

◀ Member Informational Meetings -
(Continued from page 16a)

Power Plant. It will be the most energy efficient and environmentally clean coal-fired power plant in the country and will allow for a portion of our wholesale energy supply to remain stable for the next 40 years.

Throughout the upcoming months, electrical consumption will be on the rise, however there are several energy saving measures that members can implement to cut down on the amount of electricity consumed. Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) are a great alternative and use 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than typical light bulbs. Over the lifetime of a CFL, it can allow a user to save up to \$30.

Simple techniques that can save on the amount of energy consumed include making sure your house is sealed so heat cannot easily escape. Checking and fixing all windows and doors for loose seals is a great preventative measure.

An average household can accumulate up to 20 percent of energy usage to their bill from hard to

identify phantom use. Use a power strip for appliances such as computers, cell phone chargers, game consoles, power tools, etc. so that you have easy access for turning off/on.

The most important topic in the meeting was a discussion of the new energy rates. The members learned that only the energy component of the bill is changing. There will be no change to the facilities charge, or the state utility tax rate. In addition, the wholesale power cost adjustment is being set to zero.

The tables below identify the cost differential between the old and new rates. The average amount of kWhs you use, will determine the dollar difference on your upcoming bills. A typical Rate 10 member that uses 1,000 kWh/month will see their bill increase \$10.50/month. After you have reviewed the tables, if you have any questions feel free to call the office at 217-632-7746 or 1-800-872-1203.

Rate 10			
Farm And Residential Service			
kWh	Current Bill	New Bill	\$ Change
500	\$80.60	\$83.10	\$2.50
1,000	\$131.70	\$142.20	\$10.50
1,500	\$181.80	\$188.80	\$7.00
2,000	\$219.90	\$235.40	\$15.50
3,000	\$296.10	\$328.60	\$32.50

Rate 18			
Electric Heat w/ Electric Water Heater Control			
Summer Months			
kWh	Current Bill	New Bill	\$ Change
500	\$80.60	\$83.10	\$2.50
1,000	\$119.70	\$134.70	\$15.00
1,500	\$169.80	\$181.30	\$11.50
2,000	\$207.90	\$227.90	\$20.00
3,000	\$284.10	\$321.10	\$37.00
Winter Months			
kWh	Current Bill	New Bill	\$ Change
500	\$80.60	\$83.10	\$2.50
1,000	\$119.70	\$134.70	\$15.00
1,500	\$152.30	\$171.80	\$19.50
2,000	\$184.90	\$208.90	\$24.00
3,000	\$250.10	\$283.10	\$33.00

Rate 19			
Geothermal Farm And Residential Service			
Summer Months			
kWh	Current Bill	New Bill	\$ Change
500	\$80.60	\$83.10	\$2.50
1,000	\$119.70	\$134.70	\$15.00
1,500	\$169.80	\$181.30	\$11.50
2,000	\$207.90	\$227.90	\$20.00
3,000	\$284.10	\$321.10	\$37.00
Winter Months			
kWh	Current Bill	New Bill	\$ Change
500	\$80.60	\$83.10	\$2.50
1,000	\$119.70	\$134.70	\$15.00
1,500	\$147.30	\$169.80	\$22.50
2,000	\$174.90	\$204.90	\$30.00
3,000	\$230.10	\$275.10	\$45.00

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ■ OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ■ WEB ADDRESS: www.menard.com

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The LIHEAP program provides a one-time lump sum payment directly to the utility company on behalf of the customer. The payment is based upon the number of people in the household and the gross monthly income of everyone in that household. This process can take approximately 30 days once you have completed an application.

The LIHEAP program can help with natural gas,

electricity, propane, and heating oil. In some cases if the utility service is shut off the customer may be required to make a good faith payment to the utility company before LIHEAP can make any promise of payment.

You may be eligible for assistance if your household's combined income is at or below the following levels:

# of people living in the household:	Gross income for 30 days prior to application date:
1	\$1,300
2	\$1,750
3	\$2,200
4	\$2,650
5	\$3,100

Please call your local office for additional amounts.

If you think you are eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). You may wish to contact an agent in your area.

CIEDC (Logan County)

1800 5th Street
Lincoln, IL 62656
217-732-2159

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

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MCS Community Services

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888-288-4413

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

200 S. 9th St., Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
217-535-3120

Tazewood Community Service, Inc.

Tazewell County
2005 S. Main St.
Morton, IL 61550-1540
309-266-9941

CIEDC (Mason County)

532 S. Schrader
Havana, IL 62644
309-543-2594

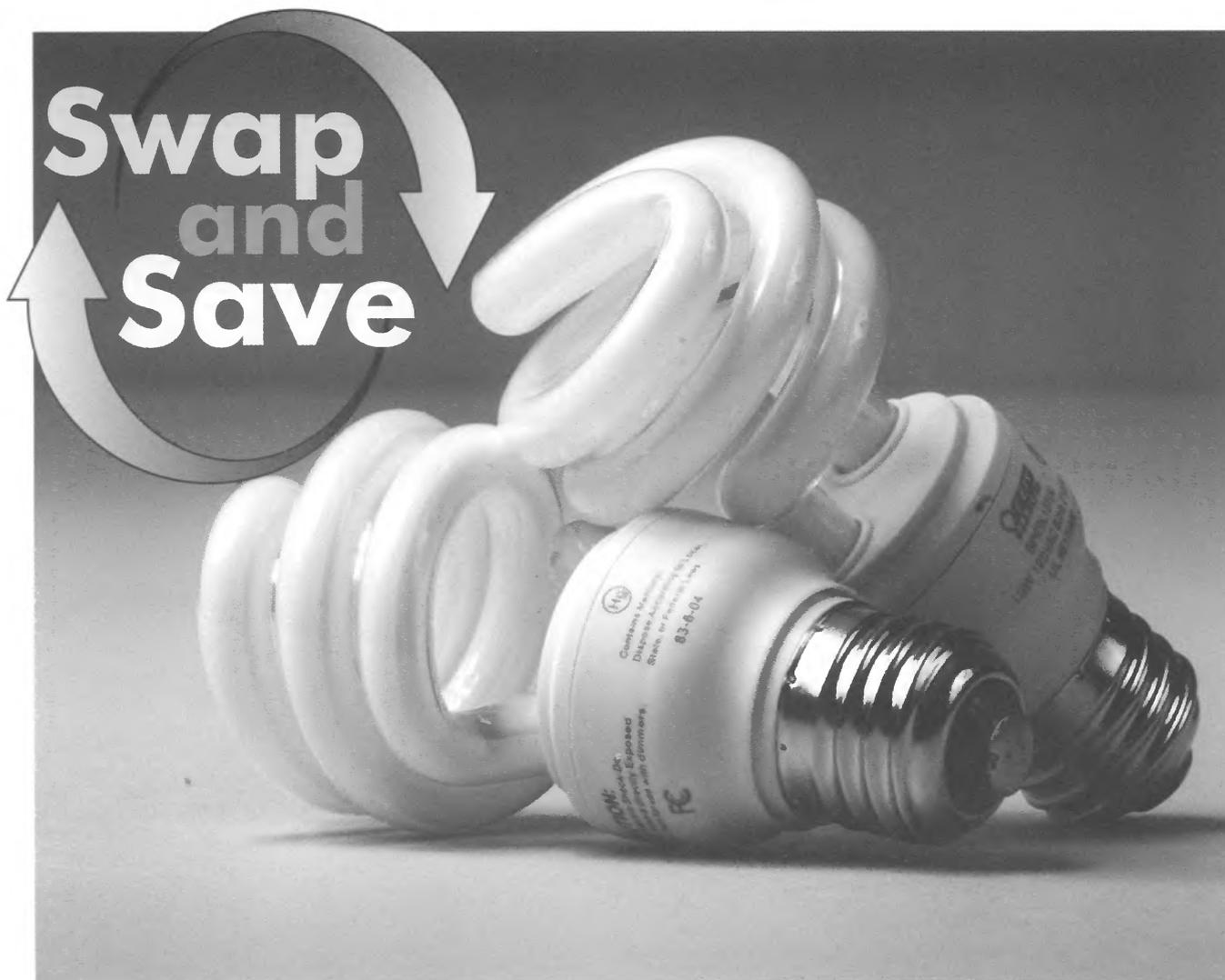
CIEDC (Menard County)

809 Old Salem Rd.
Petersburg, IL 62675
217-632-3878



Office Closing

Our office will be closed
Thursday, January 1, 2009,
for New Year's Day.



Replacing each incandescent light bulb in your home with a compact fluorescent light (CFL) can cut lighting costs significantly. Log onto the Energy Tools section of www.touchstoneenergy.coop under "CFL Calculator," plug the number of incandescent bulbs in your home into the online calculator and see how much money you can save each year by swapping out light bulbs. It just makes cents.

For more energy saving ideas contact Menard Electric Cooperative.



Menard Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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REBATES

■ Water Heater Rebates and Rate

This water heater rebate program is available on a one-time basis to all members who agree to replace an existing fossil fuel fired water heater with an electric



water heater that 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 \$100 rebate. For the second new water heater you will receive \$75. If the new electric water heater replaces an existing electric water heater you will receive a \$75 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 2.5 cent per kilowatt-hour rate reduction on kilowatt-hours used between 700 and 1,000 every month of the year. This could save you up to \$90 each year in addition to the rebate, effective Jan. 2009.

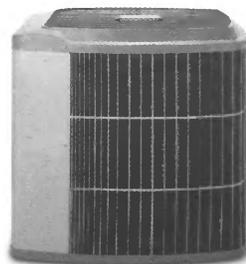
**Tankless water heaters do not qualify for rebate or load control.*

■ Geothermal Rebates & Rates

The rebate is \$600 per unit regardless of the size 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, if you have an all electric home. Under this rate you will be billed 6.7 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.

■ Heat Pump Rebates

Your cooperative is offering a \$200 rebate regardless of the size of the unit installed.



■ Certified Comfort Home Rebate

If you build a new home to the standards described in the Certified Comfort Home book you will receive a onetime \$100 rebate.



If you have any questions on these rebates give the cooperative a call at 800-872-1203 or check out the cooperative's Web site at www.menard.com.

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Make Things Easy!
Sign up now to pay your bill automatically

With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Paying Your Electric Bill through a Financial Institution

If you pay your Menard Electric bill online through your financial institution, please include your Menard Electric Account No. in the appropriate location on your financial institution's form.

This is the number in the upper right hand corner of the stub on the bottom of your electric

bill. It is in **bold face type** above the Map Location No. on your bill stub which you would normally return with your payment if you were to mail it to the office with a check. This number is important to us so we can make sure your payment is posted to your account.

Please Detach and Return Bottom Portion with Payment

Please Remit Payment to:
Menard Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675-0200

REGULAR	XXXXXXXX ←
Map Location Number	02-104-001
Amount Due	
Due Date	

72nd Annual Meeting – June 6, 2009

The 72nd annual meeting of your cooperative is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2009, at PORTA High School in Petersburg. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. A free pork chop dinner will be served beginning at 5 p.m. and a business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

As a cooperative, we are owned by those we service. The annual meeting is your opportunity to participate in the operations of the cooperative by electing directors and voting on other issues that arise.



Didn't Get Around to Preparing Your Home for Winter?

It's not too late to see savings

It's not too late to fix problems in your home or change bad habits to save on your heating bill. And some fix-its could save you on your air-conditioning bills this summer. Answer these questions to see what changes you can make.

What temperature is your thermostat set at?

For every degree you lower your setting in the winter you'll save approximately 3-5 percent in heating costs. We recommend you keep it set at 68 degrees to stay comfortable and reduce costs.

Do you set your automatic thermostat to lower the temperature when everyone is at work and school?

Make sure you're not keeping your home toasty just for the cat! And while you're at it, throw an extra comforter on the bed and lower the temperature at night as well while you're sleeping. You'll never notice a difference - but your pocketbook will.

Do you run your ceiling fans on low in the winter?

Reverse the blades to help send warm air down into your room to keep your home more comfortable so you save on use of supplemental heat or can lower the thermostat.

Have you changed your furnace filters since you turned on your furnace?

You should change them each month to ensure proper air flow and keep your furnace from having to work harder and use more energy.

Did you get around to fixing that draft under the door?

If not, it is costing you money every day. Make sure all windows and doors are properly caulked or weather-stripped to keep the cold air out and the warm air in.

Are you taking advantage of the sun's free solar heating?

Open your window coverings during the day to let the sunshine in and close them at night to keep the warm air in.

Do you keep your garage door shut?

Keeping your garage warmer in the winter could help keep cold air out of your home.

Have you used your fireplace?

Did you remember to close the dampers after the fire? You're sending heated air up the chimney if not. You can also reduce heat loss when using your fireplace if you open the nearest window slightly.

Did you put plastic coverings over any energy-inefficient windows?

You may think it's tacky but with the drapes drawn no one will ever see it.

Did you put off adding insulation to your attic?

Our Certified Comfort Home book recommends attics be insulated to R-40. Fiberglass batts achieve an R-value of approximately 3.2 per inch, and blown in loose-fill cellulose is slightly higher with an R-value of approximately 3.5 per inch.

Did you insulate your water heater?

Look for a kit at your local hardware store. Also insulate the pipes leading from the heater throughout your home, especially if they are in a crawl space or cold basement. While you're at it, make sure your heater is still set no higher than 120°.

Do you unplug your phone charger when it's not in use? Do you turn off power strips connected to your computer or other electronics?

Many items like these draw power even when they are "turned off" and unplugging them or switching off power strips can save you money.

Have you purchased compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) to replace any bulbs that burn out in your home?

EnergyStar says if you replace the five most frequently used bulbs in your home with EnergyStar-rated CFLs, you'll save more than \$60 a year in energy costs.

Did you check your ductwork before heating season began?

Be sure ducts are delivering all the warm air inside your home and not into your attic or basement by checking seams where metal ducts join together, looking for rips in flexible duct, and finding any gaps near your registers. Also make sure ducts in unconditioned spaces like attics or unheated basements are insulated fully.

Do you run your dishwasher or washer and dryer when they aren't full?

It costs about the same to wash and dry half loads as it does full loads.

Are your outlets letting air through?

You can insulate light switches and outlets with foam pads that go under the covers.

Does your home have good air flow?

It's important that your heating system receives air from return air vents to run properly. Make sure these vents aren't blocked. Don't close off rooms or air vents - it can disrupt the air flow through your home and cause your system to actually work harder.

Did you caulk around all openings in your home?

That includes all electrical, telephone, cable and water lines as well as your dryer vent.

Do you leave your bathroom's vent fan or stove's range hood on longer than necessary?

You're sending heat up those vents as well as moisture, so turn them off when you're finished.

Juiced-up Generators

Standby generators are great. They can keep the heat on and life-saving equipment operating during a power outage. But hooking up a generator wrong can put a lineman's life at risk.

Your wiring system should include a transfer switch to disconnect your service from ours before you start your generator. If the switch doesn't work right, the generator can feed electricity back into lines our linemen think are de-energized while they try to restore your power. Have a qualified electrician install a transfer switch today.

Safety Tips - Post these next to your generator!

- **Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator.** Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- **Maintain adequate ventilation.** Generators emit carbon monoxide. Never operate a generator in your home, garage, or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry, outside location.
- **Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring.** This can energize utility power lines and injure you or



others working nearby. Electrical back feed also can damage the generator and home electrical equipment. Make sure you have a transfer switch installed.

- **Turn off generator and allow cooling before refueling.** Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electrical spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location.
 - **Protect your appliances.** Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit.
 - **Use proper extension cords.** Use only safety-tested, shop-
- type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- **Shut down generator properly.** Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
 - **Remember maintenance between uses.** It's important to drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil-filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

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Stay Safe After a Winter Storm

We know that outages due to winter storms are very stressful. But we want to remind you that safety should be a top priority for your family. Please be mindful of the electrical hazards that storms can leave in their wake.

Downed Power Lines Spell Trouble

Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are dangerous. Even if your home isn't receiving power, the power lines leading to it could be energized. Warn others to stay away from lines and contact Menard Electric immediately if you see lines down.

Keep in mind a downed power line that's energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous. A fence or guardrail touching a downed line can be energized for several thousand yards, and this poses a threat to anyone coming into contact with these structures. Also, stay away from puddles of water in contact with downed lines. Encountering these objects can be as hazardous as coming into contact with the downed power line itself.

Keep Your Home Safe

Never use a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside your home or garage; Carbon Monoxide can build up in your home and become deadly.

If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used, or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator. See page 16c for more on this.



Prepare food safely when the power is out.

Frozen Food Safety After an Outage

One concern after a prolonged outage is the safety of your refrigerated and frozen foods. The American Red Cross has detailed guidelines at www.redcross.org, but here are some of their basic rules.

If a power outage is less than two hours, you don't need to be concerned. If you expect the power to be out for longer, you'll need to pay attention to your perishable foods. If the temperature outside is below freezing you may be able

to keep foods outdoors for longer periods than they would stay cold or frozen inside.

Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen 24 hours, a full freezer, 48 hours. Refrigerated perishables should not be kept above 40 degrees for more than two hours. When the power is restored check your freezer. If foods have ice crystals and the temperature is not above 40 degrees the food safely can be refrozen.

Decide Now on Your Next Water Heater

When your water heater quits, you need a new one fast. And that often means not having time to consider all your options. But remember, you'll likely live with your decision for more than 10 years, making that on-the-spot decision one that will affect your energy costs for many years. Remember to look at more than the initial purchase price and consider how much each model will cost to operate monthly. Two heaters may produce the same amount of water, but could vary greatly in how much it costs them to do so. Also, consider replacing your gas water heater with an electric model to save even more money with Menard Electric.

Earn An Electric Water Heater Rebate and Rate Reduction

Replace your gas-fired water heater with an electric one and you could earn up to \$190 back from Menard Electric. You'll earn a \$100 rebate from Menard Electric when you install your new water heater and sign up for the cooperative's load management program.* If you already have an electric water heater and replace it with another electric model, you'll earn \$75.

In addition, you'll qualify for a 2.5-cent per kilowatt-hour rate reduction on kilowatt-hours used between 700 and 1,000 every month. This could save you up to \$90 each year on top of the one-time rebate.

Call the co-op at 800-872-1203

or check out our Web site at

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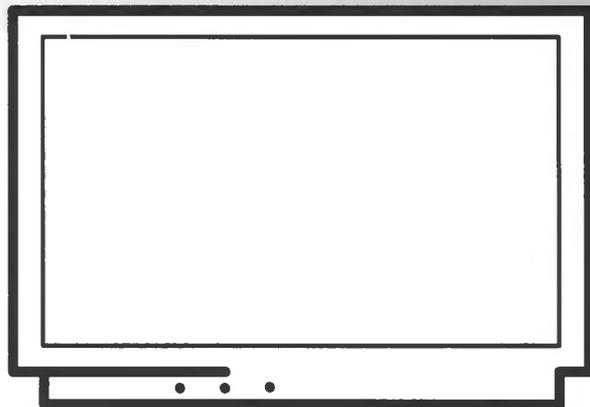
- Rebates are as follows:
Available on a one-time basis to members. \$100 if replacing an existing fossil-fuel fired water heater with an electric water heater that has at least a 40-gallon capacity. \$100 if an electric water heater is installed in a new structure. \$75 if a new electric water heater replaces an existing electric water heater. To qualify for any rebate you must sign up for the cooperative's load management program. Tankless or on-demand water heaters do not qualify for rebates or load control program.

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An Easy Way to Protect Your Electronics and Appliances

Whether you have the newest plasma television or not, you probably have a houseful of electronics and appliances that could be severely damaged in a lightning strike. Look around at all the appliances in your kitchen and take note of your cordless phone, stereo, computer and television. Our homes are filled with sophisticated electric equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before to voltage irregularities due to lightning. What would it cost to repair or replace all of these items in event of damage due to a lightning-caused power surge?

These items your family enjoys each day would quickly add up to big bucks if you had to repair or purchase them all at once. Menard Electric knows this and offers several ways you can protect your investments. It's easy, just sign up for the plan you need and you're covered!



Basic Surge Protection Plan \$4.95/month

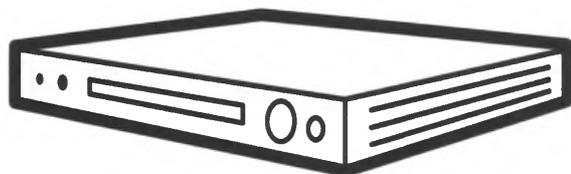
This plan protects the major electromechanical appliances (white appliances) in your home, including your refrigerator, washer, dryer, range, dishwasher, etc. A whole-house surge protector is installed on your electric meter to provide protection for less than 17 cents per day, and the price includes the surge protector, installation and all future maintenance.

Premium Surge Protection Plan \$5.95/month

The premium plan goes beyond the basic plan to include protection for sensitive electronic equipment such as your computer, television, stereo, telephone, answering machine, clock radio, etc. The plan requires an initial \$49.95 fee to cover the price of four individual point-of-use surge protectors that are used in addition to the whole-house surge protector. The point-of-use protectors can be used to protect an entertainment center, computer center, along with a cordless phone and two or three other pieces of electronic equipment. A circuit receptacle tester is also included that will let you know if you have the right amount of surge protection.

Point-of-Use Surge Protectors

We can also provide additional point-of-use protection devices for your computer, television, satellite dish and other electronic equipment. They include lifetime warranties for all devices and for the repair or replacement of the equipment they are protecting. Remember, lightning can enter your home through a phone line, cable line, satellite or antenna connection as well as through your electrical service. These point-of-use devices protect these areas and ensure that all your electronic devices are covered.



