

Logan, Mason and Menard county residents should contact:

Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation
1800 5th Street Rd.
Lincoln, IL 62656
Phone (217) 732-2159

Macon County residents should contact:

Decatur-Macon Community Opportunities Corporation
1122 East Marietta Street
Decatur, IL 62521
Phone (217) 428-2193

Cass and Morgan county residents should contact:

MCS Community Services
345 West State Street
Jacksonville, IL 62651
Phone (217) 243-9404 or (888) 288-4413

Sangamon County residents should contact:

Sangamon County Department of Community Resources
200 South 9th Street, Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone (217) 535-3120

Tazewell County residents should contact:

Tazewell Community Services, Inc.
2005 S. Main Street
Morton, IL 61550-1540
Phone (309) 694-4391

Please don't send postdated checks

Menard Electric Cooperative will not accept postdated checks to be held and deposited at a later date. The large number of payments we process each day makes it impractical to give special handling to postdated payments. Checks are normally deposited on the day they are received. Should they be returned by the bank due to being postdated or because of insufficient funds, there is a \$15

additional charge passed on to the member.

If, in the event, you find yourself in a situation where you feel you need to postdate your electric payment, please contact the cooperative office so that other arrangements can be made, therefore eliminating the potential of depositing a postdated

check and receiving additional charges, both at the bank and the cooperative.



Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 25, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Standard Time, by president Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to president Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin and Roy H. Seaney. Director Meredith L. Worner was absent. Also present were manager Dorland W. Smith, staff assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the Oct. 28 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders for October in the amount of \$78,435.62 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #123224 through #123484 amounting to \$1,408,622.24. After discussion, the payment of bills were approved.

The board approved 65 membership applications and 18 membership permits for October 1997.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for October. Margins for October were less than budget by \$5,000. Year-to-date margins are \$40,000 greater than budget. Financial ratios continue to show expected levels. The ownership equity ratio is 37.93 percent. There were 200 additional meters billed this past October as compared to October 1996. The number of outages and outage hours for

the month equal approximately one-third of those occurring in October 1996. Year-to-date average outage hours per member are slightly greater than last year-to-date. The main cause of the increases are due to interruptions in power supply. One employee injury was reported this month.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

The board discussed and recommended to management to proceed with preparation of the 1998 financial budget as presented in a preliminary form.

The approval reading of employee policy revision was heard. The first reading of a number of employee policies was also heard.

Director Seaney presented the recommendation of the capital credit committee for capital credit payments during 1998. After consideration, the board directed management to retire a total of \$300,000 in capital credits during 1998 as recommended by the capital credit committee.

Staff assistant, Gerald Hedberg presented the capital credit estates prepared for payment.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 11 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 7 p.m.

Just wait till you see DIRECTV

News, music, movies, sports, weather, special events...

A big technological revolution is here. And this time, state-of-the-art TV is available to rural and city residents alike.

Would you like to own America's best television system?

Then contact Menard Electric Cooperative at 632-7746 or 800-872-1203 to learn more. With equipment starting at \$204 and great program packages as low as about \$1 a day, you can't go wrong.

- 18-inch receiving dish
- Affordable, easy-to-use
- State-of-the-art receiver and remote control
- Crystal-clear digital pictures and sound
- Approximately 200 channels



Menard Electric Cooperative 1-800-872-1203

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Co-op Comments

On Feb. 1, 1998, Orene Lynn will celebrate her 30th anniversary with Menard Electric Cooperative. Orene is the data processing operator for your cooperative.

On Feb. 17, 1998, Dorland W. Smith will have completed 40 years of service to the cooperative membership. Dorland is the general manager of the cooperative.



On Dec. 18, 1997, Morris L. Bell was awarded the Illinois Cooperative Coordinating Committee Director of the Year Award for 1997. The ICCS presents this award annually to a cooperative director who best represents the spirit of a cooperative through leadership, community involvement, and dedication to those he

serves. For the past 21 years, Mr. Bell has served on your board as a director for District 5 and throughout that time he has been an outstanding asset by providing direction, leadership and vision that will, no doubt, lead us into a very challenging and changing future. We at Menard Electric would like to congratulate Morris on this very prestigious award.

Menard Electric Cooperative is continuing to offer members a rebate for electric water heaters. In order to qualify, a member must have an electric water heater (with a minimum of a 40 gallon storage capacity) installed and enrolled in our Load Management Program. If the new water heater is in a new structure or if it is replacing a gas water heater, the cooperative will rebate you \$175. If the new electric water heater is replacing an old inefficient electric model, the rebate is \$150. If you would like more information on how you can obtain an electric water heater rebate, please contact the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

Suppression Plus whole house surge suppression is now available

Today our homes are filled with sophisticated electronic equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before. And as a result, voltage irregularities due to lightning can easily damage appliances, resulting in costly repairs. It is for this reason your cooperative has developed a program that goes a long way in reducing this type of inconvenience.

We call the program **Suppression Plus** and it is designed to be one of the most complete whole house surge suppression programs around. Instead of just installing a surge suppression device at the meter, your cooperative also installs protection on the transformer as well, providing you with the best possible protection on the electric distribution side for just \$4.95 a month.

This is less than 17 cents per day and not

only covers the cost of the devices and installation, but also covers all future maintenance. But the program doesn't stop there. Remember that surges can enter your home through a number of avenues and the electric distribution line is only one such path. Phone lines and co-ax from cable, satellite dishes or antennas are also points of concern.

So for those members who wish to take the next step in protecting their home, your cooperative also has individual point of use protection devices for sale at reasonable prices. With these individual devices installed on your phone, computer, TV, etc., in addition to having protection on the meter and transformer, you will be able to rest easy the next time a storm is in the area.

If you would like more information on our

(continued on page 16b)

(continued from 16a)

Suppression Plus program and its warranty or if you would like to enroll, please contact the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

Below is a price listing of the devices available in your cooperative's **Suppression Plus** program.

Transformer arrestor and meter socket protector	\$4.95 per month
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Individual protection devices

Two outlet protection	\$51.88 plus tax
Two outlet with telephone protection	\$62.81 plus tax
Two outlet with co-ax protection	\$62.81 plus tax
Eight outlet protection	\$74.06 plus tax
Eight outlet with telephone protection	\$78.75 plus tax
Eight outlet with co-ax protection	\$86.25 plus tax

Home-cooked meals still important to Americans

The traditional "Ozzie and Harriet-style" home-cooked evening meal is still important to Americans, according to a survey by *Good Housekeeping Magazine* conducted with the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. Call it dinner, call it supper, but the evening meal is cooked daily on the stove 42 percent of the time.

Some 92 percent of the 501 female magazine subscribers said they cook a traditional evening meal at least twice per week. Oven usage was reported at "two to three times weekly" by 82 percent answering the magazine survey, which was conducted in the first quarter 1997.

Who's doing all this cooking? Even though a large majority of married men and women both work outside the home, women are still doing the big portion of the cooking, according to the survey. Women prepare the main meal 92 percent of the time; men just 4 percent of the time.

As to who cleans up after dinner, the results were similar. Women load the dishwasher 86 percent of the time versus only 7 percent for men and 3 percent for children. The numbers change slightly in terms of who unloads the dishwasher: 68 percent women, 13 percent men and 5 percent children.

Lenders can sell home mortgages to other lenders

If you are planning to purchase a house or condominium, there are some things you should know about the selling or "transferring" mortgage loans. Some homebuyers think that when they obtain a mortgage with a local lender they will always be able to talk to the folks down the street.

Wrong. The practice of selling mortgage loans to other lenders is very common, and your mortgage may be sold at any time during the term of the loan. While you cannot stop the sale of your mortgage, you do have certain legal rights under the National Affordable Housing Act, according to the Council of Better Business Bureaus:

- Lenders must notify you of the transfer at least 15 days before the date your next mortgage payment is due. The letter must state the name, address and telephone numbers of the new mortgage servicing company, the date the current company will stop accepting mortgage payments, and the date the new servicer will begin accepting them.

- You should also receive a "welcome" letter from the new mortgage servicer with the same information

listed above. If you only receive a notice from the new lender, contact your original lender to make certain the loan has actually been transferred.

- Consider contacting your local Better Business Bureau for a reliability report on your new loan company.

- The notice you receive from your new servicer should also include a statement that the transfer will not affect any terms or conditions of your mortgage contract, except the terms that are directly related to servicing the loan.

- Following the transfer of a home loan there is usually a 60-day grace period during which you should not be charged a late fee if you mistakenly send your mortgage payment to the old mortgage company.

If you have problems, contact the new company in writing. If you are not satisfied with the response, you have the option of contacting the Better Business Bureau, your local or state consumer protection office, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Federal Trade Commission.

Don't let your dishwasher flush \$\$\$ down the drain

Add up how much electricity all those appliances in your home use, and pretty soon you're talking real money on your electric bill. Your dishwasher is no exception.

About 80 percent of the energy used by a dishwasher is for hot water, not for electricity to run the motor. So, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recommends doing the following to make your dishwasher more cost effective.

- Check the owner's manual for the recommended water temperature. Many have internal heating elements that will allow you to lower the temperature if it is set too high.

- Scrape, don't rinse, large pieces of food and bones from dishes. Soak or prewash only when there is burned-on or dried-on food.

- Fill your dishwasher before each use — but don't overload.

- Do not use the "rinse hold" on your machine for just a few soiled dishes. This setting

uses three to seven gallons of hot water.

- Let your dishes air-dry instead of using the heat-drying option.

- Relax and enjoy the convenience of having a dishwasher because dishwashers use less water than hand washing — about six gallons less per load. Dishwashers also do a better job of killing germs because they use hotter water than you would use with hand washing.



Low Income Home Energy Assistance

If you need assistance to pay your electric bill, you may be eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). For details of this program you may wish to contact an agent in your area.

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Decatur, IL 62521
Phone (217) 428-2193

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345 West State Street
Jacksonville, IL 62651
Phone (217) 243-9404 or (888) 288-4413

Sangamon County residents should contact:
Sangamon County Department of Community Resources
200 South 9th Street, Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone (217) 535-3120

Tazewell County residents should contact:
Tazewood Community Services, Inc.
2005 S. Main Street
Morton, IL 61550-1540
Phone (309) 694-4391

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Dec 30, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. Central Standard Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the Nov. 25 board meeting were approved as presented. Minutes of the Dec. 11 special board meeting were also approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders for November in the amount of \$43,093.12 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #123485 through #123691 amounting to \$992,279.32. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 46 membership applications and 12 membership permits for November 1997.

Ten agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for November. Margins for the month exceeded budget by \$36,000. Year-to-date margins are \$76,000 greater than budget. Financial ratios continue to show expected levels. The ownership equity ratio is 37.9%. There were 179 additional meters billed this past November as compared to November 1996. The number of outages and outage hours for the month are less than those occurring in November 1996. Year-to-date average outage hours per member are slightly greater than last year-to-date. The main cause of the increase is due to interruptions in power supply. No employee injuries were reported this month. The request for installation of the newly offered whole-house surge suppressors has reached a total of six after being available for one month.

The 1997 inventory report was reviewed by the board. After consideration, approval was given to make the required accounting adjustments.

The 1998 budgets were considered by the board. After a brief review, the budget was approved.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts receivable were reviewed and approved for write-off.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

The committee of board members organized to study the possibilities of consolidating Menard Electric Cooperative with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, IL, reported on their recent meeting. Additional committee and board meetings are scheduled for January.

The board adopted the agreements and made resolutions to update the employee retirement and security program with NRECA to comply with the new IRS rules and orders.

Staff assistant, Gerald Hedberg presented the capital credit estates prepared for payment.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The board agreed to continue support and membership in the National Food and Energy Council for the 1997-1998 year.

Attendance of the late January workshops discussing issues involving deregulation of the electric industry by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives was reviewed. Arrangements for the March meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association was reviewed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m.

Your work doesn't stop in winter. Neither does ours.

At Channel Earth, we know that what you do in the winter months is just as important as what you do during planting and harvesting seasons. That's why we're the first source for year-round agricultural news that affects you most. We'll help you get a jump on next season with all the information you need to make the right business decisions. Whether it's technology changes, developments on Capitol Hill, or the latest commodities news, Channel Earth is always at work. Just like you. Call today to subscribe to Channel Earth and DirecTV programming.

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Petersburg, IL 62565
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Co-op Comments

In an attempt to provide you with the best possible service, the cooperative annually initiates a number of maintenance programs. Our Pole Testing Program will be the first of such programs for 1998; poles in the Virginia, Beardstown, Bluff Springs, and Arenzville areas are to be tested for damage and decay.

It has been brought to our attention that a large number of new irrigation systems are being built in our service territory this year. Your cooperative certainly welcomes the opportunity to serve these new accounts and to date, we have already completed line construction to a

number of new services. However, building three-phase line does take time, so we encourage you to contact the engineering department as soon as possible if you are planning to run a new irrigation system this summer.

Menard Electric Cooperative's 1998 Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 1998 at the PORTA High School in Petersburg. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend!!

If you would like to save up to \$144 a year on your electric bill, please contact the cooperative office today and ask about our Electric Water Heater Load Management Program.

Area meetings set to discuss possible consolidation with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

Your cooperative's Board of Directors has arranged to hold 3 area meetings for the purpose of informing and discussing with the membership, the possibility of consolidating Menard Electric Cooperative and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. Listing below are the dates, times and locations of the upcoming meetings.

March 17, 1998, at the Williamsville Jr. High School in Williamsville at 7 p.m.

March 19, 1998, at the Illini Central Middle School in Easton at 7 p.m.

March 24, 1998, at the A-C Central High School in Ashland at 7 p.m.