With these devices you can rest easy the next time a storm comes, knowing your home's appliances and electronics are protected. Call our office at 800-872-1203 or 632-7746 for more details or visit www.menard.com for information on this and other programs we offer.

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BOARD MEETING REPORT

**Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
November 25, 2008**

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Director Steven L. Wornor. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

The Agenda of the meeting was read. There were no changes or additions to the Agenda. Thereafter with President Martin presiding and with these minutes being transcribed by or under the direction of Secretary Frye, the following procedures were had (all action being first duly moved and seconded, and all action taken being upon the unanimous vote of the Board, or without dissenting vote or abstention, unless otherwise stated).

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board correspondence received from Gerald Herold regarding a tree trimming complaint. Mr. Herold was not a member of the Cooperative, but Burton Tree Service had trimmed on the Cooperative easement, which easement was located on Mr. Herold's property. Manager Frasco introduced Gerald Herold, who addressed the Board.

President Martin reviewed with the Board the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of October 2008. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco discussed new construction. He also reviewed outages and the nature of the outages for the month. He advised that there were 19 new irrigation services for 2009 and that paperwork had been started on those services. He discussed installation of the old Menard Electric sign at the Cooperative Headquarters Site. He advised that Menard County Zoning presently would not allow the Cooperative to place the sign on the property. He

advised that it might be possible to obtain a variance from Menard County so the sign could be placed at the Site. It was the consensus of the Board to mount the sign on the building which would not require a variance. He advised that some Cooperative Members had inquired about Net Metering. Manager Frasco reported that the premiums for Blue Cross/Blue Shield would go up approximately 15 percent. He reported on those Cooperative Managers who were resigning. He discussed with the Board the Informational Meetings and advised that attendance had been low for all the Informational Meetings. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of October. Year to date margins were \$1,513,082 compared to \$768,291 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of October was 34.13 percent and the number of members served was 10,484 compared to 10,416 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of October was \$34,177,515 compared to \$32,174,357 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities. Director Goetsch distributed the 2008/2009 IEC Continuing Education Program.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc.

Director Goetsch reported on the Policy Meeting and the recommendations of the Policy Committee. Director Goetsch advised that the committee had met before the monthly meeting and was recommending some changes to the Cooperative Policies and Bylaws. It was the recommendation of Wayne Jones that the Cooperative do away with Service Permits as such really had no purpose now. Manager Frasco distributed materials with regard to Article VIII Non-Profit Operation, specifically Section 7.02 Patronage Capital in Connection with Furnishing Electric Energy. He advised that it was his recommendation that the Cooperative revise the Bylaws to treat generation and transmission capital credits in a different manner from member and estate capital credits. He reviewed proposed language for allowing the Board of Directors to

adopt rules providing for separate retirement of G&T capital credits. It was the consensus of the committee to request that Manager Frasco and Attorney Smith draft a proposed revised Bylaw to provide a separate account for G&T Capital Credits, for review and consideration at next month's Board Meeting. It was the consensus of the Board to do away with Service Permits.

Director Goetsch also discussed with the Board having a provision in the Bylaws for early retirement of Corporate Memberships for business entities, but made no recommendations. It was the consensus of the Board that the staff prepare language to address the issue of G&T Capital Credits and Service Permits for consideration at next month's Board Meeting.

The Board reviewed the revised Section VIII - Identity Theft Prevention Policy, which was presented to the Board for second reading. It was moved and seconded the Policy, as revised, be adopted. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed, for first reading, Section IV - Line Extension Policy. It was moved and seconded that the Policy be moved to second reading for approval at next month's Board Meeting. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed, for first reading, Section VIII - Record Retention Policy. It was moved and seconded that the Policy be moved to second reading for approval at next month's Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco reviewed the 2009 Financial Budget Summary.

Manager Frasco discussed registration for NRECA Annual Meeting scheduled for February 16-18, 2009, in New Orleans.

Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

President Martin reminded the Board that the next meeting was scheduled for December 23, 2008, at 6:00 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin advised the Board that Menard Electric's Christmas Party is scheduled for December 5, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. at Hill Prairie Winery, Oakford, Illinois.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried

Board minutes also available on menard.com about 30 days after the Meeting.

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MENARD



NEWS

Menard Electric Cooperative

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<http://www.menard.com>

Petitions Due



D. Jay Frye



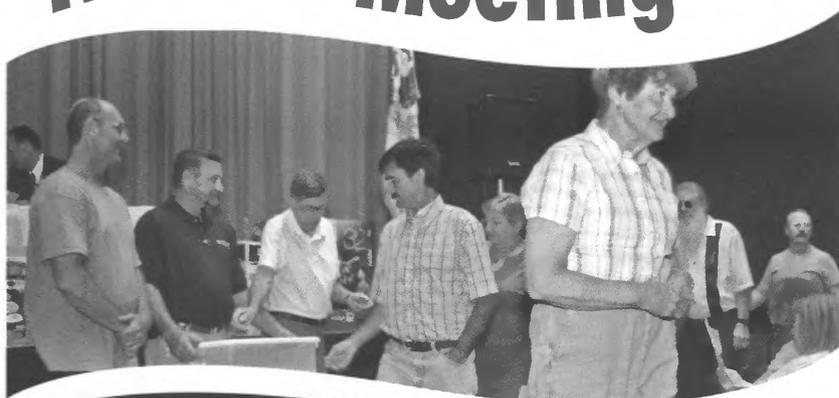
Gary L. Martin, CD



Donald "Chuck" McMillan CD

Petitions for candidates for the board of directors of Menard Electric Cooperative must be submitted to the cooperative's office by 4:30 p.m. on April 22, 2009. Petitions are available at the office for districts 2, 5 and 9. One cooperative member will be elected from each district to serve a three-year term. Incumbent directors Gary L. Martin of Alexander, District 2, Jay Frye of Easton, District 5, and Donald "Chuck" McMillan of Williamsville, District 9, will seek re-election. Nominating petitions can be picked up now at the co-op office and must be signed by no less than 10 members.

June 6 is Annual Meeting



Menard Electric's 72nd Annual Meeting will be Saturday, June 6, 2009, at PORTA High School in Petersburg. Once again a free pork chop dinner will be at 5 p.m. and the business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. All members attending receive a gift and door prizes are drawn at the meeting's conclusion.

This annual meeting is your opportunity, as a member-owner of Menard Electric, to participate in our operation by electing directors and voting on other issues.

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Viper Mine

A look at the new portal and how the mine benefits you



The history of the mine

Viper Mine began in 1982 under Shell Oil Company, when it was known as Turriss Mine. Ziegler acquired the mine in 1992 and AEI Resources in 1998. Viper Mine is currently owned by International Coal Group (ICG). Viper is the only mine in central Illinois owned by the company; they also own mines in neighboring states as well as internationally.

"The mine is the biggest producer of coal in Central Illinois," says Ira Gamm, Vice President of Investor and Public Relations for ICG. "It serves a truck-based market and customers include the City of Springfield, ADM and Tate&Lyle." Approximately 56 percent of the mine's coal sales are to electric utilities.

All raw coal is processed at the mine's preparation plant and then the clean coal is transported by truck. ICG Management believes the mine to be one of the lowest cost and highest productivity mines in the Illinois Basin.

The new portal

Viper mine is putting in a new portal one mile north of Williamsville. It will be visible on the East

side of Interstate 55. A portal is an entrance or exit into a mine. Viper initially had one portal in Elkhart. In the 90s a new portal was built east of Williamsville. Currently, miners go down into the mine in Williamsville and the coal comes up at Elkhart, where it is processed, or washed, and the trucks are loaded.

"The new portal will increase mine efficiency and productivity," says Gamm. He says the portal is expected to allow the mine to increase annual production to 2.9 million tons. Coal production in 2007 was 2.1 million tons. The new portal will allow access to all new areas.

To understand how a new portal will benefit the mine, think of how coal is mined. Miners enter the mine through a portal and then travel underground to the area currently being mined. Then all the coal and other byproducts have to be sent to a portal to exit the mine and be loaded into trucks. The miners have to maintain all the pathways going to and from the area they are working on and after awhile they are so far from the entrance and exit portals that it becomes inefficient to do that. After

"The mine is the biggest producer of coal in Central Illinois."

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ■ OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ■ WEB ADDRESS: www.menard.com



Building a new portal means the mine won't have to maintain beltlines and pathways like this one in areas that aren't being actively mined.

all the areas around a portal have been mined, the mine must create another portal to reach new areas and still be cost effective.

ICG says the new portal will allow the mine to eliminate the need to operate more than five miles of underground beltlines and to maintain the extensive previously mined area.

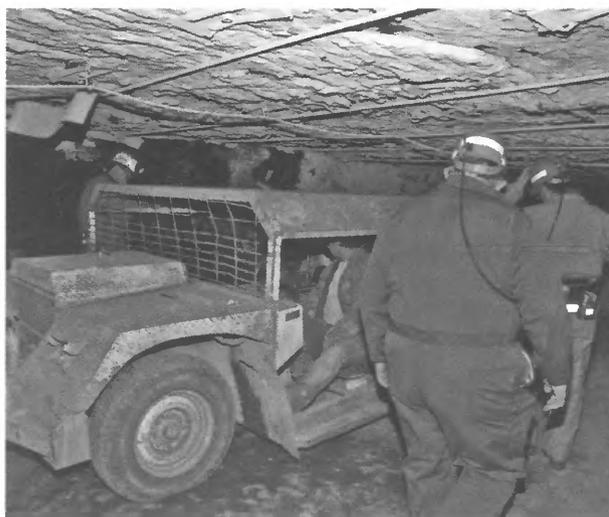
Viper currently employs 260 workers and hopes to add 12-18 new jobs after construction is complete. In addition to providing jobs, the mine provides the area with sales and property tax revenue as well as other benefits.

The new portal will cost the mine approximately \$20 million. ICG has received \$900,000 in sales and property tax abatements from Sangamon and Logan counties for the expansion.

How the mine directly benefits Menard Electric members

Viper Mine is Menard's biggest customer. It uses about 22 percent of all the kilowatt-hours we provide. "The increase in productivity the mine expects also means an increase in electricity demand," says Menard Electric Manager Lynn Frasco. "Having such a large load helps to keep operating costs and margins stable, reducing the need for future increases for all of our other members."

Menard has built temporary lines to bring power to the construction site for when construction on the new portal begins this Spring. Most of the work will be done with electric motors so the electricity is vital to the start of the project.



The new portal should create 12-18 new mining jobs, not to mention new jobs possibly created by the additional coal — the truck drivers needed to haul it away for instance.

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ■ OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ■ WEB ADDRESS: www.menard.com

Act Fast to Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.

Do you know an outstanding high school junior or senior student? They could win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 12-19, 2009, courtesy of Menard Electric Cooperative. Deadlines are near so interested students need to call the cooperative without delay.

Finalists for the trip will join more than 200 other Illinois students in Springfield on April 1, 2009, for Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day. Students will tour the Supreme Court, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Old State Capitol in downtown Springfield along with visiting with their local legislators and learning about the legislative process at the State Capitol.

At the end of the day students will be judged by employees of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives to select the two winners to the Youth to Washington Tour.

The tour has been sponsored for 50 years by electric and telephone cooperatives across the United States. More than 65 Illinois students will join students from across the country for an up-close look at democracy in action, tours of popular historical sites and more.

Past participants will tell you it's a trip filled with non-stop touring, fun, learning and new friends. The tour is well organized with good chaperones and is recognized as one of the best youth tours of Washington, D.C. Participants will visit places such as Gettysburg; Arlington National Cemetery; the Iwo Jima, Lincoln,

Jefferson, Korean War, Vietnam War, World War II, U.S. Marine Corps. and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorials; the Washington Monument; The Newseum, Holocaust, Smithsonian Air and Space, American History and Natural History Museums; the Saudi Arabia Embassy; and the National Archives. Students will also see the U.S. Capitol Building and meet Illinois Congressmen, Senators and their staffs. New this year, students will tour the Visitors Center at the White House.

Two former longtime Illinois State Representatives, Tom Ryder and Art Tenhouse, were past participants of the tour. Last year, Rachel Brooks of Oakford and Seth Deibert of Mt. Pulaski were

sponsored by Menard Electric.

For more information about applying for the tour contact the cooperative at 632-7746. Visit www.aiec.coop and click on Youth Programs for information and photos of last year's trip.



Rachel Brooks and Seth Deibert are shown here by the Washington Monument.



Rachel Brooks (left) and Seth Deibert (right) and 2003-2004 Youth Leadership Council Rep. Joseph Van Leer (center) were introduced at a Washington, D.C. luncheon.

MENARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ■ OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ■ WEB ADDRESS: www.menard.com

How to Stay Safe During Planting Season

Planning season will soon be underway, bringing with it long hours for farm workers in the fields. Take time now to refresh yourself and anyone working with you on how to stay safe when working near power lines.

Use the 10-Foot Rule

All farm equipment should stay 10 feet from overhead power lines. That distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines. Ensuring proper clearance can save lives. Sometimes power lines are closer than they look – use a spotter or someone with a broad view to help.

“Many farm electrical accidents that involve power line contact happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while performing maintenance or repairs on farm machinery near power lines,” says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity.

Today’s larger farms require transporting tractors and equipment to fields several miles away. Before transit, avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines. Also, be aware of antennas extending from the cab of tractors – some can reach 15 feet above the ground. Utility lines typically are not insulated, meaning that the lines are bare; this makes it easier to create a channel for electricity and electrocution to occur.

Other Safety Considerations

- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Assume every power line is energized, even if it is a downed power line.
- When moving irrigation equipment, be extremely cautious. Long metal irrigation pipes are excellent conductors of electricity.



- If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Don’t do it yourself. When one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption and become very hazardous.
- Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs that are near or touching overhead or fallen power lines.
- Do not raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness as well as dust and dirt contamination.
- Consider moving or burying power lines around buildings or busy pathways where many farm activities take place. Contact Menard Electric for information on minimum safe clearances from overhead and underground power lines if planning a new structure.

What to do if Your Machinery Contacts a Power Line

“It’s also important for operators of farm equipment or vehicles to know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line,” Safe Electricity Executive

Director Molly Hall says. “It’s almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off.”

“If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result,” says Hall. “Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area nearby to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there’s fire or imminent risk of fire.”

In that case, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to shuffle or hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. A large difference in voltage between both feet could kill you. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

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Though not “new” hires, Daren Deverman, Dalton Whitley and Jeremy Willis were never formally introduced to you, our membership. Here is a little information about each of them.

Daren Deverman

Daren began at the co-op last March and is now a Journeyman Lineman. He began as an apprentice at CWLP when he was 19 years old and in college.

Daren lives in the area and says, “It’s nice to work in the community that you were raised in.” He enjoys spending time with his wife, Jodi, and son, Braden, as well as helping his father on his farm.



Dalton Whitley

Dalton began at the co-op in May 2007 as summer help. He is now a second-year Apprentice Lineman. Before becoming a lineman he attended Western Illinois Law School and majored in Politi-



cal Science.

“I like providing for the people as well as seeing the different territory,” says Dalton. He comments that on the job, “it gives me a sense of accomplishment when something goes as planned.”

Dalton dotes on his two dogs, a Brittany Spaniel, Lady, and a German Short Hair, Dozer. Along with a self-proclaimed love of learning, Dalton enjoys coaching Little League Baseball, performing neighborhood tasks, mowing, planting flowers and milking cows.

Jeremy Willis

Jeremy was hired last August as an Apprentice Lineman. Before coming to Menard Electric he worked for more than five years as an electrician in Springfield.



“I like being out in the country all the time meeting new people in the community,” he says.

Jeremy lives in rural Petersburg with his wife, Gayla. They’ll celebrate their second anniversary this August. He says he enjoys about any activity that takes him outdoors, including hunting, fishing and fourwheeling.

What Does it Cost to Run?

What does that new flat screen television really cost to operate? Or that old fridge in the garage? A Kill A Watt meter will tell you. Just plug it into the wall and plug your appliance into it and it will tell you the wattage used. They are relatively inexpensive to purchase but you don’t have to buy one – you can borrow ours. It will tell you the wattage a particular appliance or electronic device is using and we can help you figure that up into what it’s costing you each month on your Menard Electric bill. Just give us a call or stop in the office to see if the Kill A Watt meter is currently available.



Geothermal Rebate/Rate

If you've chosen a geothermal heating and cooling system for your home then you already know of its amazing efficiency ratings. You will see savings on your electric bill all year long as you enjoy greater comfort in your home than a traditional furnace and air conditioner can bring.

But did you know that Menard Electric also pays you back for your choice with a one-time rebate? Call us today for your one-time rebate of \$600. The unit can be any size and can be installed in a new or existing home.

In addition to the rebate above, you can qualify for the co-op's Rate 19 if your home is all-electric, contains a geothermal heating and cooling system and water heater and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 6.7 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.

Heat Pump Rebate/Rate

Have you chosen the next best thing to geothermal? Air-to-air heat pumps are much more efficient than a traditional furnace and offer air conditioning as well. If you've chosen one of these units to install one in your new or existing home you qualify for a one-time \$200 rebate from Menard Electric regardless of the size of the unit installed. You also may qualify for the co-op's Rate 18 (Electric Heat Rate) if your primary heat source is electric and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 7.1 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. Call us today for more information.

Make Things Easy!

Sign up now to pay your bill automatically

With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct.

Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Menard Electric Cooperative's

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inside

A Trachstone Energy Cooperative

- Tree Safety 16b-16c
- A Meter Reader
Tribute 16d-16e
- Billing..... 16f
- Surge Protection ... 16g
- Board Report..... 16h

2009 Tree Trimming Plan

We want to provide you with the safest, most reliable electric service we can. In order to do that, we administer a line clearance program for all of our distribution lines that includes tree trimming and brush removal.

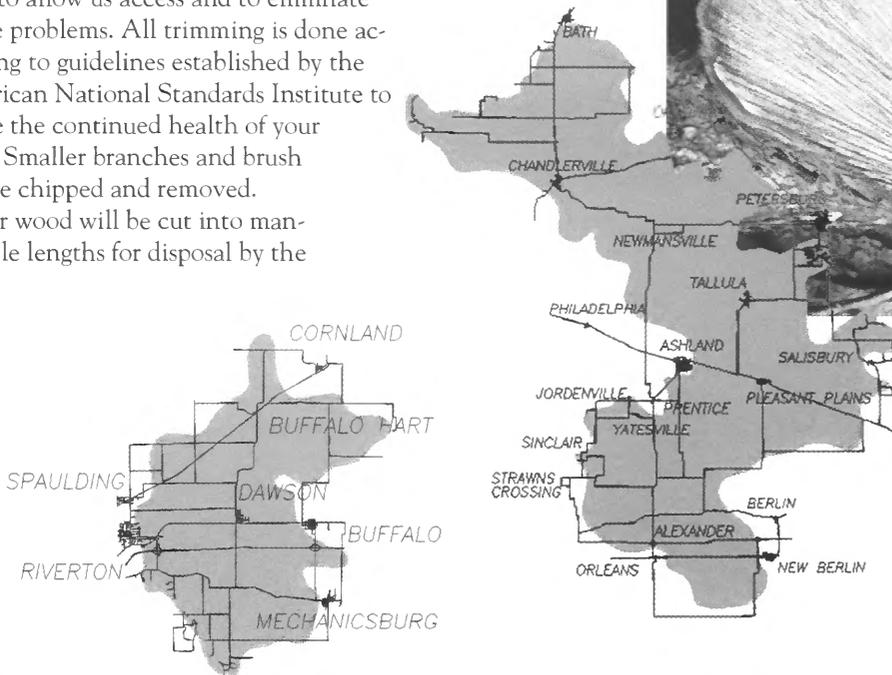
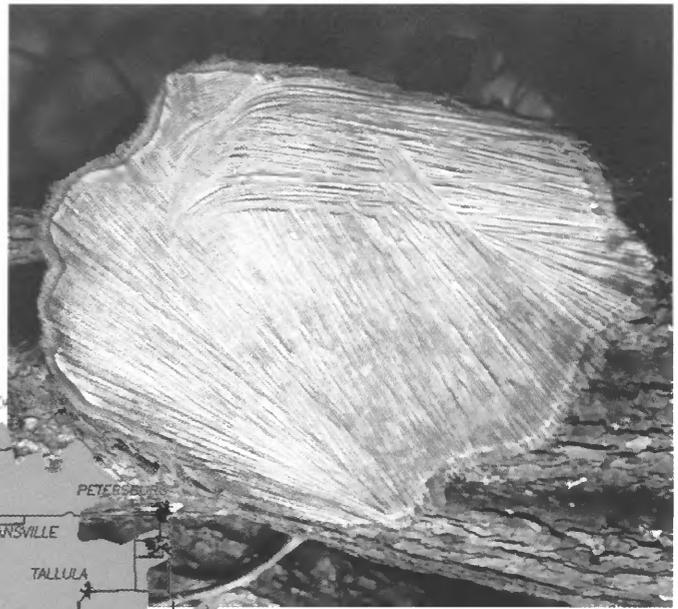
To perform this work, we have employed the services of a private line clearance contractor who attempts to clear our lines on a four-year cycle. This year, trimming operations will be conducted on circuits emanating from our Barclay, New Berlin, Petersburg and Saidora Substations. The location maps shown here designate the areas to be trimmed.

Contractors will prune trees back at least eight to 10 feet from our lines. They will remove smaller trees and brush under the lines to allow us access and to eliminate future problems. All trimming is done according to guidelines established by the American National Standards Institute to assure the continued health of your trees. Smaller branches and brush will be chipped and removed. Larger wood will be cut into manageable lengths for disposal by the

member or other local parties.