In the next few days each member will receive a letter with further details. The intent of these meetings is to inform as many members as possible as to the advantages and disadvantages of this consolidation. The ultimate decision on whether to proceed with the consolidation is up to you, the member owners, so it is imperative that all of the facts and information get to you as soon as possible. Presently, the Board hopes to ask the Membership to vote on the consolidation at the annual meeting on June 6, 1998. On behalf of the Board of Directors and employees, we hope you can attend one of these very important meetings.

Energy-saving construction methods

Building tip #1 — With spring just around the corner, now is the time of year when many members begin making plans to build their special dream home. Unfortunately, many of these homes will be built using techniques that will ultimately cost the member extra money for heating and cooling bills.

Beginning this month, your cooperative will provide you with building techniques that not only will save you money, but will make your

dream home as comfortable as possible. By the way, many of these techniques cost little or nothing to incorporate.

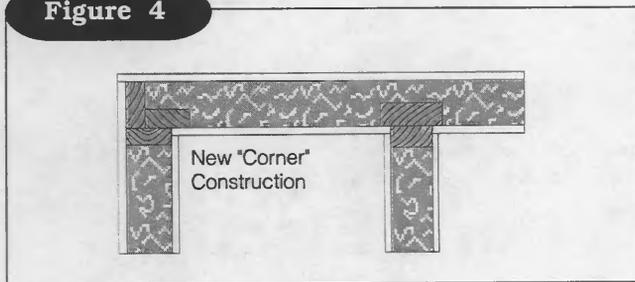
During the next several months, we will spotlight a building tip in each Menard Electric center section. These tips will all come from the "Guide to Energy Efficient Construction Standards" booklet. In order to receive a copy of the booklet, please feel free to contact the cooperative office.

Please note that we are using excerpts from the book "A Guide to Energy Efficient Construction Standards." Since we aren't referring to every illustration, our numbering appears to be off. The whole book is free from your co-op.

Walls

All exterior walls should be framed using corner and partition posts as shown in **Figure 4**. This type of construction minimizes air pockets and allows for full insulation of the exterior walls. If you have heard critics of tight home construction state that a tight home causes moisture and mildew in the corners, they are not fully insulating corner and partition posts,

Figure 4



such as **Figure 5**. As mentioned, cold corners can cause condensation to occur and if left unchecked, mildew can appear. This new type of corner prevents that. It is also easier to

Figure 5

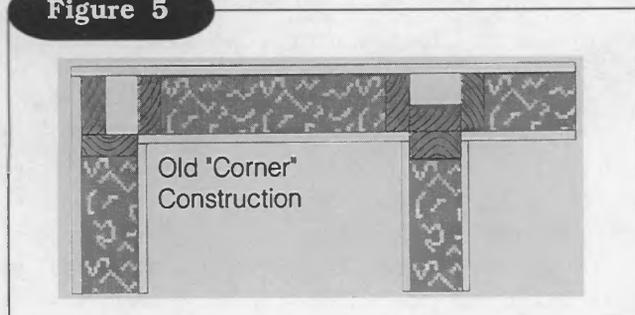
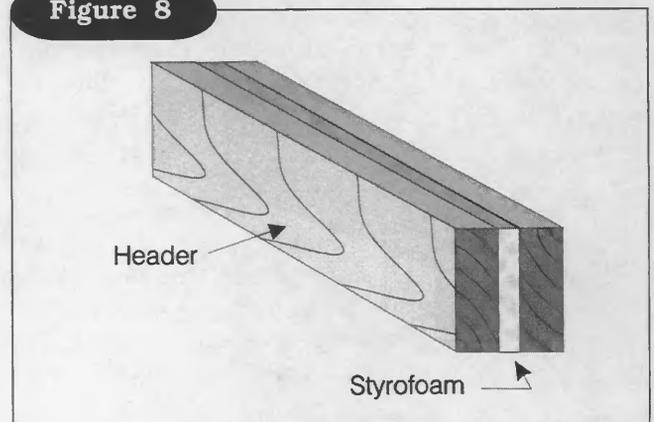


Figure 8



frame, as the framing members can be built in place, rather than having to "pre-build" a corner or partition post.

If you are using 2 x 6 exterior walls, studs could be placed on 24" centers, unless the wall is supporting a room above (second story). Placing 2 x 6's on 16" centers lowers the thermal efficiency of the wall. A stud has approximately one square foot of exterior surface area, and each 2 x 6 stud has an R-value of 6.875. Each additional stud therefore lowers the R-value 12 points for a square foot of wall. On a wall 50 feet long, there would be 12 more studs if placed on 16" centers versus 24" centers. This would lower the thermal resistance of 12 square feet of the wall (or 3 percent of the wall) by 12.12 R-value points.

If you are using 2 x 6 exterior walls, you should also use insulated headers over doors and windows, as in **Figure 8**. Using expanded polyurethane provides a rigid backing for the plywood and brings the overall R-value of the header to 15.11, not much different than the R-19 of the remainder of the wall.

Electricity use for residential energy consumption projected to increase

Total residential energy consumption is projected to increase by 17 percent between 1995 and 2015, according to a study by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). As a result, demand for electricity will grow by almost 14 percent because 81 percent of the growth in total energy use is from increased use of electricity, the study says.

Sustained growth in housing in the South, where almost all new homes use central air conditioning, is an important component of the national trend, the report continues, along with increasing use of consumer electronics, such as personal computers and home security systems.

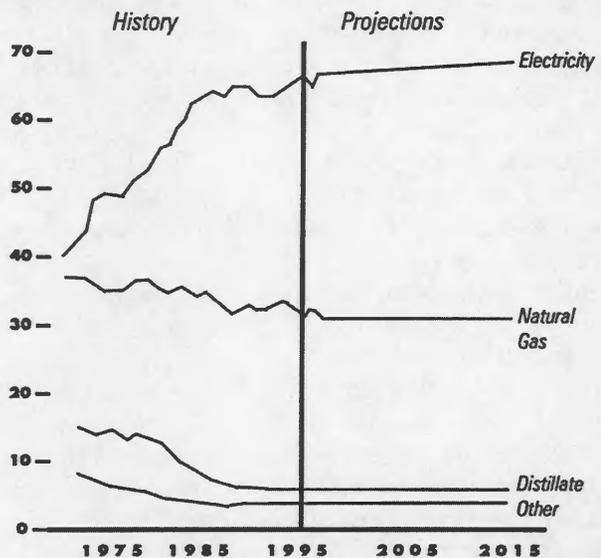
Natural gas use in the residential sector, on the other hand, is projected to grow by 0.7 percent a year through 2015, according to the report. In EIA's forecast, natural gas prices decline and are relatively low, compared with other fuel prices. Natural gas heat pumps capture an increasing share of the home heating market, the study shows, and the number of homes heated by natural gas is expected to increase more than the number of homes heated by electricity and oil.

The study reports that newly constructed homes are, on average, larger than the existing homes, with correspondingly greater needs for heating, cooling and lighting. Under current building codes and appliance standards, however, energy

use per square foot is typically lower for new construction than for the existing housing stock.

Further reductions in residential energy use per square foot could result from additional gains in end-use efficiency and more stringent building codes that would require more insulation, better windows and more efficient building design, the study concludes.

Residential Total Energy Consumption By Fuel, 1970-2015 (percent of total)



Source: Energy Information Administration

Energy-saving tips for your kitchen

Have you exhausted your little bag of tricks that help you cut energy costs? Never assume you've thought of everything! Your electric co-op offers the following tips on how to cut energy use — and costs — in the kitchen:

- Do you own gas appliances? Look for blue flames — yellow flames mean the gas is burning inefficiently and needs adjustment.
- If possible, use small electric pans or toaster ovens for small meals rather than your large stove or oven. A toaster oven uses one-third to one-half the energy of a regular oven.

- Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens whenever it is convenient to do so. They can save energy by significantly reducing cooking time.
- If you cook with electricity, turn off the burners and/or oven several minutes before you're done cooking. The heating element stays hot long enough to finish the job without using more electricity.

If you need more energy-saving tips, contact your electric cooperative. Your co-op will be glad to help you find ways to reduce your monthly energy bill.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, Jan. 29, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Standard Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Director Edward L. Allspach was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the Dec. 30 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders for November in the amount of \$51,851.38 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #123692 through #123931 amounting to \$1,645,763.77. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 48 membership applications and 27 membership permits for December 1997.

Twenty-two (22) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for December and 1997 year-end. Energy sales for the month are below budget by 36,000 kwh. Margins for December are \$16,550 lower than budget. Both revenue and cost of power are less than budget for the year. Year-to-date margins, however, are \$60,000 greater than budget. Financial ratios continue to show acceptable levels of performance. The ownership equity ratio at the end of 1997 is 37.7 percent. There were 190 additional meters billed this month when compared to December 1996. Net investment in plant (poles, wire, etc.) is \$21,592,168 at year end. This is approximately \$800,000 greater than at 1996 year end. The number of outages for the month are less than those occurring in December 1996. The number of outage hours for December 1997 are greater than those occurring in the same month

last year. Average outage hours per member for 1997 are 40 minutes greater than average outage hours per member for 1996. Power supply outages accounted for more than 2 hours and 41 minutes of the total average outage hours per member. One employee injury was reported this month. Installations of the newly offered whole-house surge suppressors has reached a total of thirteen.

The Member Services quarterly report was approved by the board after their review.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

The committee of board members organized to study the possibilities of consolidation of Menard Electric Cooperative with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co., Auburn, IL, made a report of their committee meeting. Additional committee and board meetings are scheduled for future months to continue the study.

Resolution was made to pay capital credits in the amount of \$300,000 during 1998. General retirement will be made to pay capital credits allocated during 1972, 1973 and the first half of 1974. Approximately \$65,000 of the \$300,000 will be paid to settle estates of deceased members.

Staff Assistant Gerald Hedberg presented the capital credit estates prepared for payment this month.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

After discussion, the March board meeting was changed to March 31 at 7 p.m.

Director Martin reported on plans made by the annual meeting committee for the cooperative's annual meeting to be held on Saturday, June 6.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m.



Menard Electric News

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Co-op Comments

With spring in the air, many members begin thinking about building their new dream home. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact the cooperative office and ask about the Energy Efficient Construction Standard Booklet. It will give you tips on how to build your home so that it will use energy as efficiently as possible. Those members who follow the guidelines and wish to enroll in the Certified Comfort Home Program may be eligible for a \$500 rebate.

As a reminder, Menard Electric's 61st Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 6, at the PORTA High School located in Petersburg. Mark your calendar and plan to attend this year's Annual Meeting.

Darlene and Gene McGee will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary on April 27.

Sue Freeland will have completed 20 years of service with the cooperative on April 10. Sue is a Data Processing Operator working in the cooperative office.

Dave Crosnoe will have completed 25 years of service to the cooperative membership on April 23. Dave is currently the System Engineer for Menard Electric.

Congratulations to all on these milestone anniversaries!

Residents of manufactured homes must take extra care

If you live in a mobile or manufactured home, you need to take extra precautions in case of a tornado or high winds. Residents of mobile homes, even those with tiedowns, should seek safe shelter elsewhere at the first sign of severe weather. While mobile homes can be attractive alternatives to traditional housing, they also may be more vulnerable to damage from high winds.

Make arrangements ahead of time for shelter — perhaps a friend or relative will let you come to their house in times of bad weather. If

you live in a mobile home park, talk to management about the availability of nearby shelter. If no emergency plan exists, consider setting up a neighborhood information program. Hold briefings on safety procedures as tornado season approaches.

As a last resort, go outside your mobile home and lie flat on the ground with your hands over your head and neck. Remember to be alert for flash floods that often accompany a tornado or severe storm.



Office closing

Menard Electric Cooperative's office will be closed on Friday, April 10, in observance of Good Friday. The cooperative will resume normal business hours on Monday, April 13.

(ICARE) — A new personal response service is now available through Menard Electric Cooperative

Your cooperative is launching a new community service — ICARE — Interactive Care. ICARE is a unique and affordable personal emergency response system. Partnering with ICARE, Menard Electric members can obtain added security around the clock.

The ICARE system includes the in-home installation of care guard, which is a personal wireless emergency response system simple to install and as easy to operate as a touch-tone phone. Care guard comes with a table top console, as well as a lightweight portable call button which can be worn on the belt or around the neck as a pendant. Even while in the shower, at the push of a button, care guard sends a signal for help. Within seconds, the subscriber will be in two-way contact with the ICARE response center. Trained operators then summon the appropriate help, whether it's for a life threatening emergency or merely a helping hand from a neighbor or relative. With the addition of optional motion sensors, care guard can monitor daily activities. If there is no activity for a predetermined period of time,

ICARE responders will be alerted and can send the subscriber help if they are unable to activate their system. In addition, if the subscriber leaves home for an extended period, such as a vacation, care guard can travel along, as ICARE response operators can respond to phone signals from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

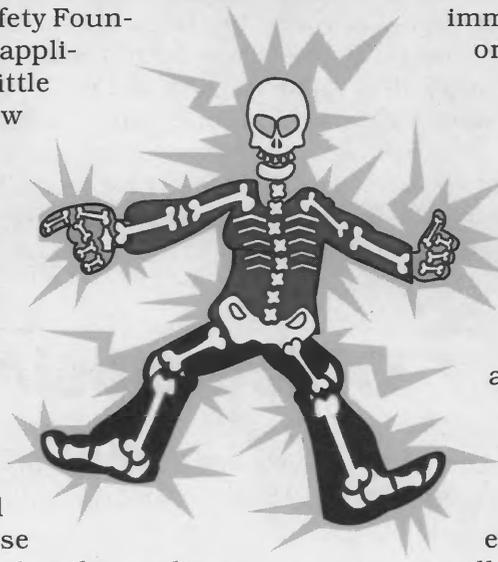
Many of Menard Electric's members live in the rural areas, beyond the timely reach of most emergency services. This is why for the past year your cooperative has been looking at a personal emergency response system. The ICARE Program has proven to be reliable and provides the best product and service available. Members may purchase the ICARE system by calling ICARE direct at (800) 882-3000. A small monthly fee is charged for the ICARE response call centers monitoring. If you would like additional information on the ICARE personal response program, you can also call the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203. It is our hope that the ICARE system will provide peace of mind for the subscribers, their families, neighbors and friends.



Don't take your appliances for granted!

The National Electrical Safety Foundation says "don't take your appliances for granted." Spend a little time with them — take a few minutes to perform some simple checks that can help prevent electrical fires. Here are some simple things you can do that might save lives:

- To make sure appliances are in good condition, look for breaks in power cords, plugs or connectors.
- An appliance that repeatedly blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker could indicate a defect that may cause a fire or electrical shock. Unplug the appliance



immediately and have it repaired or replaced.

- Unplug any appliance that has given you an electrical shock and do not use it until it has been checked and repaired by a qualified technician.
- Keep all electrical cords and products — such as radios, televisions, hairdryers and curling irons — away from water in a sink or tub.

Do you have questions about electrical safety in your home? Call your electric cooperative for more information — your co-op will be glad to help you.

Safety equipment offered at cost for older tractors



North America's five leading tractor companies are working together to help owners of older tractors equip them with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seat belts. The safety devices play an important role in reducing deaths and injuries associated with rollovers. As an incentive to owners, AGCO Corp., Case Corp., Deere & Company, Kubota Tractor Corp. and New Holland North America are making it possible to purchase ROPS and seat belts at the companies' cost, according to the National Safety Council (NSC).

This joint effort is aimed at reducing the two leading causes of death and injury to trac-

tor operators. A recent study of 76 tractor rollover fatalities by Iowa State University showed all the victims were operating tractors without ROPS and seat belts. If a tractor rolls over and it doesn't have a ROPS, there's a 75 percent chance of the operator dying, according to Iowa State researchers. However, if the tractor has a ROPS and the driver is wearing a seat belt, there is a 95 percent or greater chance of the driver walking away from the rollover accident. Wearing a seat belt is important, because it ensures the operator remains in the protection zone of the ROPS.

ROPS and seat belts became standard equipment on tractors in 1985. However, according to a 1994 survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 62 percent of the estimated 4.7 million tractors in use on farms were not equipped with ROPS and seat belts.

The five tractor companies are offering kits at cost to their dealers and asking them to sell these kits without markup. For tractor owners concerned about storage facilities with low overhead clearance, Folding ROPS kits are also available for some tractors. Most ROPS kits cost less than \$600, plus freight and installation. The NSC says tractor owners should contact their local dealer for more information.

Remember to look for the energy star label

If you are considering purchasing a new home appliance, a piece of office equipment or heating and cooling systems, remember to look for the Energy Star label, the symbol for energy efficiency.

Whose symbol? The Energy Star label was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy. Together they set energy-efficiency criteria that products must meet in order to qualify for the label. In voluntary partnership with the government, manufacturers and retailers agree to put the Energy Star label on qualifying equipment

By using Energy Star products, you will not only save money, you help the environment by using less energy. For example, Energy Star appliances typically exceed federal efficiency



standards by 13 to 20 percent — as much as 110 percent for some appliances.

Do you have questions about how to cut your electric bill? Contact your electric cooperative for more information and efficiency tips. Your co-op will be happy to help you save money.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 24, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Standard Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brook, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Director Gary L. Martin was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the Jan. 29 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$99,017.62 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #123932 through #124142 amounting to \$1,273,496.03. After discussion, the payment of bills were approved.

The board approved 43 membership applications and 30 membership permits for January 1998.

Twenty-two (22) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for January. Energy sales for the month are below budget by 846,000 kwh. Margins for January are \$56,240 lower than budget, but greater than the amount of margins recorded during the month of January last year. Financial ratios, however, show acceptable levels of performance. The ownership equity ratio is 37.7 percent. There were 212 additional meters billed this month when compared to January 1997. To date, 20 members have contracted for installation of 'Surge Suppressors' offered under the new rental program. Both the number

of outages and outage hours occurring in January are greater than those occurring in the same month last year. No employee injuries were reported this month.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts was reviewed and approved for write-off.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

Participation in the supplemental Low Income Energy Assistance Program was reviewed. The board decided not to participate in the program at this time.

The committee of board members organized to study the consolidation of Menard Electric Cooperative with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, IL, made a report of their committee meeting. Additional committee and board meetings are scheduled for future months to continue the study. Six area meetings have been scheduled during March to answer questions members may have about the consolidation. Notice of the consolidation study has been made by bill insert and by the cooperative's newsletter.

Staff Assistant Gerald Hedberg presented the capital credit estates prepared for payment this month.

Director Brooks reported on the activities of the annual meeting committee. The annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 6 at the Porta High School.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 31 at 7 p.m.



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Co-op Comments

With summer just around the corner, now would be a good time to have your air conditioner serviced. Keeping your air conditioner in proper working order and the compressor clear of debris will ensure peak operating performance during those hot, sultry summer days. A well-maintained air conditioner will not only keep you comfortable, but will also operate more efficiently and save you money.

As a reminder, Menard Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 6, 1998 at the PORTA High School. Please mark your calendar now and plan to join us. We hope to see you there!

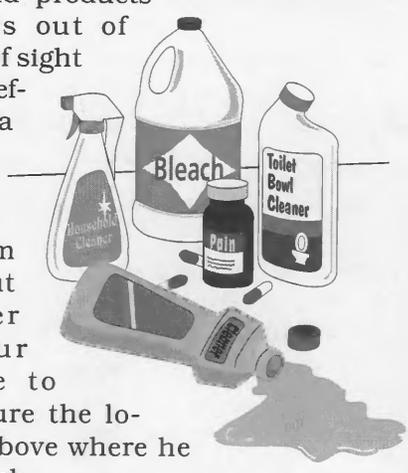
On May 14, Doug and Robin Pettit will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary. Doug is an engineering technician working in the cooperative office. Congratulations Doug and Robin!

Prevent tragedy: Lock up poisons in your home



There are precautions to help prevent children from accidentally poisoning themselves. Remember that young children will often eat and drink almost anything and they are extremely curious. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends these safety measures to reduce the risk of poisoning:

- Keep household products and medicines out of reach and out of sight of children, preferably in a locked cabinet or closet. Even if you leave the room only briefly, put the container away! If your child is able to climb, make sure the location is well above where he or she can reach.
- Store medicines and dietary supplements (especially iron pills) separately from other household products and keep these items in their original containers — never in cups



- or soft-drink bottles. For example, never store cleaning fluids near food.
- Be sure that all products are properly labeled, and read the label before using.
- Always turn the light on when giving or taking medicine to be sure you have the right medicine and the correct measure or dosage.
- Children imitate adults, so don't take medications in their presence. Don't drink medications from the bottle.
- Medicines are not candies. Never refer to them as such, even if you are trying to get the child to take medicine.
- Clean out your medicine cabinet periodically. Flush old medicine down the toilet, rinse the bottle and throw it away.
- Purchase household products and medications (including prescription drugs) that are in child-resistant packaging.



Know the difference between a tornado watch and a warning

Do you know the difference between a tornado *warning* and a tornado *watch*? With tornado season here, it is an important difference to know. A tornado warning is more serious, but you need to know what each one means (Be sure your kids know what they mean, too).

Watch — A tornado watch means that weather conditions are favorable for tornadoes to develop. For example, tornadoes are most likely to occur in the late afternoon on spring days. However, tornadoes have occurred in every month at all times of the day or night. Annually, an average of 770 tornadoes are reported every year in the United States.

Here is what to do when a watch is in effect:

- Move cars inside, if possible — hail often accompanies tornadoes.
- Move lawn furniture and yard equipment,

time permitting. They can be damaged or can cause serious damage or injury if they are blown through the air.

- Keep your television or radio tuned to weather reports. Know where all members of your family are located!
- Be alert for changing weather. Tornadoes often occur in conjunction with a severe thunderstorm that produces hail. If you believe a tornado is approaching, do not wait for a warning to be issued. Take cover immediately.

Warning — A tornado warning means that a tornado has actually been sighted. Seek shelter immediately — tornadoes are devastating and can have winds up to 260 miles per hour. If you live near a warning system, do not wait for the siren to sound. Take shelter immediately.

Plug into these outdoor safety tips this summer

Menard Electric and the National Electrical Safety Foundation recommends following these safety tips when you're outdoors during warm weather this spring and summer:

- Electric-powered mowers should not be used on wet grass. Always use an extension cord marked for outdoor use and rated for your mower's power needs.
- Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers before each use for frayed power cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housings. Don't use them if there are problems!
- When using tools or extension cords outdoors,

make sure they are marked for outdoor use.

- Unplug all portable power tools when not in use. Do not leave a power tool unattended even for a brief period. The tool can be turned on by a child who could be seriously hurt.
- Never use electrically operated power tools in the rain or in wet conditions.
- Metal ladders conduct electricity — watch out for overhead wires and power lines.

Do you have questions about outdoor electrical safety? Call Menard Electric for more information. We will be glad to provide you with safety information.

Just wait till you see DIRECTV

News, music, movies, sports, weather, special events...

A big technological revolution is here. And this time, state-of-the-art TV is available to rural and city residents alike.

Would you like to own America's best television system?

Then contact Menard Electric Cooperative at 632-7746 or 800-872-1203 to learn more. With equipment starting at \$204 and great program packages as low as about \$1 a day, you can't go wrong.

- 18-inch receiving dish
- Affordable, easy-to-use
- State-of-the-art receiver and remote control
- Crystal-clear digital pictures and sound
- Approximately 200 channels



Menard Electric Cooperative 1-800-872-1203

DIRECTV is a trademark of DIRECTV, Inc., a unit of GM Hughes Electronics.

Construction standards

Floors

Many contractors still believe that floor insulation is not needed because heat rises. The fallacy of this belief is that heat does not rise—warm air does. Thermal heat transfer does not know any difference in direction, only temperature difference. If the floor is warmer above than below, heat will be transferred through the floor. The method of insulation varies depending on the type of floor being used.

The floors above unheated basements and crawl spaces should be considered an integral part of the building envelope and should be treated accordingly. All openings in the floor surface should be sealed and closed off. This includes openings for duct systems (especially register boots), electrical, telephone, security and CATV wiring systems and plumbing systems. The drain area for bathtubs and showers are especially important, as these are normally very large openings.

Crawl Space

Crawl space floors should be insulated to a minimum of R-19. One method of doing this is by insulating between the floor joists. If using kraft-faced batt insulation, the facing should be to the floor above. Some type of support should be provided for the batt insulation in addition to staples. This can be manufactured wire stays, heavy monofilament fishing line, or wire mesh (such as chicken wire, see Figure 20). Polyethylene plastic should not be used under the insulation as support material.

If water lines or heating ducts are present, it may be desirable to insulate the crawl space walls to a minimum R-10 rather than the floor to prevent pipes from freezing. This can be done with fiberglass batts, wet spray cellulose, or 2" extruded polystyrene, polyurethane or polyisocyanurate rigid foam insulation. It is also important to insulate the box sill area.

A 6-mil polyethylene plastic, continuous vapor barrier must be installed on the ground in the crawl space to prevent ground moisture from entering the crawl space area, as shown in Figure 21. This barrier should be turned up the sides of the walls at least 6 inches and should be completely sealed. If vents are installed in the crawl space walls, they must be sealed and closed in winter.

Slab Floors

As 8 inches of concrete has the same R-value as a single pane of glass, slab floors are subjected to high levels of heat loss. Any concrete floor less than two feet below ground (including walk-out basements), should be insulated to R-10 minimum. This can be done by installing 2-inch extruded polystyrene rigid foam insulation to the bottom of the slab and in 18 inches horizontally from the perimeter. (See Figure 22.) Slab floors more than two feet below grade are adequately insulated by the surrounding earth.

Figure 20

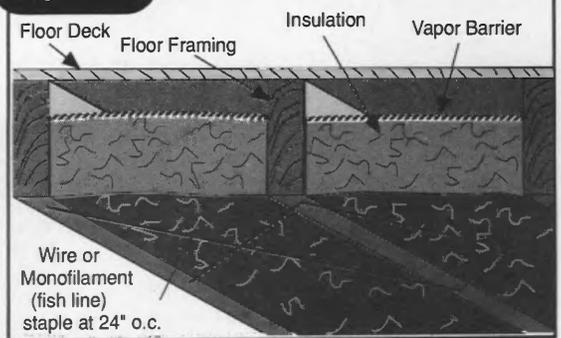


Figure 21

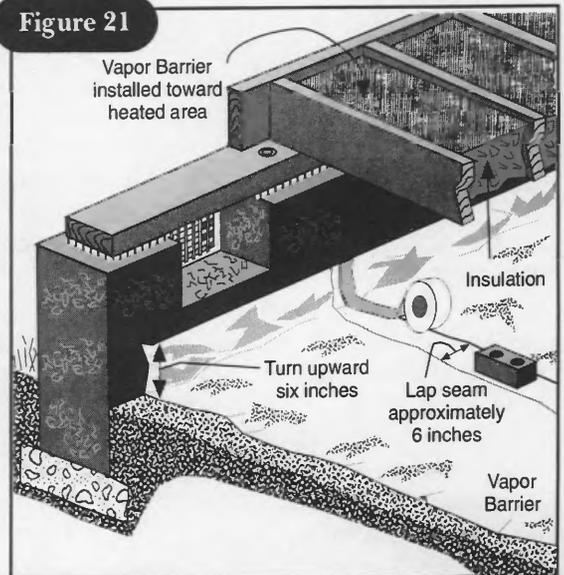
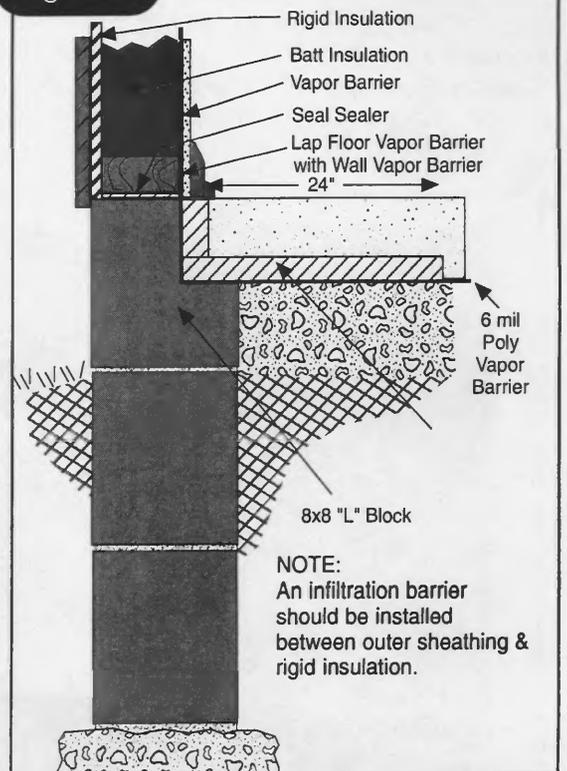


Figure 22



Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 31, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Standard Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Director Edward L. Allspach was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the Feb. 24 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$83,956.75 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #124143 through #124368 amounting to \$1,522,062.22. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 33 membership applications and 18 membership permits for February 1998.