For more information on our tree trimming program visit our Web site at www.menard.com or call System Engineer Jim Rechner at 800-872-1203 or 217-632-7746.

See pages 16b-16c for more information on why tree trimming is necessary and the best places to plant new trees.



14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

Why Does the Co-op Trim my Trees?

Trees planted too close to power lines can create safety hazards and cause outages. We trim trees to try and eliminate both of these situations.

Outages can occur when branches come into contact with our lines. Winds can cause branches to sway into our lines, or break off and fall onto a line. This creates a short circuit and causes your lights to blink and possibly damage sensitive electronic equipment in your home.

Branches that repeatedly sway into lines can cause more than three short circuits, which creates an outage and requires a lineman be sent out to reset the circuit, much like you sometimes have to reset a circuit breaker in your home.

Branches that seem too high to make contact can cause problems during winter storms, when layers of ice and snow weigh branches down and cause them to make contact. Trees and limbs that fall due to age or high winds can cause lines to snap or otherwise damage them. Sometimes squirrels will use trees as ladders to power lines, where

they nibble on wires and cause outages.

Also, branches near lines can cause safety problems. A child or adult climbing a tree near power lines is a dangerous, or even deadly, situation. A child's weight could cause a branch to lower itself into a line. Or a child could grab our line instead of a branch.

Remember, trees don't provide protection from electrocution - moisture within the wood provides a path for electricity.

Our linemen working on routine maintenance or repairing lines during outages are also safer when trees are not interfering with the work to be done.

Please help us to keep trees from causing unsafe situations and outages. Be careful where you



This child could be in danger if this branch is near a power line.

plant trees and contact us if you notice a problem with branches coming in contact with power lines.

How Can Trees Save me Money on my Electric Bill?

The U.S. Department of Energy says that trees planted in the right place can save you up to 25 percent of your energy consumption for heating and cooling. Landscaping your home correctly could return your investment in less than eight years. This is done by blocking summer sun and winter winds.

The air temperature under a shade tree can be 25 degrees cooler than that of a nearby street.

Take advantage of this natural cooling effect by planting deciduous trees with high leaves and branches to the south of your home--you'll shade your roof during the hottest part of the day. Trees with low branches planted to the west can shade your home from the afternoon sun. And don't forget that shading your air conditioner can increase its efficiency by up to 10 percent.

In the winter, evergreen trees and shrubs planted on the north and northwest sides of your home make great windbreaks. Plant trees and shrubs together to provide a consistent wind block from the ground to your roof. Shrubs, bushes and vines planted next to your home can also help insulate it-but remember to leave at least one foot between full grown plants and your home's

What Can I Plant Near Power Lines?

We don't want to have to trim your trees any more than you want them trimmed. By carefully considering where you plant new trees we can avoid any future problems. Take a moment to consider how large the tree will become when fully grown. It might not present any problems for 10 or 20 years, but once that tree has grown, its branches could interfere with the power lines, and that can be dangerous.

Choose a species that isn't going to grow tall or wide enough to threaten our power lines. A nursery owner or your county extension agent can recommend trees that will add the beauty you want without presenting a problem. But here are some general guidelines that may help:

- Trees that won't grow taller than 25 feet, such as Redbud, Dogwood and Crabapple, can be planted directly below and 20 feet to either side of our power lines.
- Trees growing up to 40 feet, such as Washington Hawthorne or Golden Rain-tree species, should be planted at least 20 feet from power lines.
- Tall trees such as Maple, Oak, Spruce and Pine should be planted at least 50 feet from our lines.



This family took into account how tall and wide this tree would grow when choosing its location so future trimming won't be necessary.

For more information and a diagram of what trees to plant where visit www.arborday.org.

outer wall. Don't plant evergreens on the south side of your home as they can block the winter sun from entering and warming your home.

Source: The U.S. Department of Energy--www.eere.energy.gov.

Planted in the right locations, trees can save you money year round on your heating and cooling bills.



A Meter Reader Tribute

Our meter readers have provided a valuable service to you and the co-op for more than 25 years. Our automatic meter reading system is now complete and so, sadly, we say goodbye to the men and women who have so loyally served our membership. Here is a brief look into what they have done for the co-op and its members.

Thank You!

Elaine Bachman of Athens
Shirley Barton of Mason City
Sarah Benner of Williamsville
Merle Bennett of Petersburg
Barb Berkshire of Petersburg
Billie Griffie of Chandlerville
Gary Hughes of Mason City
Lloyd Ingersoll of Mason City
Wes Matthews of Mechanicsburg

Delbert Mueller of Arenzville
Francis Murphy of Illiopolis
Rob Ranson of Kilbourne
Substitutes-John Brunk of Virginia, Kenneth Hughes of Mason City, Frances Schmidgall of Green Valley and John Shelton of Petersburg. Thank you to all the previous meter readers and substitutes who have served this cooperative well!!

One Meter Reader's Tale

Now that his time reading meters is through, Rob Ranson plans to spend a little more time fishing and raise a few more spotted hogs for showing. But he fondly recalls the more than 25 years he spent reading meters for Menard Electric. He was the co-op's longest serving meter reader and in all that time, Rob never missed a month. In fact, he says both of his parents passed away while he was reading meters and he welcomed the job during his grief. "The co-op called and wanted to have a sub finish my route but I wouldn't hear of it. It was good to have some normalcy," he says.

Like all meter readers, Rob says he saw some beautiful countryside as he made his way through Menard's territory. He covered more than 500 miles over a five-day period each month, and read more than 1,000 meters when irrigation systems were up and running.

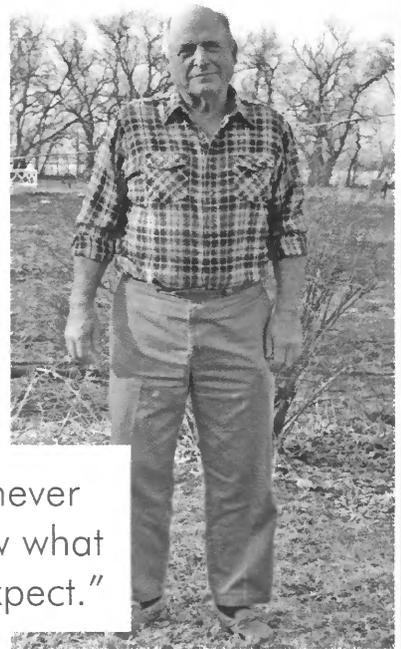
"I never knew what to expect," he says. "I went through I don't know how many blizzards when I couldn't get the whole route done. And in the 90s, the year the aquifer filled up, we couldn't travel at all."

And weather wasn't his only challenge. He had a gun pulled on him once while subbing on a different route, worked with the State Police over drug raids, was bit by dogs more than a dozen times and visited the hospital to get stitches at least five or six times.

Rob also fondly remembers being unable to find a meter when subbing on a different route. "I could see where the line went into the house. I finally found a door with a latch on the outside and when I opened it there was a bathroom and I had to climb over the tub to get to the meter. When I saw that bathroom I was glad there was no one in it," he laughs.

Like all meter readers, he was also able to keep an eye on the co-op's equipment and report any dangerous situations. "I caught several cheaters," he says. With the old meters if the rotary dial didn't turn, it didn't record any usage. "I caught members who drilled a hole up against the glass and put a wire against the rotary dial to keep it

"I never knew what to expect."



from turning."

He says he reported several cases of frayed power lines, broken insulators and snagged guy wires. "I saw poles that had been hit by tractors or cars and never reported to the co-op for some reason," he says.

Like all of our meter readers, Rob provided the co-op with a valuable service and we thank him and all who have served over the years.



Modernizing Meter Reading

Why we've changed from self-read to meter readers to automatic meters

As many of you will remember, our members self-read their meters for many years. That meant members had to go out to their meters each month and write down their readings to mail it into the co-op. Then we had to input each reading by hand into our billing system.

In 1983 the co-op hired meter readers. Why? "One of the biggest benefits when we started reading meters was that it almost eliminated energy adjustments," says Office Manager Wayne Jones. "Members weren't consistent when reading their meters, sometimes reading on the first of the month and sometimes in the middle of the month." That meant that their bills could vary from a 45-day period one month to a 15-day period the next month.

Also, it was easy for members to forget to read their meters at all or send in the readings, causing the co-op to have to send employees to verify or complete readings. And let's face it—who would put trudging through the snow to read their electric meter high on their to-do list? Meter readers read each member's meter on nearly the same day each month, making readings more consistent and eliminating a hassle for our members.

They began with paper and pen but

soon moved to electronically inputting the readings so they could be transferred to our billing system automatically—reducing errors and making billing more efficient.

"The meter readers also gave us a visual inspection of the equipment each month," says Wayne. If a meter wasn't working properly or a line was damaged, the readers were able to contact the co-op and explain the problem. Then the co-op could send out someone to fix it.

"They were a great contact point with our members as well," says Wayne. "If a member had a question or problem, they would tell our readers and they would pass that information on to us and we would get back to our members."

Our meter readers have truly been an asset to our cooperative, and we are sorry to see their time with us end. New technology can once again streamline our billing system, reduce

errors and provide us with a great deal more information. We have now installed automatic meters for each of our members. Instead of a rotary dial that turns, these meters have a chip that can record demand, energy, voltage and other data that is automatically transmitted over the power lines to our office.

New technology can once again streamline our billing system, reduce errors and provide us with a great deal more information.

Some of the benefits of the new automatic meters include:

- We can take daily or hourly readings of your meter, and that can help you understand how you use electricity. This will be invaluable information for solving high bill complaints. It will also eliminate estimated bills and provide more accurate monthly bills.
- We can access your electric usage immediately when you come in or call our office, making us better able to help you solve problems and answer your questions.
- We can identify high or low voltage problems.
- We can also isolate blinking light problems and find solutions.
- If you call in with an outage we'll know immediately if the problem is electricity not reaching the meter, or something wrong on your side of the meter.
- We'll be able to better isolate causes of major outages.
- We'll know if a meter has been tampered with.
- We'll be able to conduct engineering studies on our system. We can also gain information to determine the effectiveness of our load control system to reduce demand charges for the co-op and our members.



Building a New Home?

We can help you save on your future utility bills.

If you are building a new home, contact our office for a Certified Comfort Home booklet. If you build to the standards described in the booklet, you'll qualify for a one-time \$100 rebate.

We never seem to forget that the cost of owning a car includes the cost of gasoline. But for some reason many of us forget that the cost of owning a home includes more than a mortgage, insurance and taxes – it also includes energy bills. We can't help with the first three items, but

with this booklet we can help you build a home that gets more "miles-to-the-gallon."

The size of your utility bills is primarily related to heating and cooling. And those costs are in direct proportion to the efficiency of your heating/cooling system and how much heat your home loses in the winter and gains in the summer through the outside walls, floor and ceiling of your home. Our guide shows you how to build your home to reduce heat loss and gain,



as well as what heating, air and water heating systems to consider.

If you build a home using this guide you'll be able to rest easy knowing that your utility bills will be low while your comfort level remains high. Contact us today to receive your free copy.

Budget Billing

We know how much it can help some families to have a strict monthly budget for expenses. That's why we offer a budget billing program for your residential or farm electricity usage. You'll never again be surprised by higher bills during heavy usage periods, like when your air conditioner is running on high to help beat the summer heat.

Now's the time to sign up for our next budget bill cycle.

How it works

We'll calculate a monthly budgeted amount by estimating the average kilowatt-hour used in the previous 12 months. For new members, we'll use the best available data we have.

For 11 months you'll be billed the same amount each month. Then, in the 12th month, you'll receive a bill containing either a credit (if you used less kilowatt-

hours than expected during the previous 11 months) or an amount due (if you used more kilowatt-hours).

The next budget billing cycle will begin with our June 30, 2009, billing and end with our April 30, 2010, billing. The May 31 bill will contain the credit/amount due.

Give us a call if you're interested and we can explain the program in greater detail and send you the necessary information.

3 Ways to Pay Your Bill

1

Automatic Payment

You can pay your bill automatically from your checking or savings account on the 10th day of each month. The amount withdrawn from your account will be the net amount due shown on your bill. You'll never have to worry about paying your bill late, even if you're out of town. Call us today to receive an application form or go online to print one out.

2

Pay Online

Many members are choosing to pay their bills online through their local bank or credit union. If your financial institute offers this option you can pay your Menard Electric bill online as well. Please include your account number in the appropriate location on your financial institution's form. This number is very important to us so we can be sure to post your payment to your account. The account number can be found in bold face type above your map location number on the bill stub you would normally return with your payment if you were to mail it in with a check.

3

Credit Card

You can pay your bill by Visa or Mastercard on a one-time only or automatic monthly withdraw basis. We will charge a transaction processing fee of \$3 for amounts up to \$200. Amounts over \$200 will be charged a transaction fee of 3 percent of the payment amount. You can come into the office, call us at 632-7746 with your credit card number and expiration date, or print out the form online and mail it to our office to sign up.

An Easy Way to Protect Your Electronics and Appliances

Whether you have the newest plasma television or not, you probably have a houseful of electronics and appliances that could be severely damaged in a lightning strike. Look around at all the appliances in your kitchen and take note of your cordless phone, stereo, computer and television. Our homes are filled with sophisticated electric equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before to voltage irregularities due to lightning. What would it cost to repair or replace all of these items in event of damage due to a lightning-caused power surge?

These items your family enjoys each day would quickly add up to big bucks if you had to repair or purchase them all at once. Menard Electric knows this and offers several ways you can protect your investments. It's easy, just sign up for the plan you need and you're covered!

Basic Surge Protection Plan \$4.95/month

This plan protects the major electro-mechanical appliances (white appliances) in your home, including your refrigerator, washer, dryer, range, dishwasher, etc. A whole-house surge protector is installed on your electric meter to provide protection for less than 17 cents per day, and the price includes the surge protector, installation and all future maintenance.

Premium Surge Protection Plan \$5.95/month

The premium plan goes beyond the ba-

sic plan to include protection for sensitive electronic equipment such as your computer, television, stereo, telephone, answering machine, clock radio, etc. The plan requires an initial \$49.95 fee to cover the price of four individual point-of-use surge protectors that are used in addition to the whole-house surge protector. The point-of-use protectors can be used to protect an entertainment center, computer center, along with a cordless phone and two or three other pieces of electronic equipment. A circuit receptacle tester is also included that will let you know if you have the right amount of surge protection.

Point-of-Use Surge Protectors

We can also provide additional point-of-use protection devices for your computer, television, satellite dish and other electronic equipment. They include lifetime warranties for all devices and for the repair or replacement of the equipment they are protecting. Remember, lightning can enter your home through a phone line, cable line, satellite or antenna connection as well as through your electrical service. These point-of-use devices protect these areas and ensure that all your electronic devices are covered.

With these devices you can rest easy the next time a storm comes, knowing your home's appliances and electronics are protected. Call our office at 800-872-1203 or 632-7746 for more details or visit www.menard.com for information on this and other programs we offer.



72nd Annual Meeting

June 6, 2009 at PORTA High School

5 p.m. Pork Chop Dinner
6:30 p.m. Business meeting begins

Door Prizes drawn at conclusion of meeting

\$10 Bill Credit for every membership that registers at the meeting!

Petitions for candidates for the board of directors of Menard Electric Cooperative must be submitted to the cooperative's office by 4:30 p.m. on April 22, 2009. Petitions are available at the office for districts 2, 5 and 9. One cooperative member will be elected from each district to serve a three-year term. Incumbent directors Gary L. Martin of Alexander, District 2; Jay Frye of Easton, District 5; and Donald "Chuck" McMillan of Williamsville, District 9 will seek re-election.

Office Closing

Our office will be closed Friday, April 10 in honor of Good Friday.



Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
Jan. 27, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6 p.m. at the headquarters of the Cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Director Steven L. Worner. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith. President Martin reviewed with the Board the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for December 2008. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on the work done by the crews for the month. He advised that he had received a complaint from a member who had property in Lost Arrow Campground. He reviewed with the Board the correspondence from the member and discussed his response to the member's complaint. He discussed with the Board how to implement Rate 52 as it relates to members who have grain bins connected to their irrigation meters. There was discussion by the Board. Manager Frasco advised that he would come back to next month's Board meeting with recommendations as to how to handle this matter. He presented an update on new irrigation requests and advised that it was likely that 35 to 40 new systems would be installed.

He advised that Menard had its first wind turbine on the cooperative system. Manager Frasco advised that last week, Menard Electric had co-sponsored a Landowner's Workshop regarding wind development and dealing with wind developers. He advised that he had contacted RUS with regard to approval of the Wholesale Power Contract and advised that the RUS Representative felt that the contract would probably be approved in the near future. He advised that as Director Brooks would not be available, it was necessary to appoint a new delegate for CFC and NRTC. It was moved and seconded that Director Martin be appointed the Delegate for both CFC and NRTC. Motion carried.

There was discussion about who would attend the Prairie Power Annual Meeting scheduled for Feb. 11, 2009, at the Northfield Center in Springfield, Illinois. Manager Frasco discussed various topics for discussion and consideration at the Strategic Planning meeting, which was originally scheduled for March 4, 2009. He asked the Board if there were any other topics they wished to discuss. They agreed to reschedule the Strategic Planning meeting for March 12, 2009, at the cooperative headquarters. He reviewed with the Board the results of the conversion of Hardship Loans to FFB. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board current investment options for the cooperative. He advised that the cooperative had been depositing a substantial amount of money with CFC. He advised that the cooperative could receive higher interest rates on Money Market accounts at local banks. It was his suggestion that the Board consider utilizing National Bank of Petersburg, Athens State Bank and also Petefish, Skiles & Company Bank for deposit of cooperative funds. There was discussion about obtaining additional guaranties from the local banks to cover deposits over \$250,000.00. It was the consensus of the Board that Manager Frasco proceed with utilizing those three local banks for deposit of cooperative funds, as determined in the discretion of the Manager. It was moved and seconded that the Board approve the signature obligation form for the Athens State Bank. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of December. Year to date margins were \$1,819,754 compared to \$911,746 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of December was 34.56 percent and the number of members served was 10,475 compared to 10,392 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of December was \$34,222,137 compared to \$33,072,384 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. He reminded the Board again that the Annual Meeting was scheduled for Feb. 11, 2009. He reviewed the President's Report as well as the Press Release involv-

ing the Wind Farm in the Prairie Power Service Area. It was moved and seconded that the cooperative have prepared a plaque for the retiring Bob Harbour in recognition of many years of able service to Soyland/Prairie Power. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco discussed revising Rate Code 62. It was moved and seconded that the Rate Code 62 be reclassified from the Beardstown Commercial to the Municipal Franchise Rate. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed for second reading the Revised Section IV-Service Permit. It was moved and seconded that the Policy, as revised, be approved and adopted. Motion carried.

Director Brooks reported on the plans for the 2009 Annual Meeting.

The Capital Credit Committee presented its report to the Board and the committee's recommendations with regard to retirement of capital credits for the calendar year 2009. After discussion, it was moved and seconded that the resolution be adopted. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board the new Policy Section V - Whistleblower Policy. It was agreed that the Policy be moved for second reading at next month's Board Meeting for adoption.

Manager Frasco reviewed a summary of the 2009 Tree Trimming Program.

Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report. President Martin advised that next month's Board Meeting was scheduled for Feb. 24, 2009, at 6 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin reminded the Board that the NRECA Annual Meeting was scheduled for Feb. 16-18, 2009, in New Orleans and that the Irrigation Clinic was scheduled for Feb. 5, 2009, at the Mason County Ag Center. President Martin advised that it was necessary to appoint a Delegate for the Worker's Compensation Group Annual Meeting. It was moved and seconded that Director Frye be appointed such Delegate. Motion carried. Manager Frasco presented to the Board a demonstration of the Wireless Internet laptop to be used by the Cooperative Area Servicemen.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



inside

- Live Line Demo..... 16b-16c
- Budget Billing..... 16c
- Electrical Safety..... 16d-16e
- Autopay..... 16f
- Surge Protection ... 16g
- Board Report..... 16h

Students Visit with Local Representatives

Senator Bill Brady, Representative Richard Meyers and Representative John Sullivan met with 12 students representing Menard Electric Cooperative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, April 1, in Springfield. Students had an opportunity to view state government in action, visit with their local leaders and tour the State Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court, Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Tucker Lynn and Bethany Saek Win Trip to Washington, D.C.

All of the students participating in Youth Day were interviewed and Tucker Lynn of Oakford and Bethany Saek of Illiopolis were selected to attend the Youth Tour to Washington D.C. The Youth Tour has been sponsored for 50 years by electric and telephone cooperatives across the United States. Lynn and Saek will join more than 65 Illinois students and other students from across the country for an up-close look at democracy in action, tours of popular historical sites and more.

Lynn and Saek will see the U.S. Capitol Building and meet Illinois Congressmen, Senators and their staffs. They will also visit places such as the Visitors Center at the White House; Gettysburg; Arlington National Cemetery; the Iwo Jima, Lincoln, Jefferson, Korean War Vietnam War, World



Front row from left are Representative John Sullivan, Samuel Stoweli of Loami, Emily Eck of New Berlin, Tiera Berkshire of Tallula, Elizabeth Hohenshell of Manito and Representative Richard Meyers. Middle row is Samantha Petefish of Ashland, Sarah Helmich of Virginia, Bethany Saek of Illiopolis and Trent Friedrich of Manito. Back row are Trish Michels of Menard Electric, Tucker Lynn of Oakford, Cass Wessel of Chandlerville, Jarred Leeper of Decatur and Zac Mierzejewski of Williamsville. Senator Bill Brady is not pictured.