Seventeen (17) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Report of the 1997 financial audit conducted by the firm Quint-Dreyer & Co. was presented by Bourk Dreyer. After review, the 1997 audit report was accepted.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for February. Energy sales for the month exceeded budget by more than 356,000 kwh. Margins for February are approximately \$7,000 lower than budget. Financial ratios reflect

amounts as budgeted. The ownership equity ratio is 37.9 percent. There were 216 additional meters billed this month when compared to February 1997. Manager Smith reviewed with the board the 1997 annual financial report to RUS (Rural Utilities Services). The new Surge Suppression program continues to draw interest with additional requests for installation. Both the number of outages and outage hours occurring in February are fewer than those occurring in the same month last year. No employee injuries were reported this month.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

Those directors who attended the NRECA annual meeting reported on their participation.

The Committee of board members organized to study the consolidation of Menard Electric Cooperative with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, IL, made a report of their activity. President Goetsch reported on the six area meetings held during March to answer member's questions about the consolidation.

Director Martin reported on the progress of plans for the upcoming annual meeting.

Staff Assistant Hedberg presented the Capital Credit estates prepared for payment this month.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation.

The meeting adjourned at 12 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 28, at 7 p.m.



Office closing

Your cooperative office will be closed Monday, May 25, in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. The cooperative office will open for normal business hours on Tuesday, May 26.



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61st annual meeting set for June 6th

On Saturday, June 6, 1998, Menard Electric Cooperative will hold its 61st annual meeting of members at PORTA High School located on the western edge of Petersburg. Prior to the 6:30 p.m. business meeting, there will be a free pork chop dinner served by the Mason County Pork Producers Association.

During the meeting, members will elect three (3) directors. In addition, members will vote on a proposed consolidation with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. located in Auburn, Ill.

The cooperative will once again have a bargain table where small appliances will be offered to members at reduced prices. During the meeting, prize drawings will be held which will include two

RCA DBS Dual Output Satellite Systems.

Menard Electric Cooperative was organized 62 years ago by a group of concerned citizens living in rural central Illinois. These citizens had a goal of improving the quality of life for themselves and their neighbors. For the past 62 years, your cooperative has strived to accomplish that goal by using a democratic process whereby the members of the cooperative are responsible for electing a board of directors to establish policies of the cooperative. As a result of this democratic process Menard Electric Cooperative continues to play a vital role in improving the quality of life in rural central Illinois.

Standby power: Insurance against Mother Nature

Buying a standby generator is like buying fire insurance—you may never need it, but it is invaluable when trouble hits.

Although our electrical system is highly dependable and reliable, it is subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

How well are you prepared to handle a prolonged outage? Now is the time to take inventory of your home and farm. Determine how you would pump water, move grain, keep pipes from freezing, and provide heat and ventilation for livestock. How will you heat your home and keep foods from spoiling?

Now is the time to inventory your electrical needs. Assume you will experience

long outages that could cause you inconvenience and financial loss. The cooperative does not sell standby generators, but we do have personnel to help you analyze your load and make recommendations. And remember, standby generators are not normally stocked in any quantity, so don't plan on buying one after an outage occurs.

Remember, too, the installation of standby equipment requires a positive double-throw switch. Operating a standby generator without one is extremely dangerous and could result in financial liability.

Let us help you guard against any of those acts of God no one can foresee.

Area youths tour capital on electric and telephone co-op day

High school students from across Illinois met their state legislators in Springfield on Wednesday, April 22, during the "Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day." The 17 area students representing Menard Electric Cooperative met with Senators Laura Kent Donahue and Larry Bomke and Representative Raymond Poe at the state capitol. At the end of this long day the cooperative selected two students to participate in this year's Youth to Washington tour. Pictured at right is Manager Dorland Smith with the two winners, Megan Walker of Havana and Garrick Throckmorton of Petersburg.



Advantages of an electric water heater

- Heating water with electricity is seven times safer than gas. A study by the National Fire Protection Agency has found that gas water heaters cause seven times as many home fires as electric water heaters.

- Electric water heaters require no flue or vent. They can be placed virtually anywhere.

- Electric water heaters do not use air for combustion. Indoor air quality is uncompromised by the water heater and there is no danger of explosion.

- Electric water heaters require less maintenance. There is no pilot light, no vent, no flue or heat exchanger to corrode.

- Electric water heaters have more insulation. They can be insulated on all sides, including top and bottom.

- Electric water heaters are more efficient. The heating elements are in direct contact with the water so they are nearly 100 percent efficient. A gas water heater loses 40 to 60 percent of its heat energy up the flue.

Recipe for electrical appliance safety

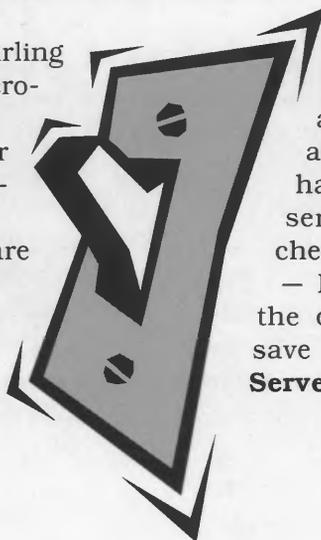
Preparation Time: 5 minutes.

Ingredients: Cords, hair dryers, curling irons, plugs, radios, toasters, microwaves, fuses and circuit breakers.

Directions: — Check all power cords and plugs for breaks or damaged insulation.

— Check plugs to be sure they are in good condition.

— Keep all appliances such as toasters, microwaves, hair dryers, curling irons and radios away from sinks and water. **Electricity and water do not mix.**



— If a circuit breaker keeps tripping or fuses keep blowing, first check to see if you have too many appliances on the circuit. Inspect cords and outlets. If the problem persists, have appliances inspected by qualified service personnel or have the wiring checked by a qualified electrician.

— Mix all ingredients together following the directions and cook up a recipe to save lives.

Serves: Everyone.

Suppression Plus whole house surge suppression is now available

Today our homes are filled with sophisticated electronic equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before. And as a result, voltage irregularities due to lightning can easily damage appliances, resulting in costly repairs. It is for this reason your cooperative has developed a program that goes a long way in reducing this type of inconvenience.

We call the program **Suppression Plus** and it is designed to be one of the most complete whole house surge suppression programs around. Instead of just installing a surge suppression device at the meter, your cooperative also installs protection on the transformer as well, providing you with the best possible protection on the electric distribution side for just \$4.95 a month.

This is less than 17 cents per day and not only covers the cost of the devices and installation, but also covers all future maintenance. But the program doesn't stop there. Remember that surges can enter your home through a number of avenues and the electric distribution line is only one such path. Phone lines and co-ax from cable, satellite dishes or antennas are also points of concern.

So for those members who wish to take the next step in protecting their home, your coop-

erative also has individual point of use protection devices for sale at reasonable prices. With these individual devices installed on your phone, computer, TV, etc., in addition to having protection on the meter and transformer, you will be able to rest easy the next time a storm is in the area.

If you would like more information on our **Suppression Plus** program and its warranty or if you would like to enroll, please contact the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

Below is a price listing of the devices available in your cooperative's **Suppression Plus** program.

Transformer arrester and meter socket protector	\$4.95 per month
Individual protection devices	
Two outlet protection	\$51.88 plus tax
Two outlet with telephone protection	\$62.81 plus tax
Two outlet with co-ax protection	\$62.81 plus tax
Eight outlet protection	\$74.06 plus tax
Eight outlet with telephone protection	\$78.75 plus tax
Eight outlet with co-ax protection	\$86.25 plus tax

Truck bids now being accepted

Your cooperative is accepting sealed bids on two trucks. The first is a 1992 Dodge 3/4 Ton Short Bed two wheel drive pickup with a 5-speed transmission and approximately 86,000 miles. The second is a 1993 two wheel drive

Dodge D-250 cab & chassis with a 5-speed transmission and approximately 140,000 miles. Bids will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, June 19, 1998. Bids will be opened at 4:31 p.m. on that date.

Budget billing begins in June —sign up NOW!

Your cooperative will once again offer budget billing to all Rate A Farm and Residential single-phase services. The budget billing plan is a method whereby a member is rendered equal monthly bills for a maximum of 11 months. The budget billing cycle will begin on the June 30 bill and will end on the April 30 bill. The May 30 bill shows credits or debits, depending upon whether the member's usage was higher or lower than the estimated amount over the previous 11 months.

The monthly amounts are determined by estimating the average kilowatt-hours used based on the actual usage of the previous 12 months. For new members, the budget amount will be determined from an estimated usage based on the best available data.

If you have any questions or would like to apply for the budget billing plan, please contact the cooperative office and we will be glad to send you the necessary information.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to president Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seanev and Meredith L. Worner. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the March 31, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$178,728.70 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #124369 through #124571 amounting to \$1,630,077.99. After discussion, the payment of bills were approved.

The board approved 51 membership applications and 30 membership permits for March 1998.

Seven (7) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Report of an unbundling rate study by the firm, Southern Engineering Co., was presented by Jack Gaines. He answered questions about detail results of the study.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for March. Energy sales for the month exceeded budget by nearly \$56,000 and 881,000 kwh. Margins for March are \$30,000 greater than budget but over \$33,000 less than year-to-date budget. Key financial ratios are slightly less than budgeted. The ownership equity ratio is 37.5 percent. There are 258 additional meters billed this month than there were in March 1997. Manger Smith reviewed with the board

the 1997 annual financial report to RUS (Rural Utilities Services). Twenty-three members have taken advantage of the new "Surge Suppression" device. Both the number of outages and outage hours occurring in March are greater than those occurring in March last year. No employee injuries were reported this month.

The member services report for the first quarter of 1998 was accepted after being presented. Resolution was made to recognize Member Services Adviser, Kevin D. Keiser for his exceptional service to the member service department during his 10 years of employment.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts were presented for write-off. Write-off was approved after review by the board.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

Director Martin reported on the activity of the Annual Meeting Committee. He reminded the board of special deadline dates between now and June 6th.

The committee of board members organized to study the consolidation of Menard Electric Cooperative with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, IL, made a report of their activity. President Goetsch reported on the proposed plan of consolidation. Attorney Smith advised the board on certain legal matters.

Staff Assistant Hedberg presented the Capital Credit estate check prepared for payment this month.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26, 1998 at 7 p.m.

Please don't send postdated checks

Menard Electric Cooperative will not accept postdated checks to be held and deposited at a later date. The large number of payments we process each day makes it impractical to give special handling to postdated payments. Checks are normally deposited on the day they are received. Should they be returned by the bank due to being postdated or because of insufficient funds, there is a \$15 additional charge

passed on to the member.

If, in the event, you find yourself in a situation where you feel you need to postdate your electric payment, please contact the cooperative office so that other arrangements can be made, therefore eliminating the potential of depositing a postdated check and receiving additional charges, both at the bank and the cooperative.



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Dorland W. Smith, left, manager of Menard Electric Cooperative, congratulates Meredith L. Worner of Manito, Roy H. Seaney of Tallula and Jerry W. Brooks of Oakford upon their reelection to a three-year term on the cooperative's governing board. The three were reelected at Menard Electric's 61st annual meeting, Saturday, June 6, at PORTA High School, Petersburg. Menard Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit electric utility that provides electricity and other services to more than 9,000 members.

Members reject consolidation proposal at 61st Annual Meeting

At the cooperative's Annual Meeting held June 6, 1998, members voted on a proposed consolidation between Menard Electric Cooperative and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co. This vote was preceded by almost a year of work by Board, Staff, and employees of your cooperative compiling and analyzing financial data and other information related to this consolidation. The Board then presented its findings to the members at a series of three meetings this Spring and during this year's annual meeting.

The ballots were cast at the annual meeting under the supervision of five independent experienced election tellers. After the ballots were

closed, the ballot boxes were transported to the National Bank of Petersburg where they were locked in the vault. On June 13th the ballot boxes were taken by the tellers to the office of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield where they were opened and counted. There were 719 votes cast, of which 240 were YES votes. For the consolidation to be approved, a two-thirds majority of votes cast was required.

Since the vote to consolidate did not pass, Menard Electric Cooperative will continue to be your energy supplier in the years ahead.

The board of directors would like to thank

continued on page 16b



Dorland Smith, manager of MEC and a 40-year employee, receives a gift in appreciation for his service.

the members for their support and patience during the past several months while we were studying the possibility of consolidating with RECC. With your continued support, the board, management, and employees of Menard Electric Cooperative will continue to serve you, the member-owners, of the cooperative.

In other balloting, three area men were re-elected to the board of directors of Menard's annual meeting at the PORTA High School, Petersburg. They are Roy H. Seaney of Tallula, Jerry W. Brooks of Oakford and Meredith L. Worner of Manito.

Speaking to some 900 members and guests, Warren Goetsch, president, said that a consolidation would be beneficial to members of both co-ops, enabling them to offer new services with the same number of employees. Several area meetings were held before the annual meeting to discuss the consolidation. Questions were also taken during the meeting before the consolidation vote was held.

Goetsch said the board and management recommended the consolidation because of improved economies of scale, improved efficiency, and the ability of the consolidated cooperative to offer new services without increasing the number of employees. He also stated that the



Members cast their ballot in the consolidation election.



Manager Smith, right, applauds four 25-year employees for their dedicated service. From left are: David Crosne, system engineer; Rhonda Satorius, secretary; Mark Bradley, area serviceman; and Marcel Verreault, lead lineman.

consolidated cooperative would be stronger and better able to deal with a competitive market under electric utility deregulation. Goetsch said both cooperatives were very similar in many ways, but that each had expertise in certain areas that could be shared if the two co-ops consolidate. He said the studies of the possible consolidation indicated savings of \$2.7 million to as much as \$5 million over the next eight years.

While RECC's rates are slightly higher than Menard's, Goetsch said that both rates would be lowered and slowly brought down to the same level over the next three to five years. After that, wholesale rates would also drop, lowering retail rates even more.

Goetsch assured the members that both boards are committed to keeping both the Petersburg and Auburn offices open and fully staffed with no employee layoffs. Several members raised other questions and concerns about the proposed consolidation, including the confidentiality of the consolidation study and the increased debt limit that would be needed after consolidation. Goetsch responded by saying certain information in the report was confidential and competitively sensitive. On the raised debt limits, Manager Dorland Smith said that the electric utility business was very capital intensive. Without borrowing money the cost of new service would have to be paid for with current member's cash, unnecessarily raising rates. The important challenge is to maintain equity at 30 to 40 percent, he said.

Members were also introduced to a new nationwide branding campaign, which over 400 electric cooperatives are involved in. With a new logo and a new slogan, "The power of human connections," locally-owned electric cooperatives are banding together in the same way locally-owned hardware stores do under the national True Value brand.

Smith said, "This new logo and tag line will be used by co-ops throughout the country to solidify and market the benefits of a utility that is locally owned and operated to provide you with quality services you need and deserve. It illustrates our commitment and belief that when people join forces and work together for a common good, nothing is out of reach. It was this



Members were treated to a pork chop dinner before the meeting.



A member registers for the balloting — and perhaps an attendance prize.

belief that created Menard Electric Cooperative 62 years ago at a time when ordinary, hard-working people joined together to bring electricity to rural America, when no one else seemed to care."

Both Goetsch and Smith discussed deregulation, or restructuring, of the electric industry and the coming of competition in a video-taped presentation. Smith said, "The governor signed the 262-page legislation into law last December, and as with any new law, many of the details will need to be determined." Goetsch said that locally owned and governed electric cooperatives and municipal utilities would have local control and authority over the deregulation issue.

Smith noted that Menard Electric had been able to reduce its rates by 5 percent in January, 1997, and hopes to implement other reductions as time goes by. "Investor-owned utilities in the state have been forced by mandate to lower their rates," he said, "but your board of directors believes that our rates should be adjusted whenever possible and not be limited to the current legislative mandates."

He stressed that deregulation will have winners and losers, or people who get a good deal and others who don't do so well. "We're afraid the people living in the sparsely populated countryside are at the highest risk of falling into the latter category," he added. Smith also noted that for 62 years quality service has been Menard's strength. "Under deregulation quality service will



Members had an opportunity to have their blood pressure checked at the meeting.

continue to be our focus. We still have real people answering the phone," he said.

Members also received some sobering news. Because many power plants in the Midwest are out of service due to routine maintenance, nuclear refueling and other problems, there is a very real possibility of a power shortage this summer. "We had the same power shortage problems last summer, but fortunately last summer was unusually mild," said Smith. "If this summer is hotter than normal or if any other generating plants or transmission lines go down, rolling blackouts will be necessary to keep the entire grid from collapsing. This is real, and last Thursday we went through practice drills to prepare."

In his report, Treasurer Roy H. Seaney of Tallula said the unusual weather caused by El Niño resulted in lower-than-expected kilowatt-hour (kwh) sales. Despite lower income, the co-op was able to meet its financial obligations. Seaney said, "This does not mean we will need a rate increase, but it also means there will not be a reduction either. But based on what we know we should see lower wholesale rates in the not-too-distant future." Seaney also reported the not-for-profit cooperative has to date returned \$1.8 million in capital credits to the members.

Near the end of the meeting Smith, who will be retiring at the end of this year, was honored for his 40 years of service to the cooperative. Along with a gift honoring his years of service, the board and members gave Smith a standing ovation in tribute to his dedication. Also honored with 25-year service awards were David Crosnoe, system engineer; Mark Bradley, area serviceman; Rhonda Satorius, secretary, and Marcel Verreault, lead lineman.

Menard Electric Cooperative provides services to more than 9,000 farms, homes and businesses in the rural areas of all or parts of eight central Illinois counties over 2,473 miles of energized lines. Members live in mostly rural portions of Cass, Logan, Macon, Mason, Menard, Morgan, Sangamon and Tazewell counties.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by Vice-President Gary L. Martin. Directors present in addition to Vice-President Martin were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. President Warren D. Goetsch was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Manager of Human Resources Stuart W. Churchill, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

The minutes of the April 28, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$141,500.98 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #124572 through #124797 amounting to \$2,008,396.99. After discussion, the payment of bills were approved.

President Goetsch entered the board room and took control of the meeting.

The board approved 54 membership applications and 13 membership permits for April 1998.

Five (5) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

A request by QST for attachment of fiber optics to Menard's poles was brought to the board. After discussion, a pole attachment agreement was approved by the board.

Director Martin presented the report of the Annual Meeting Committee.

Manager of Human Resources, Stuart W. Churchill, made a proposal promoting the Touchstone advertising program. After discussion, the board approved the proposal.

President Goetsch reported on the activity of

the consolidation committee.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for April. Power costs and energy purchases exceeded budget for the month, however, energy sales for the month were less than budget by \$23,000 and 435,000 kWhrs. Margins are \$30,000 less than budget for the month of April and \$71,000 less than year-to-date budget. Key financial ratios are slightly lower than budget for the year-to-date. The ownership equity ratio is 35.6 percent. There are 212 additional meters billed this month than there were in April 1997. Manager Smith reviewed with the board a 28-year analysis of performance statistics. Both the number of outages and outage hours occurring in April are far less than those occurring in April last year. No employee injuries were reported this month.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Bell and Manager Smith reported on the National Legislative Conference they attended during the first week in May.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

Manager Smith presented a plan to participate in the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation Integrity Fund. After discussion, the board agreed to continue as in past years.

Staff Assistant Hedberg reviewed with the board statistics for the general retirement of capital credits covering the years 1972, 1973 and the first half of 1974.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 23, 1998 at 7 p.m.



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Is your crop dryer ready?

Don't wait till you start harvesting to find out if your crop dryer is going to operate properly. Take a few minutes now and run through the following checklist. It may save you hours or even days of harvest delay.

- Inspect all wiring and panels for worn insulation, loose connections and worn-out circuit breakers. Also, check to be sure grounding wires are properly connected and not broken.
- Make sure all guards, shields and overcurrent devices are properly installed and secured.
- Check for worn bearings, pulleys, gear boxes, belts, shafts, etc. Pay particular attention to excess play in motor bearings. Bad bearings can ruin a motor.
- Lubricate all equipment before you start it. If

you are not sure of where to lubricate or what type of lubrication to use, consult your equipment dealer.

- Test it. Run through a complete drying cycle to see that all timers and switches operate properly. Let the motors run for several minutes to heat and distribute the new lubricant. Start the dryer at least twice to be sure the starting capacitors perform properly.
- If you have added motors, it would be a good idea to check with the Engineering Department of Menard Electric Cooperative to make sure the electrical service is adequate to handle the additional load.
- Don't forget to check over any fossil fuel-fired equipment used in conjunction with the dryer.

Your Cooperative must have access to its equipment!

It has been brought to our attention that access to Cooperative equipment is becoming difficult in some locations. This equipment includes meters, underground cable, transformers and in some cases, overhead lines.

In situations where equipment cannot be reached because of overgrown trees, newly built fences, patios, etc., Menard Electric Cooperative may have to enforce its "Right of Access" policy. This policy states that authorized representatives of the Cooperative shall have the right of access to the premises of the member at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading, testing or inspecting meters, connecting or disconnecting service, inspection of

wiring and apparatus, and making repairs on lines or rights-of-ways. Unreasonable deterrents to access of Cooperative facilities shall cause the service to be disconnected.

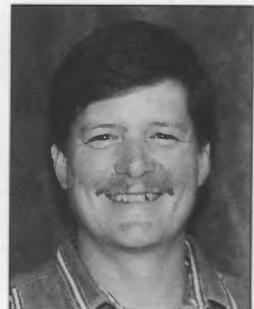
In order to avoid this situation, please take a moment to look around and be sure that the flowers, bushes, and/or trees you are planting will not interfere in overhead lines and are not in the right-of-way. Foliage that is planted in the right-of-way may be damaged in the event Cooperative facilities need to be worked on or inspected in the future.

Should you have questions or concern, please feel free to contact the Cooperative office.

Tim Schafer is new MEC employee

Timothy D. Schafer began working at your cooperative on Monday, May 18th, in the position of Engineering Technician. His duties will include installing load control devices on water heaters, working with irrigation accounts, installing and maintaining Internet facilities, inspecting geothermal installations, and maintaining and operating the cooperative's load control equipment. Tim comes to the cooperative from Brauer Pork, Inc. in Oakford. Tim is a lifelong resident of Petersburg. He and his wife, Lisa, and son, William, live in Petersburg.

If you are in the neighborhood, please stop by and welcome Tim to the cooperative family. I am sure he will welcome the opportunity to visit with each of you.



Suppression Plus whole house surge suppression is now available

Today our homes are filled with sophisticated electronic equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before. And as a result, voltage irregularities due to lightning can easily damage appliances, resulting in costly repairs. It is for this reason your cooperative has developed a program that goes a long way in reducing this type of inconvenience.

We call the program **Suppression Plus** and it is designed to be one of the most complete whole house surge suppression programs around. Instead of just installing a surge suppression device at the meter, your cooperative also installs protection on the transformer as well, providing you with the best possible protection on the electric distribution side for just \$4.95 a month.

This is less than 17 cents per day and not only covers the cost of the devices and installation, but also covers all future maintenance. But the program doesn't stop there. Remember that surges can enter your home through a number of avenues and the electric distribution line is only one such path. Phone lines and co-ax from cable, satellite dishes or antennas are also points of concern.

So for those members who wish to take the next step in protecting their home, your cooperative also has individual point of use protection devices for sale at reasonable prices. With these individual devices installed on your phone, computer, TV, etc., in addition to having protection on the meter and

transformer, you will be able to rest easy the next time a storm is in the area.

If you would like more information on our **Suppression Plus** program and its warranty or if you would like to enroll, please contact the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

Below is a price listing of the devices available in your cooperative's **Suppression Plus** program.

Transformer arrestor and meter socket protector \$4.95 per month

Individual protection devices

Two outlet protection \$51.88 plus tax
 Two outlet with telephone protection \$62.81 plus tax
 Two outlet with co-ax protection \$62.81 plus tax
 Eight outlet protection \$74.06 plus tax
 Eight outlet with telephone protection \$78.75 plus tax
 Eight outlet with co-ax protection \$86.25 plus tax

Outdoor safety is yours for the asking

And even if you don't ask, we offer you some tips on how you and your family can work and play safely around electricity in the great outdoors.

• When working outdoors, don't use ladders or long-handled tools near power lines.

• Always wear shoes when us-

ing a lawn mower and outdoor power tools. Be sure to work on dry grass only, and never use electric tools in rain or on wet surfaces.

• If your pet gets stranded on an electrical pole, never climb up to rescue it; call us, and we'll send an expert animal rescuer.

• Check your outdoor receptacles — do the outlets have their own waterproof covers?

Enjoy and respect the great outdoors. We'll be happy to advise you on more ways you can have safe playtime and work time when you're out and about doing chores or having fun.

Just wait till you see DIRECTV News, music, movies, sports, weather, special events...

A big technological revolution is here. And this time, state-of-the-art TV is available to rural and city residents alike.

Would you like to own America's best television system?

Then contact Menard Electric Cooperative at 632-7746 or 800-872-1203 to learn more. With equipment starting at \$260 and great program packages as low as about \$1 a day, you can't go wrong.

- 18-inch receiving dish
- Affordable, easy-to-use
- State-of-the-art receiver and remote control
- Crystal-clear digital pictures and sound
- Approximately 200 channels

Menard Electric Cooperative 1-800-872-1203

DIRECTV is a trademark of DIRECTV, Inc., a unit of GM Hughes Electronics.