War II, U.S. Marine Corps. and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorials; the Washington Monument; The Newseum, Holocaust museum, Smithsonian Air and Space, American History and Natural History Museums; the Saudi Arabia Embassy; and the National Archives.

14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

An Electrifying Program

Menard Electric brings safety demonstration to Athens and Cantrall Schools

Students from Athens School District learned to respect electricity during an “electrifying” program sponsored in part by Menard Electric Cooperative. Former lineman Kyle Finley, owner of Live Line Demo Inc., and Eastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Journeyman Lineman Scott McTaggart gave a safety demonstration to the kids that was full of sparks, fire, loud noises and even a smoldering hot dog.

Finley and McTaggart use the same poles, transformers and line hardware used by Menard Electric and other electric utilities to show the power 7,200 volts really has.

The dynamic demonstration keeps kids’ attention and teaches them as well. According to Cantrall Intermediate School Principal Jacie Shoufler, “The kids enjoyed the performance, especially when he showed what would happen to a squirrel, hot dog and bird. I think it brought to life the dangers of messing with electrical outlets and power lines.”

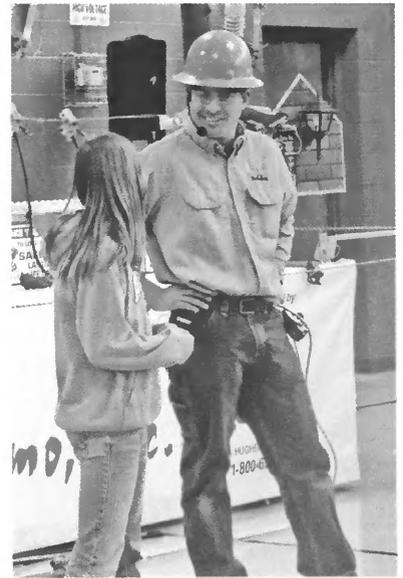


Here are a few tips that

Finley and McTaggart include in their adult or child demonstrations:

- With the help of a fake squirrel, McTaggart showed how some animals can safely sit upon power lines, and – zap! – what happens if they do make a path to ground for the electrical current. If an animal is stuck near power lines, on a utility pole, or near a transformer, leave it. Never attempt to poke or prod an animal away from anything that conducts electricity. Call your utility company. They have the equipment and expertise to deal with the situation safely.
- Using a hot dog to pose as a human finger, McTaggart showed how fast electricity could harm a child or adult. Remember that countless non-metal materials conduct electricity. Kite string, clothing, fishing rods, soil and water are a few examples of items that can become deadly under the right circumstances. Never touch a power line with anything.
- McTaggart showed students how quickly a Mylar balloon smolders when it contacts electricity. Would you let your child walk beneath a power line while he or she was holding a metal pole in the air? Of course not. Yet the shiny silver coating on a Mylar balloon is an excellent conductor of electricity.

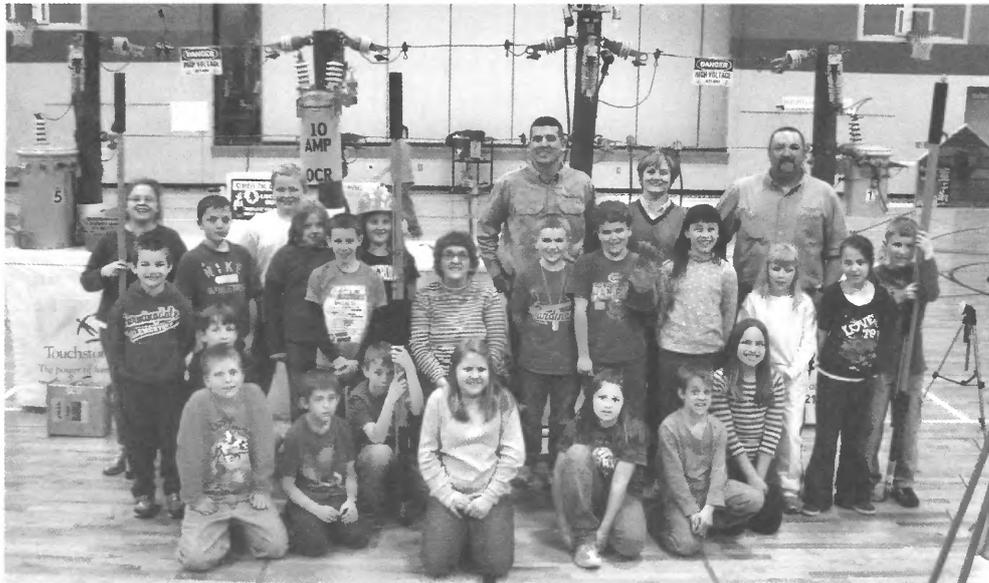
“The electricity can come down through the ribbon into your child’s hands and out of his feet at the speed of light,” warns Finley. Even free-floating Mylar balloons pose a threat – they can



become entangled in and destroy expensive electrical equipment. That’s equipment that others are depending on for day-to-day electrical service. Finley cautions consumers to deflate and dispose of balloons when children are finished with them.

- Plug extension cords into Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)-equipped cords that plug into standard outlets. If your extension cord is accidentally severed by your power tool or comes into contact with water, the GFCI will break the circuit.

Outlets equipped with GFCIs should be installed in bathrooms, kitchens, outdoors and any place where water is present. “I wish we could get a lot more of these in our homes and businesses,” says Finley. “It’s an easy way to cut down fatalities.”
- Shut your power off before doing electrical work at home – and check to make sure that it is off.
- Kids like to climb trees. “It’s kind of tough to teach a five-



year-old the difference between a phone wire and a power line," Finley says. "So the rule is – if any wire is near a tree – don't climb it. Find another tree." Finley pointed out that branches may sag into power lines as children climb. Another note of caution – the power lines you see running down your streets and country roads are not insulated.

- Overhead power lines and swimming pools can be a deadly combination. The

long metal rods of swimming pool skimmers can graze power lines. Finley says you shouldn't bet your life on the protective value of insulation on wires – trees can wear away the coating and squirrels can nick or chew through rubber. "Have overhead power lines near a pool buried," says Finley, "before they bury someone else."

You can visit www.livelihooddemo.com for more information and to see clips of a presentation.

Sign up Now for Budget Billing

We know how much it can help some families to have a strict monthly budget for expenses. That's why we offer a budget billing program for your residential or farm electricity usage.

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The next budget billing cycle will begin with our June 30, 2009, billing and end with our April 30, 2010, billing. The May 31 bill will contain the credit/amount due.

Give us a call if you're interested and we can explain the program in greater detail and send you the necessary information.

New Program to Help Members Save

Co-op Connections® Card



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



We are happy to announce that Menard Electric will soon be involved in the Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections Card. Each of our members will receive a card that will help them save on prescription drug costs and products they buy from national retailers. More information will be coming at the annual meeting June 6 and in future issues of Illinois Country Living!

Memorial Day



Our office will be closed Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day.

Is Your Home Safe?

National Electrical Safety Month Checklist to protect your home and family from fires and electrocution

Electrical problems in older homes account for nearly 55,000 fires every year. These blazes cause more than 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400, and rack up \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The risk of such fires is significant since half of all homes in the United States were constructed

and wired prior to 1973, according to the U.S. Census Bureau—before the advent of garage door openers or home computers. Even more telling, one-third of U.S. homes were built before hair dryers or electric can openers were even invented!

“As each year goes by, Ameri-

cans consume more energy in their homes,” remarks Brett Brenner, President of Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). “Many homes and electrical systems are simply being overburdened, which leads to fires, injuries and deaths.”

These simple and easy steps will help you to identify and correct electrical dangers commonly found in homes. This checklist is courtesy of the ESFI, www.electrical-safety.org.

- ✓ Are all the bulbs in your lights the appropriate wattage for the size of the fixtures? A bulb of too-high wattage may lead to fire through overheating.
- ✓ Are cords placed out of the walking areas and free of furniture resting on them?
- ✓ Are cords in good condition (not damaged or cracked)? Shock or fire hazards can result from damaged cords.
- ✓ Are cords unwrapped? Tightly wrapped cords can lead to overheating.
- ✓ Are all extension cords being used only on a temporary basis?
- ✓ Are all outlets and switches working properly and cool to the touch? Non-working or unusually warm outlets or switches may indicate an unsafe wiring condition exists.



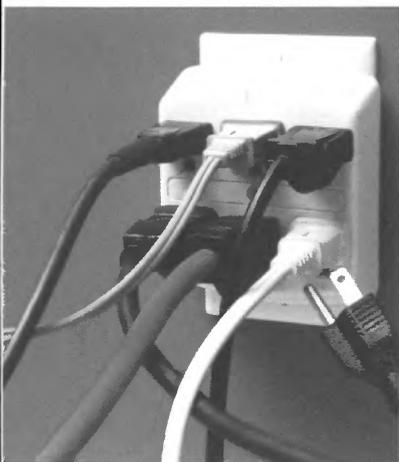
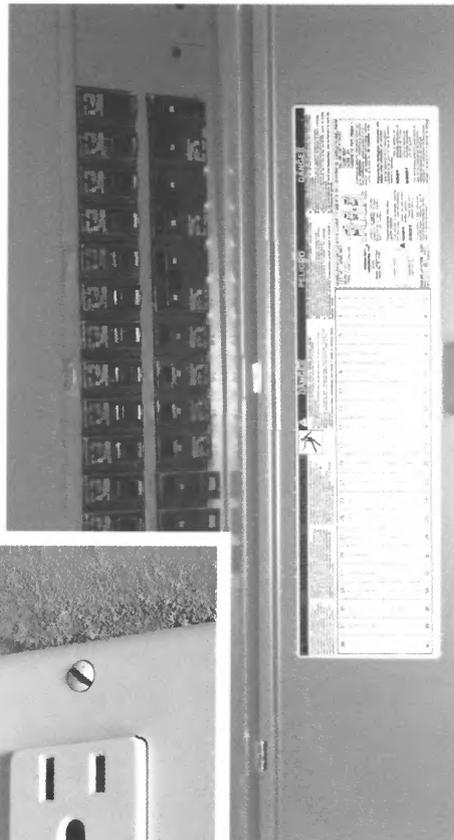
- ✓ Do you hear crackling, sizzling, or buzzing from your outlets? Call a licensed electrician to identify the cause.
- ✓ Are all outlet and switch cover plates in good condition? Replace any missing, cracked or broken cover plates.
- ✓ Are outlets tamper resistant if you have children in the home?
- ✓ Are space heaters placed away from things that can catch fire such as drapes and newspapers? Can it be tipped over?
- ✓ Check for the presence and proper placement of smoke alarms and test each one. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of the home, inside each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area.
- ✓ Are all appliance cords placed away from hot surfaces? Cords can be damaged by excess heat.

- ✓ Are all appliances located away from the sink? Plug kitchen appliances into GFCI protected outlets.
- ✓ Have you ever received even a slight shock (other than one from static electricity) from any large kitchen appliance? Do not touch the appliance until it has been checked by an electrician.
- ✓ Is the top and area above the cooking range free of combustibles (for example, potholders, plastic utensils)? Using range for storage of non-cooking equipment may result in fires or burns.
- ✓ Is there excessive vibration or movement when the washer or dryer is operating? Movement during operation can put undue stress on electrical connections.
- ✓ Are the bathroom outlets protected by GFCIs? GFCIs should be installed in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas where the risk of electric shock is high.
- ✓ If you have any GFCIs, do you test them regularly? GFCIs must be operating properly to protect against electrocution.
- ✓ Is your fuse box or circuit breaker box appropriately labeled?

- ✓ Does everyone of appropriate age know where the fuse box or circuit breaker box is located and how to turn off and restore power to the home?
- ✓ Are you regularly resetting tripped circuit breakers? Circuit breakers that are constantly tripping indicate that the circuit is overloaded or that other electrical hazards exist.
- ✓ Is your home protected by Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)? AFCIs are devices that replace standard circuit breakers in the electrical service panel and greatly reduce the risk of home electrical fires.

We Need Members for a Member Marketplace!

Do you sell a product that would interest other co-op members? We would like to have a Member Marketplace at this year's annual meeting on June 6 filled with booths of interesting merchandise. So if you sell a product like Avon, Pampered Chef, Mary Kay, Tastefully Simple, etc. contact Trish Michels at 632-7746 by May 20 for information on setting up a booth to join our Member Marketplace.



Make Things Easy!

Sign up now to pay your bill automatically

With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ 

5 Ways Automatic Payment Can Help You!

1

It saves time - fewer checks to write.

2

It is convenient and timely - even if you're out of town.

3

It is always on time - no lost or misplaced statements helps maintain good credit and avoid late charges.

4

It saves money - no postage or envelopes needed.

5

It's easy - just fill out the application at left.

Have You Protected Your Electronics and Appliances?

We all know thunder and lightning storms are common in the springtime. Whether you have the newest plasma television or not, you probably have a houseful of electronics and appliances that could be severely damaged in a lightning strike. Look around at all the appliances in your kitchen and take note of your cordless phone, stereo, computer and television. Our homes are filled with sophisticated electric equipment and expensive appliances that are more sensitive than ever before to voltage irregularities due to lightning. What would it cost to repair or replace all of these items in the event of damage due to a lightning-caused power surge?

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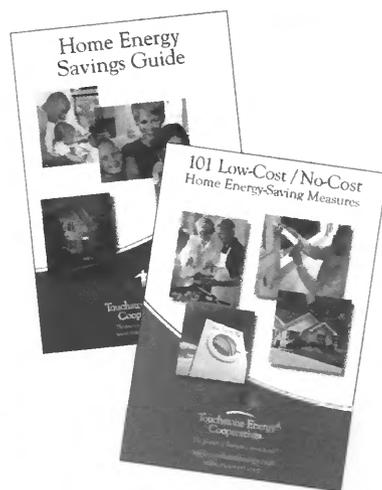
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Energy Savings Guides Available



We have two booklets available to our members to help you manage your energy costs. They offer low or no-cost ways that you can save money each month on your electric bill. Drop by our office any time to pick up a copy, or call us and we can mail you one. You can also visit www.tsesavers.coop for money-saving tips.

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
February 24, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Director Steven L. Worner. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

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Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of January 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on work done by the crews for the month. He advised that the two FEMA jobs had been completed. He discussed the wind turbine that was now in operation on the cooperative system. He advised that he had received an e-mail from Bob Harbour, who advised that he was going to have open heart surgery.

Manager Frasco advised that the cooperative is proceeding with laptops for the area servicemen as well as one for the service watch and one for Terry Entwistle. Manager Frasco reviewed the AIEC comparison of residential rates. He reviewed with the Board the proposed agenda for the Strategic Planning Meeting. He also provided the Board with materials received at the NRECA Annual Meeting

with regard to the recently passed Economic Stimulus Package.

He reviewed his recommendations for the handling of Rate 52 - Irrigation - Grain Bin Usage. It was moved and seconded that the Board adopt the recommendations of Manager Frasco, and that effective with the December 2009 billing, that the Rate 52 energy rate for the non-irrigation months of November to April be billed at 7.0 cents/kwh. Motion carried. He also presented an update on the status of irrigation services for 2009 and advised that there were currently a total of 26 new irrigation services. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of January. Year to date margins were (\$7,517) compared to (\$719) a year earlier. Equity as of the end of January was 32.68% and the number of members served was 10,467 compared to 10,364 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of January was \$34,835,027 compared to \$33,102,559 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch advised that due to the NRECA Annual Meeting, there was no AIEC Board Meeting.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. and the Wind Turbine subscription form.

Director Brooks reported on the status of plans for the June 6, 2009, Cooperative Annual Meeting.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board the proposed Burton Tree Service Contract and the terms and provisions thereof. It was moved and seconded that the contract be approved on the terms as presented by Manager Frasco. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed for first reading Section III - Conflict of Interest Policy. It was agreed to move the Policy for second reading for adoption at next month's Board Meeting.

The Board reviewed for second reading Section V - Whistleblower Policy. It was moved and seconded the Policy be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco discussed a License Agreement from the State of Illinois/ Department of Natural Resources and discussed the terms and provisions of the proposed License Agreement. It was the consensus of the Board to have Attorney Smith review the License Agreement and it was moved and seconded that further consideration of the License Agreement be tabled until next month's Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco distributed a proposed Resolution of appreciation for Robert Harbour. It was moved and seconded the following Resolution be adopted. Motion carried.

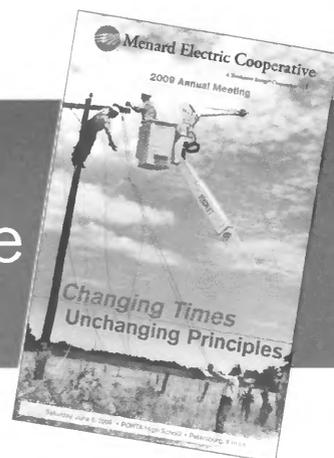
Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

President Martin and Director Carls discussed the NRECA Annual Meeting they attended in New Orleans. President Martin advised that next month's Board Meeting was scheduled for March 24, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin reminded the Board that the Strategic Planning Meeting was scheduled for March 12, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Look for your annual meeting booklet in the mail later this month!



Menard Electric Cooperative's

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inside

- Great Area
Golf Courses ... 16b-16c
- Lightning Safety 16d
- Storm Safety..... 16e
- Budget Billing..... 16f
- Rebates 16g
- Board Minutes..... 16h

Electric Cooperative Members: 42 Million Strong

The Our Energy, Our Future™ campaign helps unify electric co-op members across America

When electric cooperatives began to spread across America 75 years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the point that electricity in this country was no longer a luxury. It had become, as it is today, a necessity.

In these difficult economic times, a lot of Americans are struggling to make ends meet. As not-for-profit, consumer-owned and controlled electric co-ops, we want to make certain that each and every citizen in this country can continue to receive affordable electric power. We want to make certain we don't step back from the commitment that FDR made.

Congress is currently working to address issues related to climate change and debating federal mandates regarding renewable energy development and energy efficiency. Even if Congress doesn't act, the U.S. Supreme Court has given the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a green light to put new rules curbing emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants in place.

As a result of these efforts, there's little doubt electric bills are going to rise. The only question is whether higher electric bills will be kept affordable.

Electric co-ops are dealing with a very different situation than we have in the past. Electric bills will go up because of the climate change and energy policy decisions of U.S. senators and representatives on Capitol Hill—or worse, unelected federal bu-



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

reaucrats. Higher electric bills will become the norm as we are all forced to comply with these government mandates.

At Menard Electric Cooperative, we're talking to our members of Congress, trying to convince them to work with us to make sure that we not only deal with climate change, but do so in a way that keeps electric bills affordable. To accomplish this goal, we need your help.

Nationwide, 42 million consumers are served by electric cooperatives. If every co-op consumer contacted their senators and representatives, we could make a real impact on the final shape of any energy or climate change legislation.

Over the last year, electric co-op consumers have made their voices heard on keeping electric bills affordable through the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign. More than 1.6 million messages have been sent to Congress so far—you can add to that list by visiting www.ourenergy.coop.

Make certain that those who lead us in Washington, D.C., hear from you today.

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Great Golf Just Around the Corner

You don't have to go far to enjoy a challenging game

Golf is one of the most popular sports in the United States. Chances are if you don't golf, you know someone who does. Menard Electric serves five local golf courses and we thought our membership would enjoy learning about them. Staff at each boasts their course has something that sets it apart. You can find beautiful scenery, extraordinary value and great instructors right here in your own backyard. Check out the information below and view the Web sites to see if one of these nearby courses can offer your ideal golf game.

Country Hills Golf Course



"We have a quiet, country, peaceful setting where you can get away from it all," says Donna Simmering.

"We also have one of the best golf teachers in the area," she boasts. "People of all ages come from all over to study with our Golf Pro Mark Young."

Country Hills opened its front nine in 1993 and the back nine in 2002. It offers a clubhouse and banquet room, along with lots of different programs and leagues, night golf once a year, and a huge 4th of July celebration.

You can visit the Web site to

Location: Greenview
Phone: 217-632-7242
Web: www.countryhillsgc.com.



learn more about Mark Young and the specifics of the course as well as rates and programs.

Four Willows Golf Course



This course is a bit more casual. "You can walk on anytime and we'll get you in," says owner Roger Tucker. "You can have a tee time but it's not necessary." The course is 9-holes and Tucker says it's for all skill levels. They also have a bar for parties and do events, benefits and group outings. Tucker says they do not have a Web site, but prices average 9 holes for \$9 or 18 for \$15.



Location: Mason City
Phone: 217-482-334

Crane Creek Golf Course

Golf Pro Chris Bivens says the most unique thing about Crane Creek is its topography. "We have more hills and valleys than the other courses. The elevation changes are phenomenal," he says. He also boasts mature trees surrounding the course and great views. "In my opinion we have the best conditioned course tee to greens, it's in pristine condition. And quite frankly, I think we offer the best value around."

Bivens says they have five sets of tees for all skill levels and comments that the course is challenging

enough for all golfers.

With an extremely informative and thorough Web site, Crane Creek even lets you book your tee time online up to 14 days in advance. You'll also see stunning images of the course, hear rave reviews from some other golfers, learn about rates, the staff, leagues, and anything else you'd like to know.

Location: *Kilbourne*
Phone: *309-538-9141*
Web: *www.playcranecreek.com*



The Rail

Located in Springfield for more than 40 years, and host of the LPGA Rail Classic for 31 years, The Rail golf course is a well-known venue for amateur and championship golfers. "We are a course for everyone," says General Manager Jim Johnson. "We have tees for beginners and for championship play. It's a player-friendly course." Johnson notes that beginners shouldn't be intimidated that the course is a championship level course.

Johnson says the course is always in great condition and comments that he gets many good comments about



the service the staff provides.

He also notes that they provide an outdoor facility that is heated and air conditioned for events. "It's unusual in this area to find an outdoor facility

so we do a lot of weddings in our tent," he says.

Check out the information-loaded Web site for course information, rates, programs, leagues, photo galleries and much more. There is also information on the site about the Central Illinois Junior Golf Tour. And you can arrange for your tee time online as well.

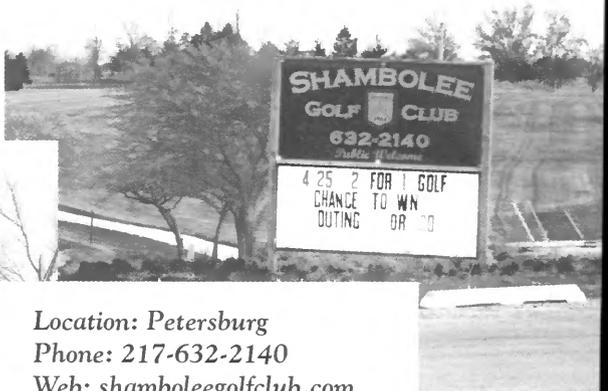
Location: *Springfield*
Phone: *217-525-0365*
Web: *www.railgolf.com*

Shamblee Golf Club

Head Golf Pro Nate Knuckey says the course has the longest running amateur competition in the area, the Shamblee Open. "It's a very playable course for beginners to seniors. And we have tees for all levels," Knuckey says. He also has an adult beginners clinic open to everyone on Tuesday nights and says the club offers free breakfast weekdays to morning golfers.

"We have a renovated club house as well and a great junior program," he says. The club also has a full restaurant and banquet facilities.

Check out the Web site for more details on rates, course descriptions and specials, as well as to book your tee time online.



Location: *Petersburg*
Phone: *217-632-2140*
Web: *shambleegolfclub.com*

Lightning is a Bigger Risk Than You May Think

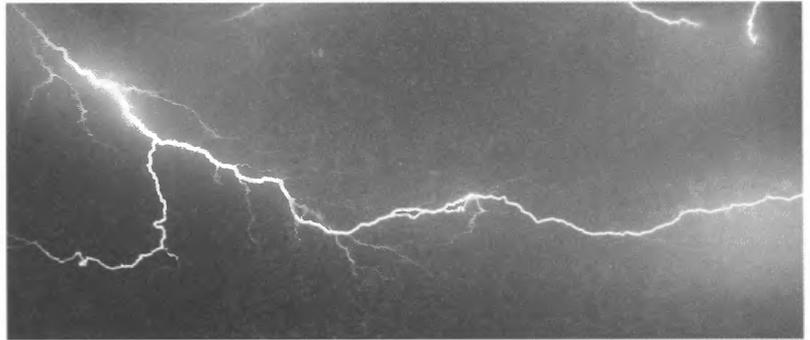
We all seek shelter during a tornado because we know of the danger and destruction that a funnel cloud can bring. But did you know that lightning kills more people each year than tornados? And it causes billions of dollars in damage each year. We've given you information in the past on protecting your home from lightning damage using our surge protection systems. This month, in honor of Lightning Safety Awareness Week June 21-27, we wanted to remind you of the danger of death or injury due to lightning.

The number one way you can stay safe from lightning is to find shelter indoors during a thunderstorm. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance. A good idea is to use the '30-30 Rule.' According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

If you are outside and your skin tingles or you hear crackling sounds, this could signal that lightning is about to strike. Drop immediately into a crouching position, stay on the balls of your feet, and make yourself as small as possible with minimal contact with the ground.

If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim.

More information on lightning safety can be found at the Na-



tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. Also visit www.SafeElectricity.org for more electrical safety information.

Tips to Stay Safe Indoors

- Use only cordless phones. The number one cause of indoor injury from lightning in the U.S. was due to corded phone use.
- Turn off and unplug appliances and electronic devices well before a storm nears – never during. If you have surge protection installed, you have significantly reduced your risk of damage to your belongings.
- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.
- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.

- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.

Tips to Stay Safe Outdoors

- Don't seek shelter in dugouts or other open outdoor structures.
- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least 20 feet apart.

6 Ways to Stay Safe After a Severe Storm



When the wind, lightning or rain accompanying a major storm leave your area, the danger may not be over. Be sure to follow these six safety tips to keep your family safe after a storm.

1) Stay away from downed power lines, treat all lines as if they are energized and call us immediately. Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Also remember that a downed power line that's energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous - a fence or guardrail touching a downed line can be energized for several thousand yards. And always stay away from puddles of water in contact with downed lines.

2) If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used, or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

3) Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off. Never attempt

to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call us to shut off power at the meter.

4) Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water.

5) If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it's raining or the ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

6) Electric motors in appliances that have been drenched or submerged should be thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned before they are put back into service. It may be necessary to repair or replace electrical appliances or tools that have been in contact with water.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Last Chance for Budget Billing

Do you hate being surprised by higher electric bills during heavy usage periods, like when your air conditioner is running on high to help beat the summer heat? Then you need to call us right away to sign up for budget billing. Don't delay, time is running out to sign up for our next budget billing cycle!

Here's how it works: For 11 months you'll be billed the same amount each month. Then, on the 12th month, you'll receive a bill containing either a credit (if you used less kilowatt-hours than expected during the previous 11 months) or an amount due (if you used more kilowatt-hours). Give us a call if you're interested and we can explain the program in greater detail and send you the necessary information.



**Watch for
highlights of
this year's
annual meeting,
to be held
June 6, in next
month's issue of
Connect to MEC.**

New Program to Help Members Save

Co-op Connections[®] Card



**Menard Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 



We are happy to announce that Menard Electric will soon be involved in the Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections Card. Each of our members will receive a card that will help them save on prescription drug costs and products they buy from national retailers. More information will be given to members at the annual meeting June 6 and in future issues of *Illinois Country Living*!

3 Ways to Pay Your Bill

Automatic Payment

1 You can pay your bill automatically from your checking or savings account on the 10th day of each month. The amount withdrawn from your account will be the net amount due shown on your bill. You'll never have to worry about paying your bill late, even if you're out of town. Call us today to receive an application form or go online to print one out.

Pay Online

2 Many members are choosing to pay their bills online through their local bank or credit union. If your financial institution offers this option you can pay your Menard Electric bill online as well. Please include your account number in the appropriate location on your financial institution's form. This number is very important to us so we can be sure to post your payment to your account. The account number can be found in bold face type above your map location number on the bill stub you would normally return with your payment if you were to mail it in with a check.

Credit Card

3 You can pay your bill by Visa or Mastercard on a one-time only or automatic monthly withdrawal basis. We will charge a transaction processing fee of \$3 for amounts up to \$200. Amounts over \$200 will be charged a transaction fee of 3 percent of the payment amount. You can come into the office, call us at 632-7746 with your credit card number and expiration date, or print out the form online and mail it to our office to sign up.

Geothermal Rebate/Rate

If you've chosen a geothermal heating and cooling system for your home then you already know of its amazing efficiency ratings. You will see savings on your electric bill all year long as you enjoy greater comfort in your home than a traditional furnace and air conditioner can bring.

But did you know that Menard Electric also pays you back for your choice with a one-time rebate? Call us today for your one-time rebate of \$600. The geothermal system can be any size and can be installed in a new or existing home.

In addition to the rebate above, you can qualify for the co-op's Rate 19 if your home is all-electric, contains a geothermal heating and cooling system and water heater and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 6.7 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.

Heat Pump Rebate/Rate

Have you chosen the next best thing to geothermal? Air-to-air heat pumps are much more efficient than a traditional furnace and offer air conditioning as well. If you decide to install a heat pump system in a new or existing home, you may qualify for a one-time rebate of \$200 from Menard Electric regardless of the size of the system. You also may qualify for the co-op's Rate 18 (Electric Heat Rate) if your primary heat source is electric and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 7.1 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. Call us today for more information.

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
March 24, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Also present were Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed with the Board the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of February 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, as well as the Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on the work done by the crews for the month. He advised that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) had conducted an inspection of the Menard Rural Water Cooperative System. He, as the Certified Operator for the water cooperative, has been involved in the inspection. The IEPA would be forwarding the inspection results to the water cooperative.

He reported on the visit from representatives from Ag Plus or what is known as the Grigsby Farms. They were interested in a wind turbine on their real estate and were inquiring about Menard's policy in that regard. Manager Frasco advised that the cooperative had registered with the Federal Government as a not for profit so as to be pre-approved for grant applications when the stimulus pro-

grams were developed.

Manager Frasco advised that the cooperative was reviewing alternative credit card vendors in order to reduce costs to the cooperative and its members. He advised that staff members were going next week to Peoria to look at a scanner system for checks and deposits and he discussed the benefits of such a scanner system.

He reported on the medical status of Bob Harbour. He reviewed correspondence from CoBank with regard to the patronage distribution to the cooperative in the sum of \$41,658.61. He advised that the balance of the patronage was retained as patronage equity. He presented an update on irrigation services and advised that 21 services were now on the schedule. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of February. Year to date margins were \$81,503 compared to \$201,551 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of February was 33.16% and the number of members served was 10,460 compared to 10,347 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of February was \$34,879,182 compared to \$33,242,770 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. Manager Frasco reviewed the February Detailed Energy Cost information.

Director Brooks reported on the plans for the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Manager Frasco discussed the status of matters with regard to the cooperative's eligibility for hardship loans. He advised that Menard Electric no longer qualified for hardship loans. He discussed

the reasons why the cooperative no longer qualified. He discussed the effect this would have on the loan proceeds to be distributed to the cooperative. It was his recommendation that the cooperative make application to the Rural Utilities Services for a Guaranteed FFB Loan in the approximate amount of \$8,500,000.00 to be used in accordance with the provisions of 7 CFR Part 1710. After discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Resolution be adopted. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the Conflict of Interest of Policy be adopted. Motion carried.

Attorney Smith reviewed with the Board the License Agreement as prepared by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. After discussion by the Board, it was moved and seconded that the President be authorized to enter into the License Agreement. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board results of the Strategic Planning Meeting. He discussed with the Board issues that needed to be decided as to what course of action the cooperative Board decided to take on those various issues.

President Martin advised that the next regular Board Meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

President Martin discussed the NRECA Legislative Rally scheduled for May 4-6, 2009, and discussed who planned to attend the Rally.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

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inside

Annual Meeting.....	16a-16c
Air Conditioning.....	16d
Free Weatherization..	16e
Serving Others.....	16g
Board Report.....	16h

72nd Annual Meeting Review

Did you miss this year's annual meeting? We want all our members to participate in, and know what is happening with, their electric cooperative. That's why we hold a meeting each year to meet with our members, fill them in on local and national changes to the electric industry, and elect representation on the board of directors. Here's a brief overview of some of the issues discussed at this year's 72nd annual meeting of members. Next month we'll reveal the prizewinners.

Automatic Meter Reading

Menard Electric Manager Lynn Frasco told members that the co-op's automated meter reading system (AMR) has been completed. Co-op employees designed and built the state-of-the-art system that gives the co-op a great amount of information about how the electric distribution system is meeting the needs of members, as well as giving members more information about their usage patterns. And more benefits will continue to arise as the system is developed to its full potential.

Prairie State Power Plant

Menard Electric Cooperative, through its membership in Power Power Inc., will own 16.5 MW of the new Prairie State Power Plant in Washington County in southern Illinois. The new plant, due to begin providing power to members in summer 2011, will be the cleanest conventional coal-fired electric generation facility in operation in the country. It will have overall emissions 70-80 percent below regulated emissions of existing power plants. "This plant should be able to provide members with a high level



Jay Frye of Easton, Donald "Chuck" McMillan of Williamsville and Gary Martin of Alexander were re-elected to three-year terms on the co-op's board of directors.

of price stability for electric energy over the next few decades," said Frasco.

Energy Efficiency and Tax Credits

Board President Gary Martin told members that everyone needs to consider the use of geothermal heating and cooling, weatherization, heat pumps, compact fluorescent bulbs and other energy saving ideas. "Energy conservation, while not as glamorous as new technologies, could actually be considered a valuable resource that is just as important as wind, solar, coal or nuclear," he said. "As energy becomes more expensive we all bear

Continued on 16b ►

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some responsibility to change our habits to conserve energy and use it more efficiently.”

Frasco encouraged members to take advantage of a 30 percent tax credit up to \$1,500 for homeowners who upgrade the level of insulation and weatherize their homes. “Every member should take advantage of this opportunity to be sure their home is air-tight and as well insulated as possible to help keep their heating and cooling costs as low as possible,” he said.

“Recommended insulation levels for homes in the Midwest are beginning to suggest greater amounts of ceiling insulation. I think adding additional ceiling insulation to increase the R-value to 40 or 50 makes a lot of sense for most homeowners and the current tax credits included in the stimulus legislation just makes it an even better choice,” Frasco said. [See the article on page 16e for information on whether you qualify for even more help through the Illinois weatherization program.]

Members thinking of upgrading their heating and cooling systems were also reminded to consider the 30 percent tax credit on geothermal systems. “This credit, along with the co-op’s \$600 rebate, can make the installation of a geothermal system cost competitive with a high efficiency gas or propane system,” said Frasco.

Climate Change

You’ve heard a lot lately about global warming and new legislation concerning climate change in the federal government. Frasco shared his concerns with members, saying, “No matter what direction this global warming legislation takes, the outcome is likely to be the greatest single cause for higher electric rates in the next decade.”

Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield, said, “President Obama’s goal is to



More than 260 members registered and each received a \$10 bill credit as a thank you gift.



Members shopped goods offered by four of our members at our first-ever member marketplace. Members sold items such as jam, jewelry, cooking supplies, home goods and health drinks.

transform our nation’s energy infrastructure, cut fossil fuel consumption and increase alternative and renewable power resources.”

Two potential climate change options include a carbon tax, which would levy a tax for each metric ton of carbon dioxide emitted. The tax would be



All children under 12 received a cinch sack filled with prizes. They were a big hit!

charged to entities such as coal-burning power plants, and passed along to consumers.

At this time it's more likely that Congress will institute a second option, a "cap and trade" program, whereby the government would grant or sell permits to entities that produce carbon.

How would this affect the average consumer? In a scenario using the carbon dioxide emissions tax, a co-op member who used 1,000 kWh of electricity per month could see an increase of anywhere from approximately \$10.81 per month if the cost of emissions per CO2 metric ton were \$10, to as high as \$108 per month if the cost of CO2 emissions per metric ton were \$100.

Noland made it clear that increases resulting from the climate change legislation would have a direct affect on members' bills, and the cooperative would have no control over them.

More than 200 members filled out communication cards at the meeting to ask Congress to consider affordability when reviewing climate change options. You can e-mail Congress your concerns at www.ourenergy.coop.

Co-op Connection Cards

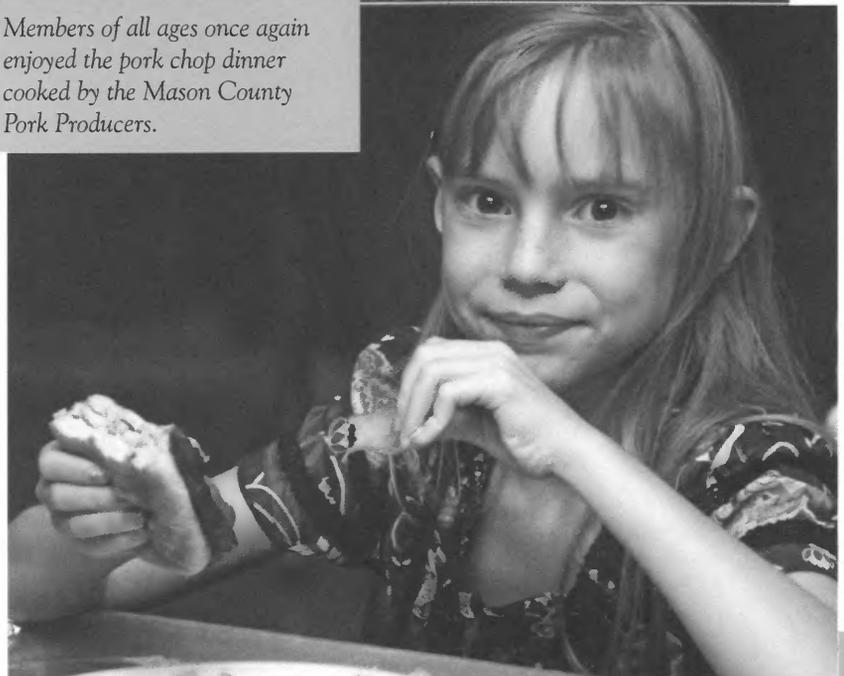
As you've read in past issues of this magazine, your electric cooperative will send you a Touchstone Energy Connection Card this fall. Frasco told members that the primary reason the board of directors has chosen to offer members this discount program is because recent member surveys indicated that nearly one-third of members had no prescription drug insurance coverage. The Connection Card is free to all members and includes a discount for 10 to 30 percent on most commonly used drugs at nearly all national and many local drug stores. It also contains many national and local vendor discounts.

You'll hear more about this program in upcoming issues. Look for your card to be included with your magazine this fall.



Kids always love the bucket truck rides!

Members of all ages once again enjoyed the pork chop dinner cooked by the Mason County Pork Producers.



3 Reasons Your Air Conditioning May Be Costing You Too Much!

You've just received, or are about to receive, your electric bill for your usage mid-May through mid-June. Chances are it was higher than the bill you received last month because you've turned on your air conditioner. We all expect to pay a little more to stay cool and comfortable in these hot summer months. How much you pay for that comfort depends on three things.

1. Your Habits

Remember to change your filter every month while your air conditioner is running, and make sure the filter faces the correct direction. Use ceiling fans on medium, blowing down to cool rooms you are using so you can turn your thermostat up a degree or two. Close your shades during the day to keep out the sun. Don't close off unused rooms or block vents.

Keep your thermostat set at 78 degrees when you're home and increase the temperature when you're away – it will cost less to lower the temperature when you arrive home than to keep it at the lower temperature while you're away.

2. Air Loss

It just makes sense that air leaks in your home allow the cool, conditioned air to leak out and the hot, humid air to leak in. Caulking around windows and doors, where plumbing enters the home and around baseboards are simple ways to improve this. Lack of insulation can also allow cool air to dissipate through your walls or attic. Be sure you have enough insulation in your attic and walls. You may be able to use a 30 percent tax credit for insulation. Check with your tax consultant.

3. Your Air Conditioner

If you have an older or improperly-sized air conditioner, it is likely the primary reason for your high bills. Although you may be waiting until your old unit quits working, you could just be wasting money each month that would go toward a new unit.

If you have a newer air conditioner there are ways you can improve its efficiency by not allowing foliage to grow up around the unit and shading it. Units in the sun can be 10 percent less efficient.

Calling a contractor to tune up your air conditioner could save you 5 percent or more on your bills, not to mention that it could extend the life of your air conditioner.

Should You Replace Your Air Conditioner?

Don't wait until it quits to decide

The hottest days of the year are usually when old air conditioners decide to fail and owners start berating themselves for not replacing them earlier. But the fact is, most people don't think about replacing their air conditioner until it stops working. And if it's 100 degrees outside you're going to buy a replacement fast, without taking the time to do any research. So, do yourself a favor and consider either replacing an old air conditioner now, or doing your research now so you know what you want if your unit decides to give up during the next heat wave.

Consider first your AC's age. Take a look at your unit's SEER rating if you know it. Air conditioners are rated on SEER, the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio. Basically,

the higher the SEER number a model has, the less money it will cost to run. If your air conditioner is 10 years old or older, it likely has a SEER rating of 8 or lower. New air conditioners are now 13 SEER or above. EnergyStar rated units have higher SEER numbers than standard models. For every SEER that you go up, it's 10 percent better. So if you replace a 10 SEER air conditioner with a 15 SEER one, it will run 50 percent more efficiently.

If you choose to install a new unit this year, be aware of a 30 percent tax credit for units with a SEER rating of 16 or above. Please check with your tax consultant to be sure the unit you choose complies with the IRS guidelines. Visit www.energystar.gov for more information on the credit.

Keep in mind that proper sizing of your air conditioning unit is a big factor in its energy efficiency as well. Bigger is not better in this regard. An over-sized unit will waste energy and reduce your comfort level. It will be more efficient running longer periods on hot days than starting and stopping often. If your unit doesn't run continually, it may be oversized. Consider having a heat loss and heat gain analysis completed by the contractor to determine how many BTUs of heating and cooling you really need.

If you think it's time to replace your unit, consider if a heat pump is right for you. The advantage is that you can use the system for heating in the winter as well. You can either keep your existing furnace or boiler as backup when temperatures drop below 15 degrees, or, if you have a gas furnace and electric heat pump, you can choose your method of heat depending on energy prices. Tax credits apply for heat pumps as well.

You Could Be Eligible for Free Home Weatherization

The Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL) has received stimulus money from the federal government to increase its weatherization program. In the past, families and individuals with incomes at 150 percent of the poverty level were eligible. This year, that level is changing to 200 percent of the poverty level.

"Now we can help even more people – people who are trying hard and just don't have the money to do something for their home that is going to save them a lot of money," says Energy Program Director Rick Campbell. "A 30 percent savings on energy bills is our goal for each home."

With multiple funding resources for the CAPCIL, each home could receive updates and repairs costing \$5,000 for material and labor. "Health and safety issues are our first priority," says Campbell. "Then we focus on energy efficiency."

He says different repairs are made to each home. Some examples are: replace and repair furnaces, insulate attics and side walls, install shut off switches on appliances, vent gas appliances properly, seal up air infiltration, replace smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, provide fire extinguishers, and even install compact fluorescent light bulbs.