Attendance prizes — 61st Annual Meeting Menard Electric Cooperative

Supplier gifts

Brownstown Electric — Set of Spices — Betty F. Robertson, Chandlerville
 Burton Tree — Black & Decker Hedge Trimmer — Alfred Baker, Kilbourne
 Burton Tree — Weed Eater Electric Trimmer — Richard Showalter, Easton
 Drake-Scruggs — Portable Work Lamp — Merritt W. Fitschen, Cantrall
 Electric Lab & Sales — Krypton Flashlight — Natrona Community Club (% J. Renken), San Jose
 R.R. Kinyon — Sanyo AM/FM Clock Radio — Clarence Spurgin, New Holland
 U.S. Electric — Ceiling Fan — John S. Wright, Riverton
 United Utility — West Bend Electric Skillet — Edith Fields, Dawson

Menard Electric Cooperative prizes

Karl Beaty	Petersburg	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
Wellington P. Behrends	Easton	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
Wayne Bridgewater	Dawson	West Bend Hot Air Corn Popper
Glenn Dambacher	Middletown	West Bend Iced Tea Maker
Bruce DeCourcy	Petersburg	West Bend Hot Air Corn Popper
Dennis Drone	Tallula	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
Lisa P. Genry	Tallula	West Bent Iced Tea Maker
Mary J. Gibson	Havana	Timex AM/FM Clock Radio
S. Bart Henderson	Williamsville	West Bend Iced Tea Maker
Richard Hoke	Petersburg	West Bend Hot Air Corn Popper
Henry R. Hollinshead	Williamsville	West Bend Iced Tea Maker
Charles R. Jones	Petersburg	DBS Satellite System
Walter Jurgens	Petersburg	DBS Satellite System ("Early Bird")
Arnold Kolves	Kilbourne	Rival Ice Cream/Yogurt Freezer
Charles Lane	Kilbourne	Dazey Micro-Seal System
Gregg W. Lane	Kilbourne	West Bend Hot Air Corn Popper
Malone Town Hall % R. Lyons	Green Valley	Rival Ice Cream/Yogurt Freezer
Elmer Meeker	Mason City	Hamilton Beach Can Opener
Henry Mester	Petersburg	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
David E. Miller	Buffalo	Dazey Micro-Seal System
Dean Mitts	Springfield	Dazey Micro-Seal System
Wm. H. Montgomery Heirs	Petersburg	Rival Ice Cream/Yogurt Freezer
Raymond M. Renken	Mason City	Timex AM/FM Clock Radio
Albert Richardson Sr.	Springfield	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
Elsie C. Smith	Buffalo	West Ben Hot Air Corn Popper
Robert E/ Suelter Sr.	Peoria	Rival Ice Cream/Yogurt Freezer
Julius Wiemer	Forest City	West Bend Iced Tea Maker
Herman Winklemann	Tallula	Proctor-Silex Electric Knife
Proxy prizes		
Oakleigh R. Adkins III	Hamilton Beach Hand Blender	
Larry M. Davis	Hamilton Beach Hand Blender	
Randall Lee King	Hamilton Beach Hand Blender	
Henry Litterly Jr.	Hamilton Beach Hand Blender	
John J. Wood	Hamilton Beach Hand Blender	

Building a new home? Go electric!

To avoid high energy bills, build an airtight home with proper insulation and install an efficient heating, cooling and hot water system.

The best heating and cooling system that you can purchase is GEOTHERMAL. Depending on the season, it uses the constant warmth within the soil to move heat in or out of your home as well as provide a significant portion of your domestic hot water needs. One piece of equipment does it all and it can save up to 60% or even more on your monthly heating costs.

MEC is offering a \$333/ton rebate for installing a geothermal system.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Director James G. Graff was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Minutes of the May 26, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$432,797.96 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #124798 through #125097 amounting to \$1,554,050.68. After discussion, the payment of bills were approved.

The board approved 54 membership applications and 9 membership permits for May 1998.

Three (3) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for May. Power costs and energy purchases exceeded budget for the month. Energy sales for the month were greater than budget by \$107,000 and 925,000 kWhrs. Margins are \$84,000 greater than budget for the month of May and \$12,000 greater than year-to-date budget. Year-to-date kWhr sales exceed 1997 by more than 1,000,000. Key financial ratios are lower than for the same period last year. The ownership equity ratio is 35.9 percent. There are 258 additional meters billed this month than there were in May 1997. Both the number of outages and outage hours occurring in May are greater than those occurring in May last year. Year-

to-date hours per meter equal approximately one hour. No employee injuries were reported this month.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

The board approved the appointment of the engineering firm of record.

Director Graff entered the board room.

Director Martin, chairman of the Annual Meeting Committee, reported on the 62nd Annual Meeting held on June 6, 1998.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Dues for membership in the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for the 1998/1999 year were approved after review.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland.

Office space in Petersburg for the Alert Security subsidiary of Soyland Power Cooperative was agreed to after some consideration.

Report on the analysis of the cooperative's wholesale power costs prepared by Southern Engineers was reviewed and accepted.

A number of existing policies involving collection of accounts receivable were presented for review.

Board meeting dates for the next 12 months were reviewed. Committee and delegate appointments were also determined.

Staff Assistant Hedberg presented up-to-date capital credit statistics to the board, showing total capital credits assigned of \$10,787,477.62, a general retirement of \$1,210,309.05 and a retirement to estates of \$564,949.01.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 28, 1998 at 7 p.m.



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Deregulation off to bumpy start

The rush to electric deregulation and competition is hitting some bumps in states that passed early legislation on electric industry restructuring. In Montana, four consumer groups are already calling for repeal of that state's deregulation bill that allows the investor-owned utilities to sell off their generation facilities. The groups fear that the utilities will sell their generation out of state, into higher-cost areas such as Southern California, leaving the Montana consumers with higher costs than before deregulation.

California's deregulation effort is further along, but residential consumers aren't seeing the benefits there, either. Enron Corp., a Houston-based energy marketer with ambitions of serving customers across the country, spent \$10 million to attract the business of California businesses and residential consumers. Of the hundreds in California which have officially had a choice of suppliers since March 31, only 30,000 had signed up with Enron, despite promises of two free weeks of electricity and other incentives.

Enron gave up on the California residential market in April, pulling out and laying off its sales forces. It will continue to pursue commercial and

industrial customers there, however, with contracts for nearly \$2 billion in place. Enron's residential marketing plans have met similar setbacks in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, where its residential sales programs have been suspended.

"This is a perfect lesson that the Enrons may have to learn 50 times over — once for each state — when it comes to residential customers," said NRECA chief executive officer Glenn English. "It is an unfortunate, yet perfect example of what happens when you don't have the consumers' best interest at heart. Electric co-ops do. It's what defines us."

Illinois' electric deregulation bill, signed into law last December, sets specific deadlines for choice of suppliers among investor-owned electric utility customers. The largest customers are free to shop around later this year, while commercial customers are phased in over the next three years and residences can choose beginning in 2002.

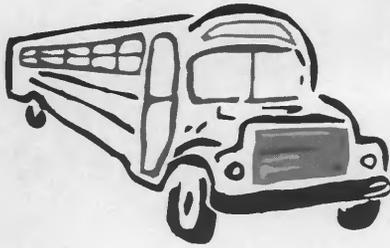
Electric co-op boards of directors, elected by their members, have the authority to determine their own plans for the benefit of their memberships as a whole.

Office closing

Our offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day. Enjoy your holiday!



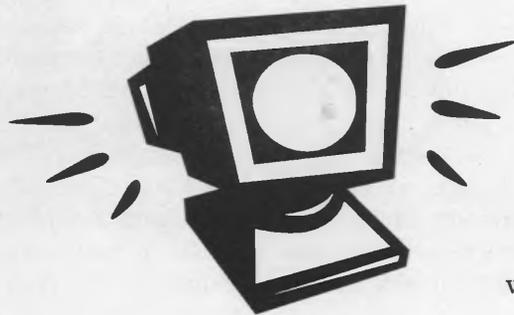
Joyce Ingersoll passed away on June 16, 1998. Joyce was a part time employee for Menard Electric Cooperative since 1983. Joyce read member's meters in Mason and Tazewell Counties. She and her husband Lloyd lived near Mason City. She will be missed.



Summer's over!

The school year has either begun or will soon. Now's the time to get back into the habit of looking more carefully when you're driving. Kids are out and about more, and they're not in the habit of being particularly watchful or careful. So, please be especially careful to avoid them.

Keeping in touch with your cooperative



Your cooperative has had a homepage for two years. In that time it has been expanded and improved upon. The homepage has a great deal of information about your cooperative from rebate programs, to employee information, and links to informative sites for all members of your family. The next time you are surfing the net check out your cooperative's homepage. Visit the homepage regularly to keep in touch with what is going on at your cooperative. We will see you soon at:

www.menard.com





OUR ENERGY COMES WITH A VERY WARM GLOW.



Let there be light.

But not just any light.

When you get your electricity from a cooperative energy provider, it makes for a glow that

That's why we've come together to create a nationwide partnership of cooperative energy providers. Together, we're known as Touchstone EnergySM

energy providers possible.



Of course, some things should never change, which is why Touchstone EnergySM Partners will always

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

(800) 872-1203 • (217) 632-7746

In 1998 Menard Electric Cooperative was one of approximately 450 electric cooperatives around the nation to become a Touchstone Energy Partner.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by Vice-President Gary L. Martin. Directors present in addition to president Martin were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, James G. Graff, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Directors absent were Warren D. Goetsch and Michael E. Carls. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Minutes of the June 23, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

Minutes of the special board meeting held on July 17, 1998 were also approved.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$218,920.72 was reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #125098 through #125405 amounting to \$2,783,282.57. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 52 membership applications and 19 membership permits for June 1998.

Four (4) agreements for electric service were reviewed and approved by the board.

Director Goetsch joined the meeting via telephone.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for June. Power costs and energy purchases were lower than budget for the month. Energy sales for the month were greater than budget by \$180,000 and 1,868,000 kwhs. Margins are \$170,000 greater than budget for June and \$183,000 greater than year-to-date budget. Year-to-date kwh sales exceed 1997 by nearly 3,000,000. Key financial ratios are lower than for

the same period last year, but adequate to meet financial goals. The ownership equity ratio is 33.9 percent. There were an additional 252 meters billed this month over and above what was billed in June of last year. A number of outages and outage hours were experienced during June due to severe weather. Both the number of outages and outage hours occurring in June are greater than those occurring in June last year. Year-to-date outage hours per meter equal approximately 2 hours, 20 minutes. One employee injury was reported this month.

Manager Smith reviewed retail rate comparisons between Illinois utilities with the board.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts were reviewed and approved for write-off.

The report of member service activities for the second quarter was reviewed.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Attention was drawn to the annual meeting to be held July 30th and 31.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland. He reviewed the strategic planning activities and pointed out dates set for upcoming regional meetings.

Activities involving the Missouri Electric Works were reported by Manager Smith.

Changes in a number of policies involving collection of accounts receivable were suggested. Changes in employee policies were also reviewed.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 25 at 7 p.m.



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Rebates Anyone?

Water heater rebates

So far in 1998 your cooperative has given 25 rebates to members who have installed an electric water heater and have agreed to have a load control switch installed on the new water heater. This water heater rebate program is available to all members on a one-time basis who agree to install an electric water heater which has at least a 40 gallon capacity. If the new electric water heater is installed in a new structure or replaces a fossil fuel-fired water heater you will receive a \$175 rebate. If the new electric water heater replaces an existing electric water heater you will receive a \$150 rebate. To qualify for the rebate you must sign up for the cooperative's load management program. In addition to the rebate above you will qualify for a 3 cent per kilowatt-hour rate reduction on kilo-

watt-hours used between 600 and 1,000 every month of the year. This could save you up to \$144 each year in addition to the rebate.

Geothermal rebates

In 1998 your cooperative has given 11 rebates to members who have an all-electric home. The rebate is for the installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system as their primary source of heating and cooling. The rebate is \$333 per ton based on the cooling capacity of the unit installed. The unit can be installed in either a new or existing home. If you install a geothermal heating and cooling system you will also be eligible for your cooperative's geothermal rate. Under this rate you will be billed 5 cents per kilowatt-hour for all kilowatt-hours used between 1,000 and 6,000 for the billing months of October through May each year.

If you have any questions on these rebates give the cooperative a call at (800) 872-1203.

October is cooperative month

Today many electric cooperative consumers don't remember the first day electricity came to their homes. In fact, your electricity was probably already there when you moved in — one of those automatic things like the telephone line and running water.

The day you joined your electric cooperative, you became a member of a unique organization. An electric cooperative is different.

Your electric cooperative is not-for-profit and consumer owned, like the local credit union or

food cooperative. That means any revenue above expenses is eventually returned to the member (you) in the form of capital credit payments.

Your electric cooperative is committed to providing the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. We take pride in our cooperative — a grassroots system of service started by pioneers like those who settled this area.

There is something different about receiving your electricity from an electric cooperative. We think it's a difference you can be proud of.

Notice of change in fees effective Oct. 1, 1998

Collection charge	\$35
Reconnection charge	\$35
Overtime connections	\$35

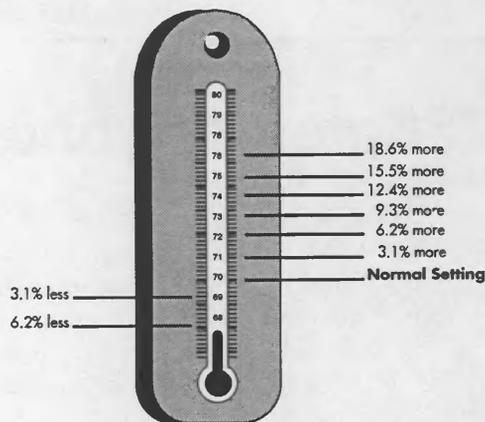
A couple of degrees equals a bunch of dollars!!

A degree here and a degree there and pretty soon you're talking real money! Lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees in the winter can mean real savings on your heating bills. Raising the temperature can also result in much larger heating bills.

For example, lowering your thermostat to 68° from 70° will save you 6.2 percent on your heating bill. Lowering the thermostat just one degree will save you 3.1 percent. However, let's say you like to keep your home toasty warm in the winter. Cranking up the thermostat to 76° will jack up your heating bill by 18.6 percent. Remember: each degree you raise or lower the thermostat from 70° means you will pay 3.1 percent more or less on your heating bill.