The new program starts July 1 and the CAPCIL hopes to service 500 homes this

year, up from the 80-100 homes regularly updated.

Eligibility for the program is based on income. You must be a homeowner or a renter with a landlord who is willing to pay a portion of the costs for repairs. Income verification, social security cards for all persons in the home, proof of home ownership, and the latest utility bill, are required to apply.

Once applications are approved, each person is assigned a priority number. Then each home is assessed to determine what repairs are needed. A contractor is hired to do the work and when completed, the home is inspected and the work is guaranteed by the CAPCIL for one year.

Check out the Web site www.capcil.org for more information or call your local office, listed below.

- CAPCIL (Logan County) 217-732-2159
- Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp. 217-428-2193
- MCS Community Services 888-288-4413
- Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources 217-535-3120
- Tazwood Community Services 309-266-9941
- CAPCIL (Mason County) 309-543-6988
- CAPCIL (Menard County) 217-632-3137

Local Student Wins Scholarship

Rachel Jean Brooks of Oakford, a senior at PORTA High School, won the Earl Struck Memorial Scholarship, a \$1,250 scholarship from the Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Rachel is the daughter of Menard Electric board member Jerry Brooks. One scholarship is given each year to the son or daughter of an Illinois co-op employee or director.

Candidates were judged on grade-point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities and a short essay demonstrating their knowledge of energy cooperatives.

Rachel plans to use her scholarship at Texas A&M, where she will major in animal science on her path to becoming a veterinarian.

Menard Electric Manager Lynn Frasco says, "Our employees and board members have always been involved in our local schools and communities. We live in the community we serve so we have a vested interest in the future of our local children. This scholarship is just one small way the co-op is helping to make a difference."



Visit us at the Farm Progress Show in Decatur

Visit the Touchstone Energy booth at this year's Farm Progress Show Sept. 1, 2 and 3 in Decatur to learn about energy efficiency measures that will save you money each month on your energy bills. We'll offer a free gift each day as well as the opportunity to win Wal-Mart gift cards.

Touchstone Energy is also sponsoring the Live Line Demo, an electrical safety demonstration featuring 7,200 volts of electricity! Great for kids and adults, it's an experience your family won't want to miss. Visit www.livelinesdemo.com.

Look for more information soon in Prairie Farmer Magazine and visit the Web site www.farmprogressshow.com.

Make Things Easy!

Sign up now to pay your bill automatically

With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

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5 Ways Automatic Payment Can Help You!

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It saves time - fewer checks to write.

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It is convenient and timely - even if you're out of town.

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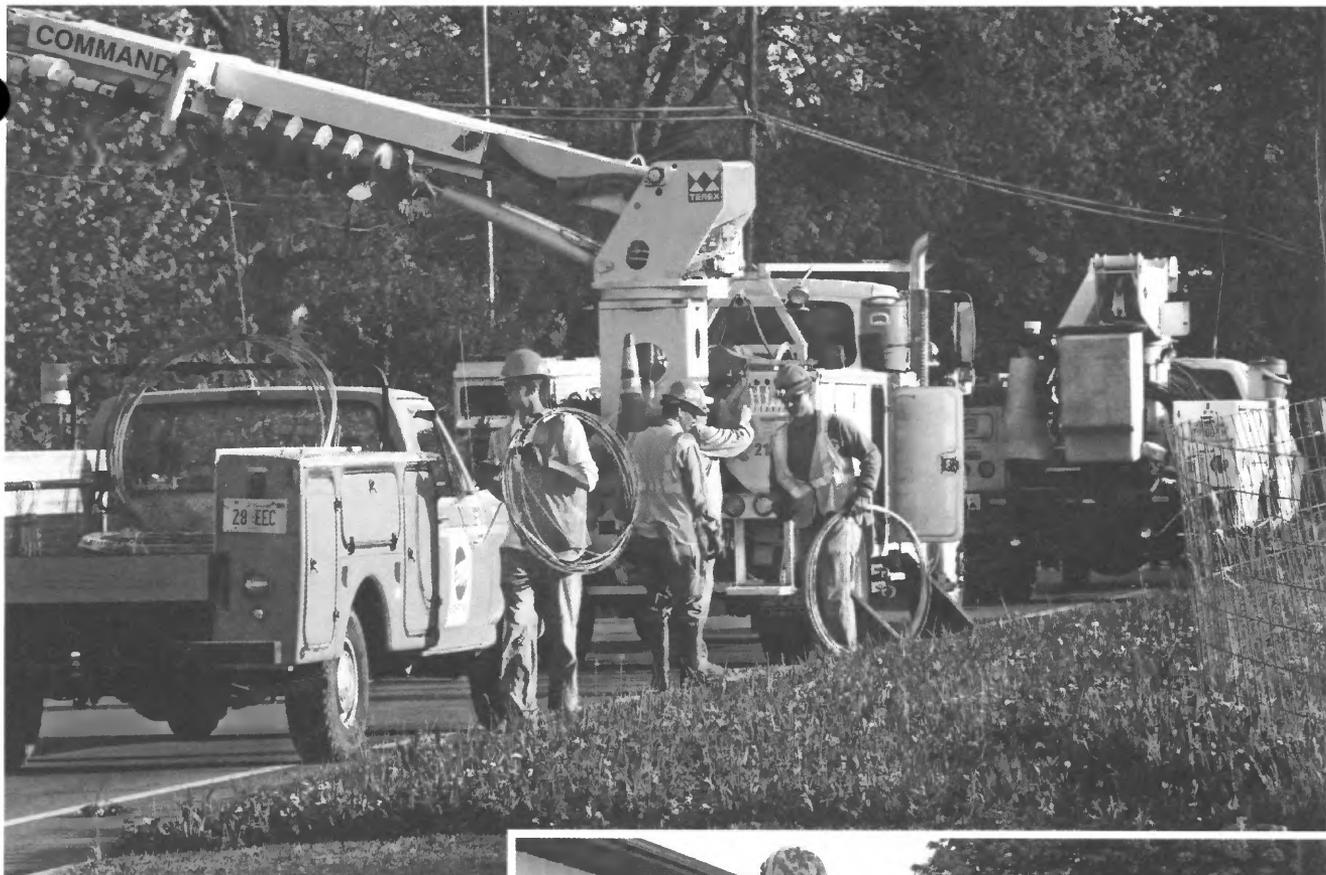
It is always on time - no lost or misplaced statements helps maintain good credit and avoid late charges.

4

It saves money - no postage or envelopes needed.

5

It's easy - just fill out the application at right.



Serving Others

Seven Linemen Assist Members in Southern Illinois After Wind Storm

May 8 brought a horrific wind storm to southern Illinois. Egyptian Electric Cooperative served much of the area hit hard by the storm. More than 440 of Egyptian's utility poles were destroyed, causing power outages to more than 8,500 of the co-op's 12,500 meters. Seven of Menard Electric Cooperative's linemen responded to Egyptian Electric's call for help. Brandon Blair, Daren Deverman, Seth Parker, Troy Shafer, Corey Stone, Dalton Whitley and Jeremy Willis assisted the co-op for 11 days, working long hours in some very unpleasant conditions.

It took more than 150 linemen to restore power to all of Egyptian Electric's members. Without the help of linemen like these from Menard Electric and those from 20 other co-ops and utilities, Egyptian Electric members would have had to go without power for much longer.



Shown helping Egyptian Electric return service to its members are Daren Deverman, Corey Stone, Dalton Whitley and Brandon Blair.

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the founding principles of Menard Electric and other electric cooperatives in Illinois. It's comforting to know that if we experience a devastating storm we can rely on linemen from other co-ops to help restore power to our members.

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
April 28, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Director Steven L. Worner. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed with the Board the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of March 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reviewed the status of 2009 Irrigation services and advised that there were 31 new irrigation systems installed in 2009. He advised that this was the first month that the cooperative had relied solely on the TWAC System for reading cooperative meters.

He discussed the AIEC Emergency Work Plan. Manager Frasco discussed the Manito Sand Plant. Manager Frasco advised on the status of the Coop Connection Card. It was estimated that the cards would be delivered to cooperative members some time in September. He discussed the status of the new Menard Web design. He advised that Jim Rechner was in the process of getting proposals from various Web designers. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of March. Year to date margins were \$132,857 compared to \$337,648 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of March was 33.10% and the number of members served was 10,462 compared to 10,343 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of March was \$35,044,340 compared to \$33,387,206 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC activities and advised that the Scholarship winner for the IEC Earl Struck Memorial Scholarship was Rachel Brooks, daughter of Director Jerry Brooks.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. and reviewed the President's Report. He advised that Prairie Power had hired a new CEO, that being Jay Bartlett. He reviewed the qualifications of Mr. Bartlett. He discussed correspondence from Prairie Power, Inc. with regard to the allocation of 2008 patronage capital.

Director Brooks reported on the status of plans for the Annual Meeting.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board a proposed License and Use Agreement from International Broadband Electric Communications. He reviewed the terms and provisions of the License and Use Agreement. It was his recommendation that the Board not enter into the License and Use Agreement and the Board concurred.

Manager Frasco discussed the NRECA-Deferred Compensation Plan Administrative Services Agreement and the cost therefore. It was moved and seconded that the President be authorized to enter into the Agreement. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco discussed the

Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

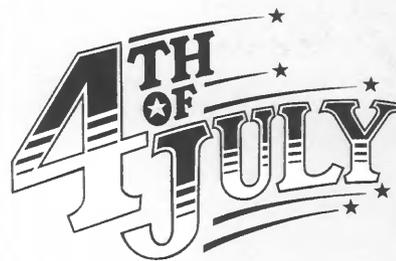
Manager Frasco distributed to board members the Conflict of Interest Certification and Disclosure Form and asked that each board member fill out the form and return it to the cooperative as soon as possible, in conformance with the cooperative's Conflict of Interest Policy.

President Martin advised that next month's meeting was scheduled for May 26, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin reminded the Board that the NRECA Legislative Rally was scheduled for May 4-6, 2009.

The Board discussed the possibility of rather than mailing the Board packet of materials, instead e-mailing those documents prior to each Board meeting. It was determined to discuss this further at next month's meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.



**Our office
will be closed
July 3 for
Independence
Day.**

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

inside

- Laptops in Trucks 16a-16b
- Youth Tour 16b
- Annual Meeting Prizes..... 16d
- Video Game Usage 16e
- Board Report..... 16h

Faster and More Accurate

New Laptops Help Area Servicemen Serve Members More Efficiently

A few months ago your co-op's five area servicemen began using laptop computers in their day-to-day operations. Mark Bradley, Bob Burris, Dwaine Heyen, Seth Parker and Corey Stone are now able to access a large amount of information about the electric system and our members in their trucks, enabling them to better serve you.

These area servicemen are responsible for connecting and disconnecting power, performing line maintenance, checking and installing security lights, handling member complaints, checking outages and problems with substations, power lines and member services.

"We work a lot by ourselves," says Bob Burris, "and now we have access to almost everything the main office does. We can get names, phone numbers, locations, meter numbers and more."

Dwaine Heyen says, "The laptops are big time savers. All the information we need is right there."

When in unfamiliar territory, the servicemen can look up information to tell where they are and where they need to be. This is great for finding particular meters and saves having to call the office and speak with



Area Servicemen can now access up to date maps of their territory as well as member account and outage information while in their vehicles.

someone there. Service orders will be on the laptops soon and eliminate more phone time between the servicemen and the office.

"They say we'll be paperless soon," says Burris. This means that he and the other servicemen won't fill out paperwork that is then added to the computer system by someone in the office. They will just input the information directly, reducing the chance of errors and increasing efficiency.

► Continued on 16b

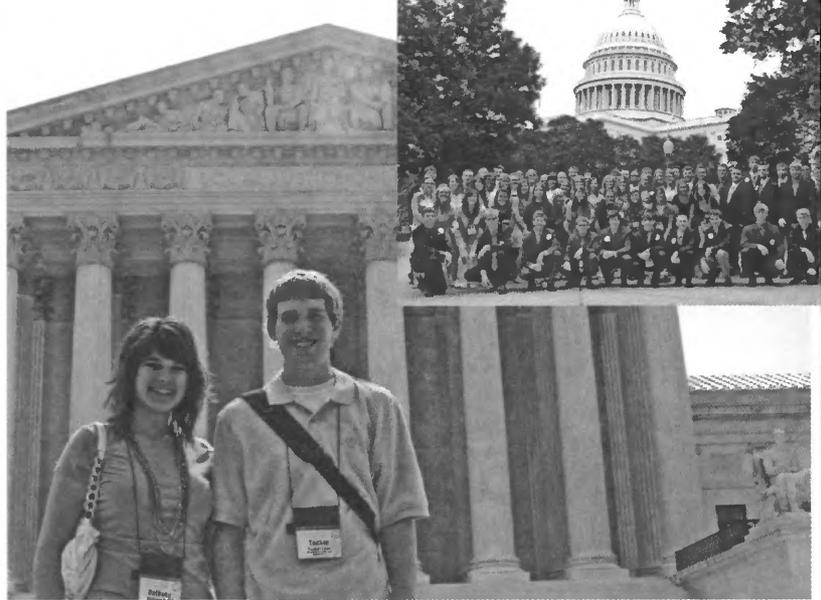
14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

Co-op Sends Students to Washington D.C.

Bethany Sack of Illiopolis (left) and Tucker Lynn of Oakford (right) represented Menard Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 12-19. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, began 50 years ago to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

The students met with Congressman Aaron Schock and were among 65 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined 1,532 young leaders from across the country. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust



Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the National Ar-

chives, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

Continued from 16a

The co-op's mapping system is much more functional as well. "Used to be we got new maps every year or two. Now the maps are electronic and are updated once a month," says Burris. "The old maps, when you got to the edge of one you had to thumb through a book of paper until you found where it continued. Now, we just use the computer."

But one of the biggest advantages members may notice is with outage restoration.

"With the automated meter system," says Heyen, "we sometimes know when members are out of power before they do and that cuts down on lost time." He says in a recent situation he knew a cabin wasn't receiving power and was able to fix the problem before the owner knew anything was amiss.

Another outage time saver is the ability to check substations. "Before we had to drive out to the substations to check and see if they were receiving power from the transmission lines. Now, we can see on the computer if they are on or off and that reduces outage time."

For now the laptops are just in the area servicemen trucks, but more could be added in the future to the line crew trucks. As technology advancements are made your co-op will continue looking for ways to increase efficiency and reduce errors while at the same time increasing reliability and decreasing outage times.



Area Serviceman Seth Parker checks his laptop before heading out on a service call.

Use Tax Credits to Fund Efficiency Upgrades

The idea of living in a more efficient home — and paying lower utility bills — has widespread appeal. But finding ways to fund improvements can be difficult during hard economic times.

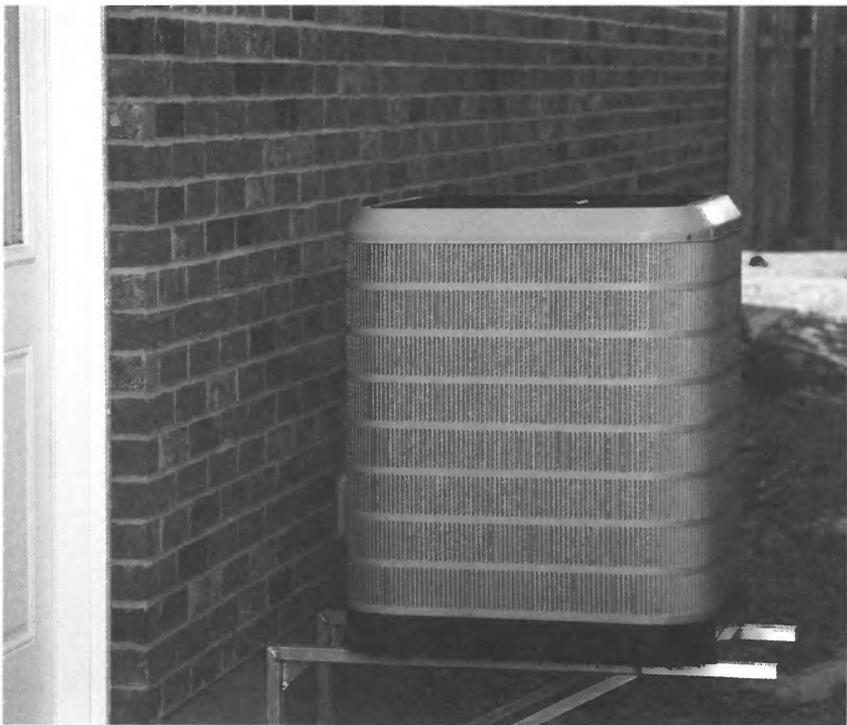
Fortunately, the federal government offers two ways to recover some of your expenses when planning upgrades: energy efficiency tax credits and renewable energy tax credits.

Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — known as the federal stimulus bill — Uncle Sam offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency measures made at existing homes in 2009 and 2010. You can recover 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help reduce your home's heat loss or gain. The credit also covers efficient central air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, hot water boilers, and biomass stoves.

With a maximum value of \$1,500 for all improvements made in 2009 and 2010, the credit may be applied toward material costs on all projects. You can also use it on installation costs for heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and biomass stoves.

If you want to start generating your own power, consider taking a renewable energy tax credit covering 30 percent of the cost of materials and installation for solar panels, solar water heaters, and geothermal heat pumps. This credit applies to both existing homes and new construction. Projects must be placed into service between Jan. 1, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2016.

ENERGY STAR, a joint program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, pro-



vides guidelines on what qualifies for both tax credits at www.energystar.gov, keyword "Tax credits."

You can file for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695. Remember to get a Manufacturer Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit) for your records. Both of the energy tax credits are non-refundable — they can increase your refund by reducing the taxes you owe, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to reduce your taxes in following years. But you don't get a separate check for the credit amount.

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

You may qualify for a \$1,500 tax credit for making energy efficiency improvements like installing a new air conditioner.

Annual Meeting Prize Winners

Last month we recapped our 72nd annual meeting of members. This month we'd like to congratulate all of our prize winners and thank all of our sponsors for their prize donations. Be sure to come to next year's meeting and stay until the end for your chance to win!

Grand Prize Winner

James and Nora Zimmerman of Petersburg won a Dell Laptop Computer from Menard Electric Cooperative!!

Early Bird Prize Winner

Robert Ratliff of Petersburg won a \$100 Gift Card to Wal-Mart donated by Aclara.

Supplier Gifts

These members won gifts donated by our suppliers. Thank you to all who donated gifts!

Eric Heikes of Petersburg:

\$50 Gift Card to Lowes
Brown Wood Preserving

James McDonough of Springfield:

Spice Set
Brownstown Electric

Mary E. Blumle of Mechanicsburg:

Flowering Crabapple Tree
Burton Tree

Kevin L. Horath of Cantrall:

Dwarf Lilac Tree
Burton Tree

Barbara Hopgood of Sherman:

Magnolia Bush
Burton Tree

Curt Wolff of Dawson:

Hamilton Beach Slow Cooker
Central IL Reclosers

James Underwood of Sherman:

Presto Electric Griddle
Central IL Reclosers

C. Kenneth Smith of Easton:

\$25 Gift Card to Menard's
Drake Scruggs

James Holler of Petersburg:

Polo Shirt & Travel Mug
DUECO

David E. Miller of Buffalo:

3 speed Oscillating Fan
Fletcher Reinhardt

Marshall H. Austin of New Berlin:

Black & Decker 12 Cup Coffeemaker
HD Supply



260 members registered and 42 members took home prizes at this year's annual meeting.

Richard L. Stiltz of Topeka:

Westinghouse 52" Ceiling Fan & Light Kit
U.S. Electric

James Winkelman of Easton:

\$25 Gift Card to Sears
United Utility

Bradley W. Justice of San Jose:

\$50 Gift Card to Lowes
White Hawk Enterprises

Cooperative Gifts

These members won gifts supplied by Menard Electric Cooperative.

James A. Baker of Athens:

Emerson Smart Set Clock Radio

William E. Beatty of Petersburg:

\$50 Credit on Electric Account

Sandra K. Colavecchi of Petersburg:

Presto Cooker/Steamer

Daniel Cornwell of Petersburg:

Set of 4 Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Virgil L. Gathmann of Manito:

George Foreman Grill

Albert Glasscock of Springfield:

\$50 Credit on Electric Account

Alvin Hackman of Havana:

Set of 4 Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Lila M. Hudspeth of Petersburg:

\$50 Credit on Electric Account

Edna A. Kirby of Easton:

25-Foot Work Light

George Kistler of Tallula:

Expandable Cooler

Greg Lepper of Ashland:

\$50 Credit on Electric Account

Steve L. Lindsey of Petersburg:

Set of 4 Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Robert McNeal of Tallula:

\$50 Credit on Electric Account

Raymond M. Phillips of Petersburg:

Skil Hand Sander

J. Weldon Renken of San Jose:

Hamilton Beach Ice Cream Maker

Raymond M. Renken of Mason City:

Armor-All Auto Gift Pack

Emerson Sheets of Springfield:

Scrapbook Kit

Christian G. Stone of Petersburg:

Black & Decker Electric Hedge Trimmer

Donald Wake of Cantrall:

50 Foot Garden Hose w/Sprayer

Roger Westerhold of Dawson:

LED Aluminum Flashlight Set

Barbara A. White of Petersburg:

Auto Safety Kit

Proxy Prizes

These members each received a \$10 Menard Electric Cooperative bill credit:

Robert J. Edwards of Beardstown
Harold Humphres of Petersburg
John Hurie of Petersburg,
Christina Sue Schafer of Oakford
William G. Smith of Petersburg

An Easy Way to Save on Your Video Game Play

Are you one of the more than 40 percent of U.S. homes that contains at least one video game system? If so, you might be surprised to learn how much that system, or systems, are costing you to run. A Playstation 3 or Xbox 360 left on all the time could cost you as much to operate in a year as two new refrigerators.

The Natural Resources Defense Council, NRDC, completed a study on the most popular game systems and estimates that they consume 16 billion kilowatts a year, or roughly the amount used annually by the city of San Diego. That's a lot of electricity. NRDC says turning off those systems when not in use would save \$1 billion nationally and avoid more than 7 million tons of CO₂ emissions annually.

If you leave your Playstation 3 or Xbox 360 on all the time you're paying more than \$100 a year in energy costs. Turning the systems off after using them could reduce your costs to less than \$15 a year. Nintendo Wii users consume much less electricity, only \$10 a year for systems left on, and roughly \$3 a year for those turned off after use.

So, the best way to save energy and money is to shut off your system when you're not actively playing it. But let's face it, if you can't get your kids to turn off lights, TVs or other appliances, they're probably not going to remember this one either. If you own a Playstation 3 or Xbox 360 you can enable an automatic power-off feature – see right for instructions on how to do that.

And if you use your game console to play DVDs be aware that it could use four to seven times as much electricity as a stand-alone Blu-ray player and 24 times more power as a stand-alone DVD player.

Information taken from Lowering the Cost of Play: Improving the Energy Efficiency of Video Game Consoles by the NRDC. Read the paper at www.nrdc.org/energy/consoles/contents.

Enabling Automatic Power-Off in Playstation 3 and Xbox 360

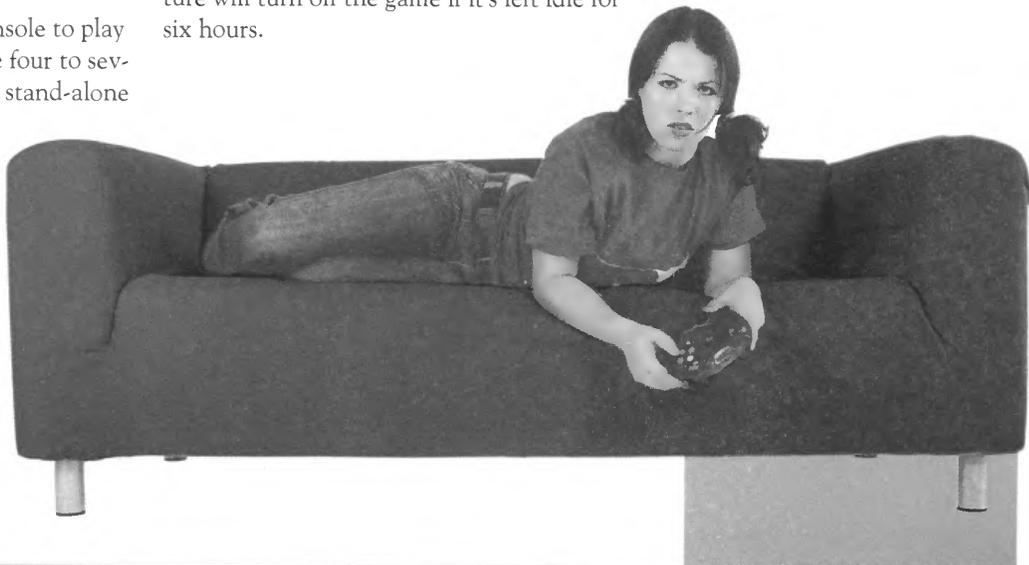
Taken from www.nrdc.org/energy/consoles/contents.asp. Visit the site for these instructions in steps with screen shots.

Playstation 3

At the main menu screen select the System Settings tab, then select Power Save Settings. Select the System Auto-Off option. Select the 1 hour time option for maximum energy savings. Select the option to turn off the system automatically “even under special conditions.” (This allows the auto-shutdown feature to work even if you have a game or movie inserted in the console.) Once you've returned to the Power Save Settings screen you can select the Auto-Off feature for your controllers as well, further increasing your energy savings. These features will turn off a game if it's left idle over 1 hour, so remember to save your game.

XBOX 360

Turn on the XBOX 360 without a disc in the drive. Use the green A button on your controller to select items. At the main menu screen scroll to the right to the System tab and select Console Setting. Scroll down and select Shutdown. Then select Auto-Off and select Enable. This should return you to the Shutdown screen where you should notice the Auto-Off feature is Enabled. This feature will turn off the game if it's left idle for six hours.



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With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

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- Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp. 217-428-2193
- MCS Community Services 888-288-4413
- Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources 217-535-3120
- Tazwood Community Services 309-266-9941
- CAPCIL (Mason County) 309-543-6988
- CAPCIL (Menard County) 217-632-3137

Cellular Phone Discount for Co-op Members

Menard Electric Cooperative members can receive a discount on cellular phone service with AT&T through service agent Jim McAfee. The discount is 8 percent off each month's bill, with an initial \$36 fee. Jim says the initial fee is usually recouped in 4 or 5 months. Call Jim at 217-741-0405. He'll go over your service with you to make sure you are only paying for the services you use, check for any additional discounts you may be eligible for, and discuss any other questions you have.

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
May 26, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of April 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on work done by cooperative crews for the month. He advised that there had been a meeting of the staff to discuss the status of FEMA repairs. He advised that there were still approximately five miles of single-phase line to be rebuilt as well as other work to be completed.

He reviewed the update from Don Wood on the Waxman Climate and Energy Legislation. He reported on the status of the new Web design and advised that Jim Rechner was still in the process of narrowing down the field of choices to do the Web design. He reviewed a summary of the results of the first small wind turbine on the cooperative lines.

He advised that he had contacted the Village of Williamsville to discuss a proposed franchise agreement with the village. Manager Frasco discussed the preliminary application with PPI that he had completed for smart grid funding. It was moved and seconded that Frasco be authorized to proceed with the application. Motion carried.

Frasco reviewed a summary of the rate decrease for Ameren customers. He also reviewed the 2009 General Retirement and Capital Credits. He reviewed with the Board a letter to irrigation members regarding billing procedure for 2009.

He also discussed materials obtained from NRTC regarding a WiMAX opportunity. The Board discussed the materials from NRTC and Manager Frasco reviewed his discussions with the NRTC representative regarding the WiMAX opportunity. It was his recommendation that the Board spend the initial fee of \$7,500 for Phase 1 Pre-qualification. It was moved and seconded that the Board pay the \$7,500 for Phase 1 Pre-qualification. Motion carried. It was moved and seconded that the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of April. Year to date margins were \$438,474 compared to \$800,973 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of April was 33.52% and the number of members served was 10,469 compared to 10,357 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of April was \$35,148,311 compared to \$33,489,726 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and

NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. He reviewed the President's Report and the April energy cost.

Director Brooks reported on plans for the cooperative Annual Meeting scheduled for June 6, 2009, with dinner starting at 4:30 p.m. and the business meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. He advised that the Annual Meeting committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 3, 2009, at 9 a.m. at the cooperative headquarters.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Manager Frasco and Director Brooks discussed the NRECA Legislative Conference.

President Martin advised that next month's meeting was scheduled for June 23, 2009, at 6 p.m.

Under other business, the Board discussed issues with regard to an Internet Policy for the directors. Director Brooks moved that each member be paid \$40 a month as reimbursement for Internet costs.

This would allow Board materials and other cooperative materials to be provided to Board members via the Internet as opposed to mailing those materials. There followed discussion with regard to the motion. After further discussion, it was moved and seconded that Director Brooks' motion be tabled for further discussion. Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

inside

- Capital Credit Allocation..... 16b
- Signs on Poles..... 16d
- Tough Choices, Strong Voices 16e
- Harvest Safety 16f
- Cars in Power Lines Safety..... 16g
- Board Report..... 16h

Coming Next Month Your Co-op Connection Card

Next month's magazine will include your new Menard Electric Cooperative Co-op Connection Card.

With your card you'll receive discounts at national and local restaurants, shops and service joints, as well as a prescription drug benefit. And it's all free to you. Places like J&D's Family Restaurant in Oakford, River Bank Lodge in Petersburg and Salt Creek

Attic in Mt. Pulaski, along with many other stores and restaurants in our service territory, have already agreed to offer a discount to our members. Check out next month's magazine for a complete listing of local deals. You can visit www.co-opconnections.coop for a look at the national deals you'll soon be able to take advantage of as well.

Co-op Connections® Card



Menard Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Attention Businesses

Do you own a local business? Give us a call today to sign up for this free program. You can offer any discount you'd like to Menard's more than 8,000 members and in return we'll advertise your business in this magazine and on our Web site. It's a great way for us to encourage local businesses while at the same time aiding our members.

Office Closing
Our office will be closed
Monday, Sept. 7
for Labor Day.



14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

What are Capital Credits?

Your electric cooperative is structured to make every member an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your electric service needs are always met, not to make a profit. Instead, any revenues over and above the cost of doing business are considered "margins."

These margins represent an interest-free source of operating capital by the membership to the cooperative. This capital allows Menard Electric Cooperative to finance operations and — to a major extent — new construction, with the intent that this capital will be repaid to you in later years. During 2009 Menard Electric paid capital credits allocated to members who received service in 1984. We have provided answers to some questions for a better understanding of capital credits.

What's the difference between allocated and retired capital credits? Allocated capital credits appear as entry on the permanent financial records of the co-op and reflect your equity or ownership in Menard Electric. When capital credits are retired, normally by a general retirement in May or June of each year, a check or credit on your account is issued to you and your ownership-share in the co-op is reduced.

How often will I receive an allocation notice? You should receive an allocation notice annually after the finances for the previous years books have been completed. See this year's notice at right.

What do I have to do to start accumulating capital credits? Capital credits are calculated by Menard Electric for every member that purchased electricity during a year in which the utility earned margins. No special action is re-

quired to start a capital credits account. Your membership activates your capital credits account.

How are capital credits calculated? The amount of capital credits you earn in a given year is based upon the amount of capital you contribute to the cooperative through payment of your monthly bills. The more electric service you buy, the greater your capital credits account. The sum of your monthly bills for a year is multiplied by an allocation factor to determine your capital credits.

What percent of my bill is assigned as capital credits? The percentage of your total payment that is allocated as capital credits varies from year to year, depending upon the success of the cooperative. Capital credits are only allocated for a year in which Menard Electric earns margins. Since capital credits are a member's share of the margins, no credits are allocated for a year with no margins.

Do I have to be a member for an entire year to earn capital credits? No. Capital credits are calculated based upon a member's monthly bills. If you are billed for service for even one month, you will accumulate some capital credits if Menard Electric earned margins in that year.

What happens to the capital credits of a member that dies? The capital credits of a deceased member may be paid without waiting for a general retirement. However, these estate payments are not automatic. A representative of the estate must request the capital credits be paid at a reduced, present value, amount by filling out our capital credit estate packet. If the membership is jointly held by a spouse, the capital credits can be transferred to the surviving spouse's new membership.

Will I receive a capital credit check every year? Not necessarily. The Board of Directors must authorize a general retirement before you receive a check. When considering a retirement, the Board analyzes the financial health of the co-op and will not authorize a general retirement if Menard Electric cannot afford it.

What happens to my capital credits when I leave the Menard Electric service area? They remain on the books in your name until they are retired with a future general retirement or as an estate final payment. You should ensure that Menard Electric always has your current mailing address.

How to Calculate Your Capital Credits

For the fiscal year 2008 the capital credit allocation factor will be .09335821. To determine the amount of capital credits on your account, multiply the allocation factor by the amount paid for electricity excluding tax. For example, energy payments of \$1,000 X .09335821 = \$93.36. Please contact the cooperative for more information.

No Signs

Attaching Signs to Utility Poles Presents Safety Hazards

Although seemingly innocent enough, putting signs or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs —as well as the signs themselves — pose dangers to Menard Electric Cooperative line workers who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters or other objects (birdhouses, balloons, flags and even basketball nets) can create dangerous obstacles. Also, the nails and tacks left behind from signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making line workers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

Menard Electric Cooperative encourages co-op consumers to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally.



Image courtesy of Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Chris Grammes writes on safety issues for NRECA.

Geothermal Rebate/Rate

If you've chosen a geothermal heating and cooling system for your home then you already know of its amazing efficiency ratings. You will see savings on your electric bill all year long as you enjoy greater comfort in your home than a traditional furnace and air conditioner can bring.

But did you know that Menard Electric also pays you back for your choice with a one-time rebate? Call us today for your one-time rebate of \$600. The unit can be any size and can be installed in a new or existing home.

In addition to the rebate above, you can qualify for the co-op's Rate 19 if your home is all-electric, contains a geothermal heating and cooling system and water heater and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 6.7 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.

Heat Pump Rebate/Rate

Have you chosen the next best thing to geothermal? Air-to-air heat pumps are much more efficient than a traditional furnace and offer air conditioning as well. If you've chosen one of these units to install one in your new or existing home you qualify for a one-time \$200 rebate from Menard Electric regardless of the size of the unit installed. You also may qualify for the co-op's Rate 18 (Electric Heat Rate) if your primary heat source is electric and you have signed up for the co-op's load management program. The rate is 7.1 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. Call us today for more information.

Make Things Easy!

Sign up now to pay your bill automatically

With our Automatic Payment Plan you can have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement. No checks to write, stamps to buy or deadlines to worry about! Fill out the application below to make your life just a little easier!

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Menard Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that Menard Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Menard Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ 

5 Ways Automatic Payment Can Help You!

1

It saves time - fewer checks to write.

2

It is convenient and timely - even if you're out of town.

3

It is always on time - no lost or misplaced statements helps maintain good credit and avoid late charges.

4

It saves money - no postage or envelopes needed.

5

It's easy - just fill out the application at right.

Our Energy Our Future:

Tough Choices call for Strong Voices



In a 1951 play, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre jotted down a line that seems tailor-made for the energy challenges facing our nation and electric co-ops: "We are our choices." Indeed, who we are is reflected in how we choose to live and the decisions we make each and every day.

Our leaders in Congress are tackling tough energy choices this year, choices we, as a nation, should make together. Will we choose for electricity to remain affordable, or will we choose for it to be a luxury? Are we ready for brownouts if enough power's not available, or will we choose a diverse energy mix to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity in an environmentally responsible fashion? Will we choose to move forward or will we find ourselves, despite good intentions, moving backwards?

The climate change debate in Congress is coming down to the wire. Now, more than ever before, is the time to make sure your voice — and your choice — is heard. At Menard Electric Cooperative, our choice is clear. We've always been committed to providing affordable, reliable energy in a responsible manner. This choice reflects who we are, and why we were founded by members like you in an effort to move our community

forward into a brighter future.

Tough choices call for strong voices, and no voice is stronger than the combined force of 42 million electric cooperative consumers across the nation. Together we can choose to speak up for affordability. We can choose to invest in technology to lower energy costs, and we can pave the way for adding energy to the grid. Most importantly we can choose to work together, calling on Congress to work with electric co-ops in a combined effort to address climate change responsibly with affordability in mind.

The choice is clear. More than 370,000 electric co-op members have decided to join a national conversation, making their voices heard through the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign. Make sure your voice — and your choice — counts. Visit www.ourenergy.coop and choose to be heard today.



Our Energy, Our Future

A Dialogue With America



Reap an Autumn Harvest of Safety

This harvest season is an opportune time to be proactive in exploring potential safety hazards and taking action to eliminate those that may exist so that accidents can be prevented.

“Sadly, electrocution is one of the leading hazards on farms today, which frequently occurs during harvest season when farm equipment comes in contact with power lines,” says Jay Solomon, University of Illinois Extension Educator. “These accidents are oft-times preventable if proper safety procedures are followed.”

Safe Electricity offers the following recommendations to help avoid tragic accidents in the farming communities:

- Each day review all farm activities and work practices that will take place around power lines to remind all workers to take precautions.
- Know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of a grain truck. It can be difficult to estimate distance and sometimes a power line is closer than it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet - before moving or transporting them. Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

For more information on farm and home electrical safety visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Making the Right Move After an Auto Accident Involving Power Lines

When a vehicle accident brings down a power line, a drivers' natural instinct tells them to flee danger. Unfortunately these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results. Often our inclination is to step in to help those in danger and offer assistance. But, in accidents involving power poles, your best action is to call for help. Wait for the utility to arrive and de-energize the line, or you could become another accident victim in need of rescue.

If your car hits a power pole, or is otherwise involved in a scene with a downed power line, Menard Electric urges you to stay inside the auto and wait for help. If you come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene. The ground around the accident could be energized.

If you must get out because of fire or other danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop or shuffle with feet together – don't run or stride, which allows one

foot to move from one voltage zone to another. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance.

If the power line is still energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path for that electricity and electrocution is the tragic result. Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area near your car to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire.

The same rules apply to situations involving large farm and construction equipment that comes in contact with overhead lines.

For more information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Photo by Kevin Bernson

3 Ways to Pay Your Bill

1 Automatic Payment

You can pay your bill automatically from your checking or savings account on the 10th day of each month. The amount withdrawn from your account will be the net amount due shown on your bill. You'll never have to worry about paying your bill late, even if you're out of town. Send us the form from page 16d to sign up today.

2 Pay Online

Many members are choosing to pay their bills online through their local bank or credit union. If your financial institute offers this option you can pay your Menard Electric bill online as well. Please include your account number in the appropriate location on your financial institution's form. This number is very important to us so we can be sure to post your payment to your account. The account number can be found in bold face type above your map location number on the bill stub you would normally return with your payment if you were to mail it in with a check.

3 Credit Card

You can pay your bill by Visa or Mastercard on a one-time only or automatic monthly withdraw basis. We will charge a transaction processing fee of \$3 for amounts up to \$200. Amounts over \$200 will be charged a transaction fee of 3 percent of the payment amount. You can come into the office, call us at 632-7746 with your credit card number and expiration date, or print out the form online and mail it to our office to sign up.

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
June 23, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, D. Jay Frye, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Director Michael E. Carls and Director Warren D. Goetsch were absent. Also present were Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of May 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on work done by the cooperative crews for the month. He advised that notice had been received with regard to the Virginia Wells Project. The cooperative needed to have power available by 9/30/2010.

He discussed the status of the Web site development and advised that the cooperative had hired AgPage to do the design work for the Web page and that within the month, the cooperative should have a rough draft of the design to present to the Board.

He discussed the Climate Change legislation before the United States House of Representatives and advised that NRECA had been in discussions with legislative leaders in Washington with regard to changes in the legislation. He advised that word had been received from Glenn English that an agreement had been reached with the Chairman of the Committee as to changes requested by the NRECA.

Manager Frasco advised that the cooperative was looking at using a different credit card processing vendor and that a proposal had been received from NRECA

with NISC.

Manager Frasco discussed the 2009 irrigation billing procedure. He advised that CFC had voted to adjust its policy relating to Capital Credit Retirements, which would result in CFC retaining a larger amount of cash. He advised that the WiMax Application with NRTC had been completed as of June 5, 2009.

He discussed the Smart Grid Application with Prairie Power. He then continued with the Board discussion with regard to an Internet Policy. He reviewed other cooperative policies with regard to the Internet. It was moved and seconded to take this issue off the table for further discussion. Motion carried. Director Brooks had previously made a motion, at last month's Board Meeting, to pay Board Members a stipend of \$40 per month as reimbursement for Internet expenses.

It was moved and seconded that Director Brooks's motion be amended to change the stipend to \$30 per month instead of \$40 per month. Motion carried. It was then called for a vote on the motion as amended providing for a \$30 per month reimbursement for Internet services, to be effective for the July 2009 Board Meeting. The motion carried. Manager Frasco discussed the pending Farm Progress Show.

It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the Month of May. Year to date margins were \$537,484 compared to \$983,754 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of May was 34.22% and the number of members served was 10,473 compared to 10,377 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of May was \$35,158,333 compared to \$33,680,024 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

In the absence of Director Goetsch, there was no report on AIEC Activities. Director Brooks asked the Board to review the Report in the Board packet.

Manager Frasco reported on Prairie Power and reviewed the President's Report, as well as the May Energy Cost

Analysis.

President Martin reviewed with the Board the proposed Board Meeting dates and times for 2009-2010. It was moved and seconded that the dates and times be approved as presented. Motion carried.

The Board and Manager Frasco discussed the 2009 Annual Meeting and possible changes and additions to the Annual Meeting.

President Martin reviewed with the Board, Committee and Delegate appointments for 2009-2010. It was moved and seconded that the Delegate and Board Member appointments for 2009-2010 be approved. Motion carried.

President Martin discussed with the Board the Committee appointments for 2009-2010. It was moved and seconded that the Committee appointments for 2009-2010 be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco discussed with the Board the AIEC - 2009 Statewide Member Survey - Local Report and advised that the cooperative had the opportunity to submit additional questions to Menard members for comment.

The Board discussed the four proposed questions and it was determined that if there were suggestions or comments, that such be given to Manager Frasco as soon as possible.

Manager Frasco presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

President Martin advised that next month's meeting was scheduled for July 28, 2009, at 6 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin reminded the Board members that the AIEC Annual Meeting was scheduled for July 30-31, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois, and the NRECA Seminar "Role of Renewables in Power Supply" scheduled for July 29, 2009.

President Martin discussed the CFC Forum he attended.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



inside

LIHEAP	16b
Co-op Connections Card Businesses	16c-e
Prescription Discount	16f
National Cooperative Month	16g
Board Report.....	16h

Got Your Card?

Connections Card saves you money
and strengthens your community

The Co-op Connections Cards are here! Excited? If not we hope you will be once you see all the great discounts already available to you just for being a member of Menard Electric Cooperative.