Temperature settings affect heating operating costs

Cost of keeping room temperature above and below 70°.



Source: *The Hi-line News*, Meade County RECC

Farm electrical accidents: When help is miles away

Frequently, farm accidents occur when emergency help is not readily accessible. There are any number of reasons. Perhaps an injured worker must walk to a farmhouse for first aid. Or the closest hospital may be more than 20 miles away. Harsh winter weather can create conditions that make travel difficult, too. That is why it's important for farmers and ranchers to know the proper steps to take in case of an electrical accident. The National Food and Energy Council, an association of electric co-ops and companies, makes these recommendations:

- Call for help immediately. Give the emergency operator your name, address, the number of victims, and type of accident. Do not hang up.

- Always assume a downed power line is hot. Keep others away and call the power supplier.

- Do not attempt to move a downed power line with anything.

- If you are in a piece of machinery that is in contact with a power line, remain inside and wait for help.

- If the threat of fire exists when machinery



is in contact with a power line, jump out and away from the machinery, so that no part of your body touches the equipment and the ground simultaneously.

- Don't touch or move someone in contact with a downed power line.

Questions about electrical safety around your farm? Call your electrical cooperative; they'll be glad to help you.

Start winterizing your home now

Even though we may have a few more relatively warm fall days ahead of us, now is the best time to start planning for the cold winds of November and the subsequent central Illinois winter weather. Since many of us haven't used our furnaces since, oh, perhaps last April; this may be the best place to start.

Heating systems and humidifiers

If you have a humidifier attached to your furnace, it should be cleaned and chlorinated. Replace filters, making sure the water is turned on and the drain is clear. Make sure the humidifier is not leaking into the furnace.

Check all furnace filters to make sure they are clean. If not, either clean them or replace them. In some systems, filters should be replaced on a monthly basis during the regular heating period. Check your owner's manual for recommended replacement time and other maintenance requirements.

If you have a wood-burning stove, check all ductwork for possible leaks. Do not vent a wood-burning stove or fireplace in the same flue as a gas, or oil burner, or space heater. Check fireplace chimney for obstructions or creosote buildup, and clean it at least once a year. Leave the damper slightly open at all times if you have a gas log or gas starter.

Plumbing and water heaters

Locate your main water shut-off valves and know how to use them.

Turn off any water lines going to outside faucets and drain the pipes to prevent winter

freeze up.

Insulate water lines in your basement or outer walls exposed to cold drafts; however, do not use heat tapes in hard-to-reach areas.

Install a temperature pressure relief valve and metal overflow line on your electric water heater. Consider insulating your water heater to prevent unwanted heat loss.

Snow Birds

If you plan on taking an extended vacation over a period of months, consider draining your entire water system and shutting the water off to your home until you return.

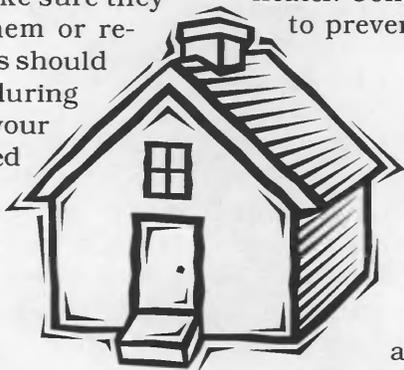
Unplug any large appliances not in use: range, washer, dryer, refrigerator (if empty and defrosted, leave door ajar), television, etc.

Set your thermostat at a minimum of 45 degrees to prevent freeze up.

Ask a friend or neighbor to periodically check your home in case of some unforeseen emergency.

Call the Menard Electric Cooperative office for more winterizing tips.

By reviewing your winterization needs now, you'll be ready later — as Old Man Winter is knocking on your door.



Incentive rates begin with September meter reading

Members using electric heat or a geothermal heating system in their home, will find that their bills for the next few months will be calculated in a different manner. Beginning with the September meter reading, the geothermal rate and electric heat rate go into effect and will continue until the meter reading in May.

As a reminder for those members using geothermal systems, kilowatt-hours used over 1,000 during this period will be

billed at 5 cents per kilowatt-hour. For members utilizing electric heat as their primary source of heat, kilowatt-hours used over 1,000 during the winter period, will be billed at 6 cents per kilowatt-hour.

If you have electric heat or a geothermal system and are not currently enrolled in these two incentive rates, please contact the cooperative office to find out details and requirements.



Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to president Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Michael E. Carls, Jerry W. Brooks, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Minutes of the July 28, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$111,134.90 were reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #125406 through #125650 amounting to \$1,597,927.43. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 54 membership applications and 11 membership permits for July 1998.

One agreement for electric service was reviewed and approved by the board.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for July. Margins are \$76,000 greater than budget for July and \$260,000 greater than year-to-date budget. Year-to-date sales exceed 1997 by nearly 2,000,000 kwh. Key financial ratios are lower than for the same period last year, but adequate to meet financial goals. The ownership equity ratio is 34.2 percent. There were 197 more meters billed this month than the number billed in July of last year. A greater number of outages were counted during July this year when compared to July 1997, but they accounted for fewer outage hours. Year-to-date outage hours per meter equal approximately three hours, 33 minutes. One employee injury was reported this month.

Manager Smith reviewed with the board, the key ratio trend analysis report prepared by the National Rural Cooperative Finance Corporation.

Manager Smith reviewed a revenue report for the cooperatives largest electric users.

The board approved the director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts was reviewed and approved for write-off.

Director Bell reported on the activities of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Directors Brooks and Graff reported on their attendance at the annual meeting held July 30th and 31st.

Director Carls and Manager Smith reported on the activities of Soyland. They discussed information presented at the regional meetings held on August 11th and 12th.

Agreements with Alert Security for use of the office at 104 S. Sixth Street, were approved after review.

Approval readings for changes in a number of policies involving collection of accounts receivable was made. After review, changes in the policies were approved.

A new janitorial service contract was brought before the board. After review and discussion, a newly formulated contract was accepted.

Procedures for insuring the cooperative's computers will perform after year 2000 were discussed. The board approved that the cooperative engage Electric Laboratories Inc. to perform an evaluation and suggest corrective action if necessary.

Staff Assistant Hedberg reported on the estates ready for payment of capital credits.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22, 1998 at 7 p.m.



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Suppression Plus whole house surge suppression is available

Today our homes are filled with sophisticated electronic equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before. And as a result, voltage irregularities due to lightning can easily damage appliances, resulting in costly repairs. It is for this reason your cooperative has developed a program that goes a long way in reducing this type of inconvenience.

We call the program **Suppression Plus**. It is designed to be one of the most complete whole house surge suppression programs around. Instead of just installing a surge suppression device at the meter, your cooperative also installs protection on the transformer as well, providing you with the best possible protection on the electric distribution side for just \$4.95 a month.

This is less than 17 cents per day and not only covers the cost of the devices and installation, but also covers all future maintenance. But the program doesn't stop there. Remember that surges can enter your home through a number of avenues and the electric distribution line is only one such path. Phone lines and co-ax from cable, satellite dishes or antennas are also points of concern.

So for those members who wish to take the next step in protecting their home, your cooperative also has individual point of use protection devices for sale at reasonable prices. With these individual devices installed on your phone,

computer, TV, etc., in addition to having protection on the meter and transformer, you will be able to rest easy the next time a storm is in the area.

If you would like more information on our **Suppression Plus** program and its warranty or if you would like to enroll, please contact the cooperative office at (800) 872-1203.

Below is a price listing of the devices available in your cooperative's **Suppression Plus** program.

Transformer arrester
And meter socket
Protector \$4.95 per month

Individual protection devices

Two outlet protection \$51.88 plus tax
Two outlet with
telephone protection \$62.81 plus tax
Two outlet with
co-ax protection \$62.81 plus tax
Eight outlet protection ... \$74.06 plus tax
Eight outlet with
telephone protection . \$78.75 plus tax
Eight outlet with
co-ax protection \$86.25 plus tax

Office closing



Your cooperative office will be closed on Wednesday, Nov. 11, in honor of **Veteran's Day**. We will resume normal business hours on Thursday, Nov. 12.

The cooperative office will also be closed on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 26 and 27, in observance of the **Thanksgiving holiday** with family and friends.



Throw that snow — carefully

A snow thrower can make quick work of cleaning a walk or driveway, but it's only as good as the safety sense of its operator. So before you start that engine, take some important

safety precautions:

- NEVER put your hand in a snow thrower to clear a clog. Always stop the engine and use a long stick to unclog the machine.
- Always stop the engine if you need to make a repair or adjustment.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving parts.
- Never leave a running snow thrower unattended. If you need to leave it for more than a moment, shut off the engine.
- Add fuel to the tank before starting the machine. Never add gasoline to a hot or running engine, and always add it to the snow thrower outdoors.
- If you're using an electric snow thrower with a power cord, be sure you know where the cord is at all times.
- Check the machine each time you use it



before you start the engine.

- Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on care and maintenance.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Students encouraged to apply for 1999 IEC Memorial Scholarships

Dorland W. Smith, manager of Menard Electric Cooperative, has announced that for the fourth consecutive year the Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to two high school seniors. The scholarships are being awarded through the Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarship program.

High school seniors pursuing a college education in the state of Illinois are eligible to participate in the program and must be a child of an electric cooperative member. Deadline for applications is Jan. 1, 1999.

"The purpose of the scholarship program is to assist electric cooperative youth, Smith said. "Menard Electric Cooperative

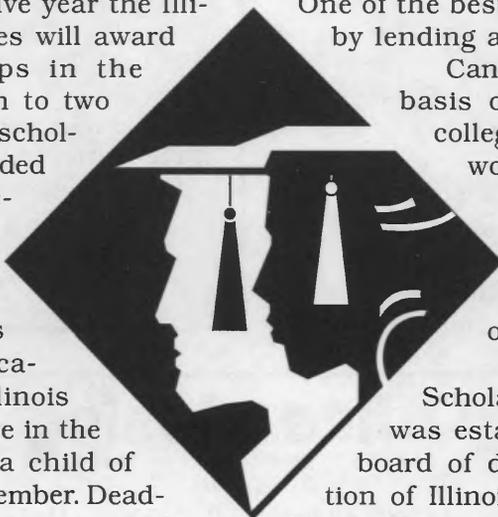
and the other electric cooperatives want to make a difference in their community.

One of the best ways we can do that is by lending a hand to our youth."

Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay, which demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

The IEC Memorial Scholarship program of Illinois was established in 1994 by the board of directors of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

For further information on the IEC Memorial Scholarship program contact Menard Electric Cooperative at (800) 872-1203.



Using your electric space heater safely

An electric space heater can increase your comfort during cold months, especially in garages, basements, workshops and other areas that may not have central heating. But using an electric space heating requires some attention to safety as well as comfort. Before you purchase an electric heater, check it carefully to make sure it has:

- An automatic safety switch that will turn the unit off if it's tipped over.
- An overheat sensor that shuts off the heater if it gets too hot.
- A low surface temperature to protect your family and pets from burns.
- A screen or grill to prevent kids from reaching inside or putting toys in the heater.
- A label or tag noting the heater has been tested and approved by an independent testing Lab.

If you already have a space heater, before you put it to use keep these things in mind:

- Check the cord. Is it worn? Is the insulation cracked? If so, don't just put some electri-

cal tape over the break. Have the cord replaced by a professional. Replacing a high-wattage heater cord isn't the same as rewiring a lamp. And make sure your professional replaces the cord with one designated an HPN cord — it's the only kind acceptable for electric space heaters.

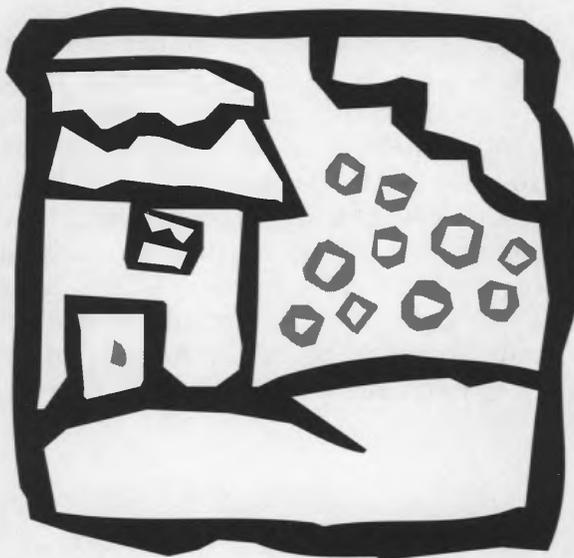
- Never use an extension cord with an electric space heater.
- Keep the heater away from water sources or damp places, to avoid potentially deadly electric shock.
- Keep anything that bums — electric or otherwise — at least three feet away from curtains, newspapers or other flammable items.
- Never leave the heater unattended or go to bed without turning it off.
- Keep the heater out of high traffic areas, and make sure to place it on a stable surface.
- Don't hang items to dry on the heater.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

Why do electric bills go up in the winter?

It's a good question. Even if you don't use electric heat, you may notice that your bills are higher during the colder months. Several factors can contribute to those higher bills, including:

- Warm baths feel great on cold days — and heating extra water can increase your consumption and your electric bill. Be sure your water heater is properly insulated if it's in an unheated space, and have it checked for leaks.
- Winter brings holidays, which often mean additional cooking and baking, and those bright holiday lights, all of which can raise your usage of electricity.
- Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer both inside and out.
- Most heating systems use electricity for some functions, such as operating the fan, and many run almost continuously when it's very cold.
- You may be using space heaters in garages, basements or other unheated spaces.
- That electric blanket or heating pad that feels so cozy on cold nights can cost another dollar or so to operate.
- You may be using engine block heaters on your cars or equipment.
- Most consumers use the clothes dryer more often in winter.



But even if your bills are higher during winter, electricity remains one of the best values around. The pound of sirloin steak you buy at the grocery costs about the same as the electricity needed to heat an electric range for 15 hours. The cost of a box of tissues and a roll of paper towels will power an electric dryer for five hours. For the price you pay for a magazine, you can read by electric light for 50 hours.

Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to President Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Director Michael E. Carls was absent. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Staff Assistant Gerald E. Hedberg, and Attorney Charles K. Smith. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Minutes of the Aug. 25, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The inventory of work orders in the amount of \$50,643.81 were reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed general fund checks #125651 through #125860 amounting to \$1,989,859.49. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 58 membership applications and 17 membership permits for August 1998.

Manager Smith reviewed the financial reports for August. Margins are \$70,000 less than budget for the month and \$189,000 greater than year-to-date budget. Year-to-date sales exceed 1997 by nearly 1,500,000 kWhr. Key financial ratios are lower than for the same period last year. The ownership equity ratio is 34.8%. There were 243 more meters billed this month than the number billed in August of last year. A greater number of outages were re-

corded during August this year when compared to August 1997, but they accounted for fewer outage hours. Year-to-date outage hours per meter equal approximately 3 hours, 45 minutes. No employee injuries were reported this month. Manager Smith presented the current loan options offered by the Rural Utilities Services.

The board approved the Director's special occasion vouchers for the month.

A list of uncollectible accounts were reviewed and approved for write-off.

Director Bell reported on the continuing education program offered by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. The board approved participation in the program for the coming year.

Director Bell reported on the recent regional meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Approval readings for changes in two policies involving employee leave were made. After review, changes in the policies were approved.

The first reading of a policy change involving operating rules for security lights was presented.

Director Seaney reported on the meeting of the Labor Committee.

Staff Assistant Hedberg reported on the estates ready for payment of capital credits.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.



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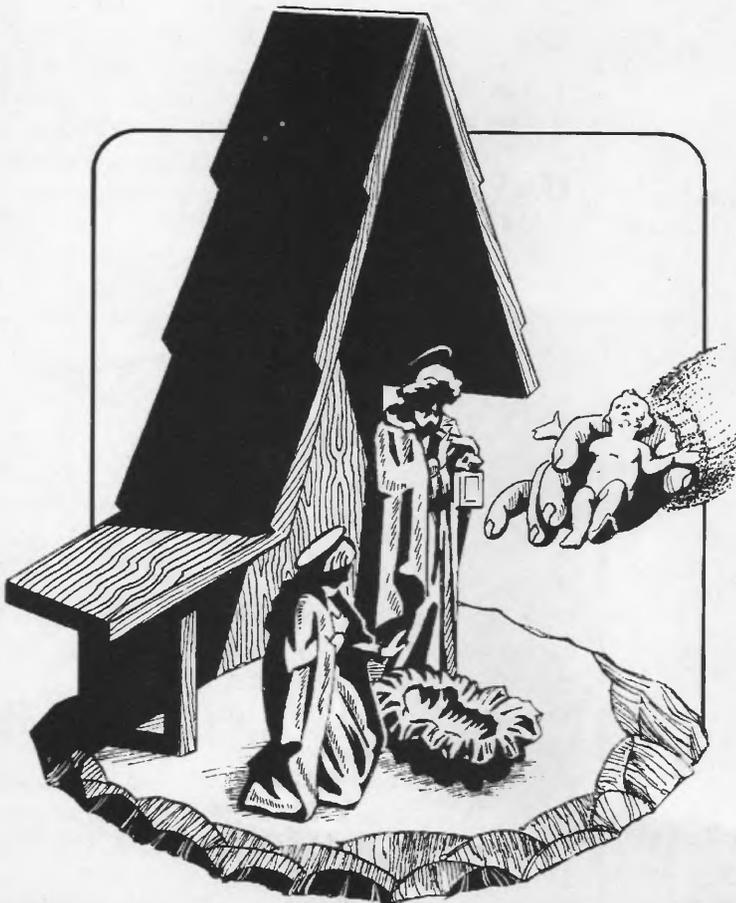
Season's Greetings

Board of directors

Warren D. Goetsch, *President*
 Gary L. Martin, *Vice President*
 Meredith L. Worner, *Secretary*
 Roy H. Seaney, *Treasurer*
 Edward L. Allspach
 Morris L. Bell
 Jerry W. Brooks
 Michael E. Carls
 James G. Graff

Cooperative personnel

Dorland W. Smith, *Manager*
 Janey L. Ames
 Randolph J. Avery
 Mark A. Bradley
 Robert P. Burris
 Stuart Churchill
 David H. Crosnoe
 Terry L. Cutright
 W. R. (Casey) Duncheon
 Terry W. Entwistle
 M. Suzanne Freeland
 James T. Haddick
 Gerald E. Hedberg
 Dwaine E. Heyen
 Christopher P. Hinton
 Alan D. Horn
 Wayne E. Jones
 M. Orene Lynn
 Phyllis A. McCoy
 Darlene M. McGee
 Brock D. Meyer
 John D. (Dan) Morgan
 Douglas S. Pettit
 Larry D. Power
 Judith A. Powers
 Rhonda K. Satorius
 Leo. P. Savage
 Timothy Schafer
 Troy S. Shafer
 Corey M. Stone
 Marcel Verreault
 Keri Vogt
 John H. Whitehurst



Easy, inexpensive ways to winterize your house

If you're worried about how "winter-ready" your house is, but don't have a lot of money to spend, the U.S. Department of Energy recommends the following easy and inexpensive ways to winterize your house. While these recommendations won't solve all your problems, they will help ensure that you are doing everything you can on a limited budget to keep your family warm and cut your heating bills.

First, draft-proof windows, doors and other air leaks:

- Test your windows and doors for airtightness (a cold, windy day is a good time to check for leaks). You can find many air leaks by feeling around windows and doors.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows with air leaks. You can do it yourself, and it is cheap. Materials cost \$40 to \$50 for the average house (12 windows and two doors). This small investment can result in cutting annual energy costs by up to 10 percent.
- Look for other air leaks through openings where plumbing or electrical wiring goes through walls, floors and ceilings. Check for drafts from electrical outlets, around ceiling fixtures and at attic openings. Seal cracks or holes; close fireplace dampers.

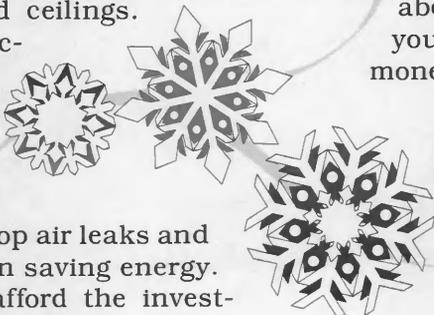
Storm windows will stop air leaks and drafts and are a big help in saving energy. However, if you cannot afford the invest-

ment, there is an alternative:

- You can install heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame at a cost of about \$10 to \$15 per window.
- A less expensive option is to use clear plastic film, which can be taped tightly inside the window frames, at a cost of about \$10 per window.
- Adding storm doors should also be considered.
- You can reduce space-heating costs by as much as 15 percent per year, by installing storm windows, doors or the use of plastic.

Adding insulation to your house is another option, but if you are on a very tight budget, even a few hundred dollars may be too much. However, if you think you might be able to afford insulating at least part of your home, you can reduce annual cooling and heating costs by 20 to 30 percent. For help, talk to an insulation dealer, local building inspector or county agent.

Do you need more information about quick, easy and efficient ways you can winterize your house and save money? Call your electric cooperative for help. Your co-op will be glad to help you because your co-op exists to provide you with electricity at the lowest possible cost and in the most efficient manner possible.



New employee

On Aug. 17th Keri Vogt began working for your cooperative. Keri will be assuming the duties of Phyllis McCoy as radio dispatcher. Phyllis is planning to retire in January 1999. Keri along with her husband, Paul, and son, Levi, live in Tallula. Prior to coming to work for the cooperative, Keri worked at Brandt's Consolidated in New Berlin. If you are in the area, please drop in and say hello to Keri.



Keri Vogt

Office closings

The cooperative office will be closed on Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24 and 25, in observance of the Christmas holiday. We wish all of our members a very Merry Christmas. The cooperative will be open for business on Monday, Dec. 28.



The cooperative office will also be closed on Friday, Jan. 1 for New Year's Day. We will resume normal business hours on Monday, Jan. 4. Best wishes to all of our members for the New Year!

Energy Star TVs. VCRs now available

TVs and VCRs have become part of the growing list of Energy Star®-labeled products including office equipment, household appliances and heating and cooling systems. Energy Star®, the symbol for energy efficiency, is a product label created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department Of Energy to help consumers identify products that save money and protect the environment by saving energy.

A total of 10 manufacturers offer Energy Star® TVs and VCRs; JVC, LG Electronics ((Goldstar), Matsushita (National, Panasonic, Quasar, Technics), Philips (Magnavox), Samsung, Sanyo, Sharp, Sony, Thomson (GE, RCA, Proscan) and Toshiba.

The availability of energy-efficient TVs and VCRs is important because they use energy even when turned off. Some of that energy is used to power features like remote controls and channel memory, but much of it is wasted. Americans spend about \$3.5 billion each year to power their TVs and VCRs. Of this amount, about \$1

billion is used to power them when they are switched off.

According to DOE, TVs and VCRs with the Energy Star® label typically have the same or better performance, features, reliability and price as conventional models but save money and the environment by using less energy. An Energy Star®-labeled TV consumes up to 75 percent less energy than the average TV when switched off, while a VCR consumes up to 70 percent less energy than the average VCR when switched off.

The average annual household energy bill in the United States is \$1,300. By choosing Energy Star®-compliant equipment when purchasing appliances and electronics, the average household can cut its energy bill by as much as 30 percent. For more information: call toll-free (888) STAR-YES or (888) 782-7937. Would you like more information on cutting your home energy bill? Contact Menard Electric Cooperative, we're always happy to help you save money.



CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE ALARM

The Tree Ornament That Helps You Have A Safe Christmas!

This attractive ornament may save a life!

A Christmas Tree can ignite and burn within a few seconds! By the time conventional smoke & fire detectors sense the blaze, an entire room could be on fire!

The heads up! Christmas Tree Fire Alarm is designed to provide you with those few precious seconds needed to prevent a tragedy from occurring.

The alarm operates on a nine volt battery (not included) and is designed to emit a piercing 110 decibel siren if it detects temperatures above 113°F/45°C.

Safe, Convenient & Easy To Use!

The alarm features integrated electronic circuitry, a low battery indicator, and performs a self diagnostic check for malfunctions. To operate, simply unscrew the casing,

insert a nine volt battery, and replace the casing. Hang the ornament about three-quarters of the way up the tree. The battery should last about 30 days when used 24 hours per day.

Prevent a possible tragedy with the heads up! Christmas Tree Fire Alarm!

These attractive ornaments are available at the cooperative office for the low price of \$5.25. If you would like more details on how you can get an ornament that may save your life, please feel free to call us at (800) 872-1203.



Board meeting report



Menard Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 27, 1998, in the office at Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time, by President Warren D. Goetsch. Directors present in addition to president Goetsch were: Edward L. Allspach, Morris L. Bell, Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, James G. Graff, Gary L. Martin, Roy H. Seaney and Meredith L. Worner. Also present were Manager Dorland W. Smith, Director of Member Services Stuart W. Churchill, Attorney Charles K. Smith, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative, General Council Michael W. Hastings and Rural Utilities Services, General Field Representative Aaron Johnson. After roll call, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Minutes of the Sept. 22, 1998 board meeting were approved as presented.

The Inventory of Work Orders in the amount of \$154,725.52 were reviewed and approved.

The board reviewed General Fund checks #125861 through #126070 amounting to \$1,954,734.53. After discussion, the payment of bills was approved.

The board approved 52 Membership Applications and 15 Membership Permits for September 1998.

Report on Legal and Public Affairs was presented by AIEC General Council Michael Hastings. His topics included deregulation of the utility industry, municipal ordinances involving rights-of-way and electric cooperatives in Chicago.

Manager Smith reviewed the Financial Reports for September. Margins are \$164,000 greater than budget for the month and \$353,000 greater than year-to-date budget. Year-to-date sales exceed 1997 by nearly 5,000,000 kWhr. Key financial ratios are low but meet required levels. The ownership equity ratio is 35.9 percent. There were 211 more meters billed this month than the number billed in September of last year. A fewer number of outages was recorded during September when compared to September 1997, and they accounted for fewer

outage hours. Year-to-date outage hours per meter equal approximately 3 hours, 47 minutes and is less than year-to-date at the end of September 1997. No employee injuries were reported this month.

Manager Smith also reviewed activities involving the load management season for 1998.

Rural Utility Services, General Field Representative Aaron Johnson reviewed with the board, options in the RUS loan program for future loans.

Director of Member Services Stuart W. Churchill presented the member services departmental report for the third quarter.

Departmental budgets for 1999 were presented to the board by the staff.

The board approved the Director's Special Occasion Vouchers for the month.

Uncollectible accounts were presented to the board for write-off. After careful consideration, the board approved the report.

Director Bell reported on the activities of The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Director Carls reported on the activities of Soyland Power Cooperative.

The approval reading of a policy change involving operating rules for re-connection of security lights was presented and approved.

Manager Smith and Director of Member Services Churchill presented a plan to reduce cost of major medical costs for the cooperatives personnel. After careful discussion, the plan was approved for implementation.

An agreement with Amren-CIPS involving service area in the Beardstown vicinity was presented to the board. After their review, management was given permission to secure the agreement with Ameren-CIPS.

The report on the estates ready for payment of Capital Credits was presented.

Manager Smith reported on the activities of the Illinois Cooperative Workers Compensation Group.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m. The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 1998 at 7 p.m.