We've got more than 100 local businesses offering ways for you to save on their products or services, and that's in addition to the pharmacy discount that we know will benefit many of our members who don't have prescription drug insurance coverage.

Check out the list on page 16c to see where you can use your card right away. More businesses will be added periodically and we'll publish them here at that time. You can also see up-to-date listings of all the discounts on our new Web site at www.menard.com.

Yes, it's another card to add to your wallet or keychain, and we know that space can be getting pretty crowded with all the store cards out there these days. But really, who doesn't like getting free stuff? Or discounts?

Add to that the knowledge that this card is also helping to keep your community strong by encouraging you to frequent local small businesses and it's a sure bet that this card will stay in your wallet.

So why did we do this? It's about making connections (now you get the name of the card right?), connections between our

Co-op Connections® Card



**Menard Electric
Cooperative**

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members and the small businesses in our area. We're your electric cooperative and we work and live in these communities too. We're committed to keeping them strong and to providing our members' with services that improve their quality of life. Saving on prescriptions and services is just one small way we can do that.

So how much savings is it? Well, so far over \$8.6 million dollars has been saved by co-op members across the nation on prescription drugs. That's a pretty big number. And we don't know how much money has been saved at local businesses across the country, but we're sure the numbers would be just as staggering.

So start using your card today and start saving money!

Daylight Savings Time

November 1 marks the end of Daylight Savings Time. Move your clocks back one hour before you go to bed October 31. If earlier sunsets leave you bumbling through your yard in the dark, it might be time to contact us about a security light.

14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

Need Help Paying Your Electric Bill?

LIHEAP may be the answer

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a one-time lump sum payment paid directly to Menard Electric Cooperative on behalf of a consumer. Payments are based on the number of people in a household and the gross monthly income of everyone in that household. The eligibility process can take approximately 30 days once an application is completed.

The LIHEAP program can help with other utilities as well, including gas, propane and heating oil. In some cases if the utility service is shut off, a consumer may be required to make a good faith payment to the utility before LIHEAP can make any promise of payment.

Check the requirements above to see if you may be eligible for assistance.

If you think you may be eligible, please contact an agent in your area:

CAPCIL (Logan County)

1800 5th St.
Lincoln, IL 62656
217-732-2159, Ext. 251

Number of people living in household	Gross income for 30 days prior to application date:
1	\$1,300
2	\$1,750
3	\$2,200
4	\$2,650
5	\$3,100

Please call your local office for additional amounts

CAPCIL (Mason County)

532 S. Schrader
Havana, IL 62644
309-543-2594

CAPCIL (Menard County)

809 Old Salem Rd
Petersburg, IL 62675
217-632-3878

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

1122 E. Marietta St.
Decatur, IL 62521
217-428-2193

MCS Community Services (Cass & Morgan County)

345 W. State St.
Jacksonville, IL 62650
888-288-4413

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

200 S. 9th St., Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
217-535-3120

Tazewood Community Service, Inc. (Tazewell County)

2005 S. Main St.
Morton, IL 61550
309-266-9941

August 19 Storms and Tornadoes

When high winds, lightning and two tornadoes wound their way through Central Illinois Wednesday, August 19, they left devastating destruction behind. Many of Menard Electric Cooperative members living Northeast of Williamsville and East of Elkhart experienced firsthand the destruction. At least two dozen homes were destroyed or damaged and total damage to just the Williamsville area was estimated at \$10 million.



◀ As you can see by this piece of pole and transformer, many utility poles caught in the path of the storm were snapped. More than 30 of our poles had to be replaced, as did many of the transmission poles that provide power to us. On Thursday, transmission poles were replaced by Prairie Power, Inc., allowing our crews to rebuild the underlying distribution lines to restore power to the several dozen members who remained out of power that evening.

■ More on page 16g

Co-op Connections Card Business Listing

Just show your new Co-op Connections Card at any of these businesses to receive the discount shown. We'll update this listing periodically in this magazine as we get more businesses signed up, and keep an up-to-date file on our new Web site, www.menard.com. Questions? Call us at 217-632-7746.

ASHLAND

Antique Ranch
136 N. Yates, 217-381-7340
10% discount.

Crazy Horse Campground
2113 Crazyhorse Rd, 217-886-2089
10% off camping fee.

Uncle Tykie's Down Home Grill
318 W. Freemont St, 217-476-DINE
10% off total check.

BARTONVILLE

Associates in Dentistry
617 W. Garfield Ave, 309-697-2228
5% off services paid in full at time of service.

BEARDSTOWN

A.C. Jones, Inc.
700 Garden Ave, 217-323-2591
5% off crane service/material hauling. Payable on completion or delivery. Some restrictions apply. Does not include state and county permits. One day limit.

Benny's Pizza
100 E. 15th St, 217-323-5222
Free pitcher of soda with any purchase of \$15 or more. Dine-in only. Cannot be combined with any other discounts or specials.

Eyler Auto Center, Inc.
9355 IL Rt. 125, 217-323-4949
\$200 off any vehicle purchase with this ad. One redemption per vehicle purchased.

Fiesta Grande
315 E. 4th St, 217-323-4941
Purchase 2 dinners or 2 lunches and receive \$1.50 off total bill.

Jennings Beardstown
716 March, 217-909-4349
10% off any service work.

R & H Farm & Home
1351 Grand Ave. Jct. 67-100, 217-323-9000
10% off your purchase of \$100 or more. Must present co-op card.

DECATUR

Bard Optical
288 N. Park, 217-422-3881
Save 10% on disposable and specialty contacts. Save 20-40% on all other eye care products. Reduced exam fee for preferred program providers.

Creative Media Services, In.
2121 S. Imboden Court, 217-428-9950
20% off first hour of graphic design time/consulting.

Enterprise Rent A Car
2745 N. Water St, 217-875-4900
5% off daily rates or 10% off weekly rates on rental vehicles. Does not apply to weekend rates; cannot be combined with any other coupons or offers.

Glass Specialty Company, Inc.
505 E. William, 217-429-2371
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.

Midstate Overhead Deals
2101 E. Olive St, 217-422-8030
10% discount on parts and materials used in process of service/repair call. Excludes all complete door, replacement door sections and garage door openers.

Ramada Limited
355 E. Hickory Point Frontage Rd, 217-876-8011
\$59.99 + tax for 1 or 2 people. Extra person \$5 each. This price for 1 or 2 beds.

Scotty's Pest Control
730 S. Willow, 217-422-9372
10% off first time pest control.

HAVANA

The Main Street Chuckwagon
316 W. Main, 309-543-2799
10% off purchase.

Kracker's Korner
1110 S. Water St, 309-543-3598
Free coffee or tea with purchase of a meal.

JACKSONVILLE

Aarons Sales & Lease
1727 W. Morton Ave, 217-245-0010
50% off first month lease payment.

All Occasions Flowers & Gifts
635 E. Morton, 217-245-0064
10% off cash and carry; must present co-op card. Not valid on special or Teleflora orders.

Bahan's
214 N. East St, 217-243-3009
\$1.25 burgers Mon-Wed, 5-9 p.m.

Bard Optical
901 Morton, 217-243-0506
Save 10% on disposable and specialty contacts. Save 20-40% on all other eye

care products. Reduced exam fee for preferred program providers.

Bill Wade Photography, Inc.
229 E. State St, 217-245-5418
Get any of our regular or better sitting-half off! Good for families, children and/or individuals. One per person/family/address per year.

Blessings on State Bed & Breakfast
1109 West State St, 217-245-1013
Enjoy a 10% discount when you stay two consecutive nights. Based on availability.

Buchheit of Jacksonville
2200 W. Morton Ave, 573-547-1010
\$5 off reg. priced men's and ladies' Carhartt pants in stock excluding bibs and insulated pants.

Canine Camp
2317 Deornellas Rd, 217-245-6857
10% off boarding and \$5 off a bath or grooming.

Comfort Inn
200 Comfort Dr, 217-245-8372
15% off rack rate. Does not apply to any other discount rates.

Dairy Queen
1360 S. Main St, 217-243-7255
Buy any regular priced sandwich and get a 2nd sandwich 1/2 price.

Doyle Family Chiropractic
1521 D West Walnut St, 217-243-4333
50% off 1st visit. Some Medicare, insurance restrictions.

Dunham's Sports
901 W. Morton, Ste. 18, 217-243-0046
10% off non-sale purchases. Cannot be combined with any other offer or used on Dunham's website. Not for re-sale. Restrictions: Firearms, ammunition, licenses, trading cards, DVD's, select Nike & Under Armour products, Titleist PRO V & NXT golf balls, select Taylormade products, gift cards & special order items.

Easton's Services
5 W. Central Park Plaza, 217-245-2380
10% off carpet-furniture-floor cleaning. 10% off new carpet and flooring sales.

Easy Street Lounge
1699 W. Morton, 217-243-3555
\$1 off any pizza on Mon. nights; Dine-In only. Must be 21 years old.

JACKSONVILLE (cont.)

El Rancherito

901 W. Morton, 217-243-1368
Purchase 2 dinners or 2 lunches & receive \$1.50 off total bill.

Enterprise Rent A Car

950 W. Morton, 217-243-5300
5% off daily rates or 10% off weekly rates on rental vehicles. Does not apply to weekend rates & cannot be combined with any other coupons or offers.

Glass Specialty Systems

817 E. Morton, 217-243-7516
\$20 Wal-Mart card with any glass replacement.

Godfather's Pizza

1233 B West Morton, 217-243-6444
One free buffet with purchase of one buffet and a drink or 25% off any regular priced menu item.

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites

2501 Holiday Dr., 217-245-6500
10% off rack rate.

Karen Anderson Designs, Inc.

56 N. Central Park Plaza, 217-473-1178
\$25 off session fee.

Kevin Denney Precious Jewelers

104 E. Vandalia Rd., 217-245-0671
Free inspection and cleaning of jewelry.

Makin Waves

598 Massey Lane, 217-245-0700
10% off in store. Restrictions: Pools and spas.

Papa Murphy's

1119 W. Morton, 217-245-6367
\$3 off a family size pizza. Cannot be combined with any other discounts.

Perkins Restaurant and Bakery

901 W. Morton, 217-245-5663
10% off meals.

Precision Auto Collision

207 E. Douglas Ave., 217-245-6403
\$2 off labor rate.

Reese Family Chiropractic

265 N. Westgate
10% off all nutritional products, 10% off all custom orthotics, 10% off all support pillows. Restrictions: Professional services.

Seymour's Gold & Silver Exchange

1687 W. Morton, 217-245-1741
10% off jewelry items.

Sprocket Motor Sports LLC

400 W. Morton, 217-245-2650
15% off retail purchases. Does not include service work.

Super 8

1003 W. Morton, 217-479-0303
\$49.99+ tax per room/night for one or two bed/person. Extra persons \$5 each.

Wareco Car Wash

1005 S. East St., 217-245-9119
\$1 off per wash-any wash.

LINCOLN

Bard Optical

1481 Woodlawn Rd., 217-735-1707
Save 10% on disposable and specialty contacts. Save 20-40% on all other eye care products. Reduced exam fee for preferred program providers.

Dickinson's Tacos and More...The Flour Sack Custom Bakery

127 S. Kickapoo St., 217-735-3430.
Buy one sancho get one free.

Enterprise Rent A Car

1005 Macon St., 217-732-2999
5% off daily rates or 10% off weekly rates on rental vehicles. In the Jacksonville area. Does not apply to weekend rates; cannot be combined with any other coupons or offers.

MT. PULASKI

Buff's Family Restaurant

102 S. Washington St., 217-792-5233
Buy one meal at regular menu price and get the second of equal or lesser value for 1/2 price. Limit one offer per family per visit.

Salt Creek Attic

106 S. Washington, 217-792-5117
Save 10% on purchases of Dept. 1 items of \$20 or more of regular-priced items.

OAKFORD

J&D's Family Restaurant

103 Center Street, 217-635-5631
Free drink with meal.

Hill Prairie Winery

23753 Lounsberry Road, 217-635-9900
Free wine tasting and 10% off case purchase.

PEKIN

Bard Optical

3287 Court St., 309-353-9313
Save 10% on disposable and specialty contacts. Save 20-40% on all eye care products. Reduced exam fee for preferred program providers.

Bond Eye Associates

725 S. 14th, 309-353-6660
15% off complete pair of eye wear or sun wear. Excludes contact lenses.

Mattress Doctor

135 Radio City Dr., 309-382-2600
10 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday, receive 20% off non-sale items and 15% off sale

items. Otherwise receive 15% off non-sale items and 10% off sale items. Must present card upon entering store.

PEORIA

Associates in Dentistry

4300 N. Brandywine Dr., 309-686-4900
5% off all services paid in full at time of service.

Bard Optical

1800 N. Knoxville, 309-686-6491
1200 W. Main, 309-672-2273
416 Riverside Dr., E. Peoria, 309-694-2273
4620 N. University Dr., 309-692-8222
7720 N. Crestline Dr., 309-693-9520
Save 10% on disposable and specialty contacts. Save 20-40% on all other eye care products. Reduced exam fee for preferred program providers.

Blimpie Sub & Salads

3125 N. University St., 309-687-3659
Buy one 6" sub and medium drink and get a 6" sub free.

Dejure Formalwear & Bridal Palace

3204 N. University, 309-685-0313
\$40 off tuxedo rental. 30% off wedding dress purchase.

Dunham's Sports

3425 N. University Ave., 309-685-6819
10% off non-sale purchases. Excludes firearms, ammunition, licenses, trading cards, DVDs, select Nike and Under Armour products, Titleist Pro V & NXT golf balls, select Taylormade products, gift cards & special order items. Cannot be combined with any other offer or used on Dunham's web site. Not for resale.

Glass Specialty Company

1000 SW Jefferson, 309-676-6181
\$20 Walmart gift card with autoglass replacement. \$25 off Rhino linings spray where applicable. Does not apply to windshield repairs.

Jim's Autobody and Refinishing Inc.

1330 NE Adams, 309-674-0113
5% off repair cost up to \$100 discount.

Mattress Doctor

8859 N. Knoxville Rd., 309-691-8600
10 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday, receive 20% off non-sale items and 15% off sale items. Otherwise receive 15% off non-sale items and 10% off sale items. Must present card upon entering store.

Medicine Stop of Peoria Pharmacy

4410 N. Knoxville Ave. Ste. A, 309-685-5939
5% discount on prescriptions, vitamins and over-the-counter medications.

Peoria Comfort Suites, Courtyard, Residence Inn
West War Memorial Drive, 888-651-ROOM
Call Chad Reisenauer at 701-355-5710 for current room rate.

Sud's Mercedes, Porsche, VW, Audi
2322 W. Sud Pkwy, 309-243-1101
10% off all parts and service.

Super Suppers
3524 Willow Knolls Rd, 309-691-3400
Purchase 5 full entrees and receive 6th full entrée free. May not combine with any other offer, specials or discounts.

PETERSBURG

Country Pickens II
103 S. 7th St, 217-632-3271
10% off regular price, excludes firm.

Curves of Petersburg
205 S. 6th St, 217-632-5501
50% off signup fee and first month free. Retail value \$110. New members only.

Dairy Queen
401 S. 6th St, 217-632-2733
10% off all combo meals.

Estep & Associates Mercantile
101 N. 7th St, 217-632-4154
10% discount on purchases of \$10 or more except coin, knives and firm.

Loving Creations
102 N. 6th St, 217-632-2629
10% off all silk swags and wreaths.

Memory Lane Antiques
511 S. 6th St, 217-632-2058
10% off.

Pizza Hut
330 E. Sangamon, 217-632-7707
\$2 off a medium pizza; \$3 off a large pizza.

River Bank Lodge
522 S. 6th St, 217-632-0202
10% discount on price of a room. Group discounts available on banquet room if overnight guest rooms are occupied in connection with an event.

Stonebake Pizza Co.
221 E. Douglas, 217-632-2461
Buy any pizza, get the second pizza of equal or lesser value half price.

PLEASANT PLAINS

Paul Tree Farms
12430 State Route 125, 217-971-7876
10% off of Pines, Spruces, Maples, and Oaks.

SHERMAN
Dairy Queen
300 Crossing Drive, 217-632-2733
10% off all combo meals.

SPRINGFIELD
AAA Automotive Services
1425 S. 10th St, 217-753-3765
10% off any service or combination of services over \$100.

Aarons Sales & Lease
3128 S. MacArthur, 217-241-5800
50% off 1st month lease payment.

Aarons Sales & Lease
3100 Walton Dr, 217-522-1911
50% off 1st month lease payment.

Benjamin Franklin Plumbing
P.O. Box 631, 217-523-2301 or 866-867-5309
\$25 off any repair.

BikeTek, Inc.
957 Clock Tower Drive, 217-787-2907
\$5 off complete bicycle tune-up (Reg. \$39.95)

Calhoun Carpets
1701 S. Dirksen Pkwy, 217-544-1826
10% off any carpet purchase.

Enterprise Rent A Car
3901 Yucan Dr, 217-546-7800
101 E. Jefferson, 217-528-8888
1031 S. Dirksen Pkwy, 217-789-1800
5% off daily rates or 10% off weekly rates on rental vehicles. Does not apply to weekend rates and cannot be combined with any other coupons or offers.

George Alarm Company
917 S. 9th St, 309-827-5707
Change monitoring service and will beat existing price by 15%. Lease or purchase new security system and save 15% off installation. Existing customers save 15% on control panel and touchpad upgrades.

Glass Specialty Systems
829 S. 11th St, 217-544-9886
\$20 Wal-Mart card with any glass replacement.

Godfather's Pizza
1549 S. Dirksen Parkway, 217-522-4886
2700 W. Lawrence, 217-726-2000
Buy any Med. or Lg. pizza at reg. price, get one free.

Illini Water Systems
722 W. Jefferson St, 217-544-8677
\$500 off an Ionics Whole House Water System.

J & J Electric Motor Repair Shop
2800 S. 11th St, 217-529-0015
10% off any purchase.

Laketown AAA Automotive Services
3030 Stanton Ave, 217-529-5670
10% off any service or combination of services over \$100.

Nelson's Catering
3005 Great Northern Ave, 217-787-9443
5% off total order.

Papa Murphy's Take n Bake Pizza
1712 Sangamon Ave, 217-391-7272
\$2 off any size pizza at regular price.

Parkway Pointe AAA Automotive Services
3316 Robbins Rd, Suite D, 217-787-2187
10% off any service or combination of services over \$100.

Phone Guy
217-741-0405
25% off in-stock accessories. Free AT&T wireless calling plan review. 8% plan discount for Menard Electric Co-op members. Call Jim McAfee for details.

Springfield Comfort Inn, Courtyard, Fairfield Inn, Sleep Inn
Freedom Drive, 888-651-ROOM
Discount available. Call Chad Reisenauer at 701-355-5710 for current rate.

VIRGINIA

Ball Park Motors, Inc.
20544 Illinois Rte. 125, 217-452-7656
We will discount any advertised price on any vehicle 10% (maximum discount \$1000) that we have in stock to co-op cardholder. Restriction: Vehicles that are not in our current inventory.

Sunrise Ag Service
20735 Hwy. 125 W, 217-452-7751
10% off purchases totaling \$50 or more, 5% off purchases totaling less than \$50.

Didn't see your favorite restaurant or business listed here? Tell the owners you want them to join the program! They can call the office or visit our Web site to get in touch with us.

Prescription Discount

Listing of National and Local Pharmacies Offering Prescription Drug Discounts

Listed below are the national and local pharmacies in our service territory who accept the Co-op Connections Card for prescription discounts. This is not an insurance program and cannot be used in conjunction with an insurance program. We encourage you to price your medication at your local pharmacy through your insurance and through this program and select the most affordable option.

Check with each pharmacy to find out the discounted price for your prescriptions, or visit www.rxpricequotes.com. To find a local provider visit www.locateproviders.com and type 22203 into the group field.

Local Pharmacies

BEARDSTOWN

Martin Rexall Pharmacy
118 W 2nd, 217-323-3002

Pamida Pharmacy
113 W 3rd St, 217-323-4422

DECATUR

Dales Southlake Pharmacy
280 W First Dr, 217-429-5165

Enloe Drugs Decatur
796 N Sunnyside Rd, 217-428-8575

Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy
1035 C E Pershing, 217-875-9090

Physician Plaza Pharmacy
2300 N Edward, 217-876-5649

Victory Pharmacy of Decatur
163 N Water St, 217-428-4000

HAVANA

Wolter's Drug Store
201 W Main, 309-543-2250

MANITO

Manito Pharmacy
406 S Adams, 309-968-2800

MASON CITY

Mason City Pharmacy
149 E Chestnut, 217-482-5985

MT PULASKI

Mt. Pulaski Pharmacy
507 E Chestnut, 217-792-5082

PEKIN

Park Court Pharmacy
600 S 13th St, 309-347-9455

Pekin Prescription Lab
1016 Court St, 309-346-2141

PEORIA

Barnato Pharmacy
5001 N Big Hollow Rd,
309-689-9999

Bogard Drug Inc.
1102 S Western Ave, 309-637-4487

Enloe PCI Prescription Center
2305 W Altorfer Dr, 309-691-2010

Essential Wellness Pharmacy
4625 N University St,
309-681-8850

Heartland Pharmacy
221 NE Glen Oak Ave,
309-671-5151

Medipark Pharmacy
420 NE Glen Oak Ave, Suite 102,
309-655-3799

Medicine Stop of Peoria
4410 N Knoxville, 309-685-5939

Omincare Infusion of Peoria
2106 W Townline Rd,
309-692-2826

Smith Drug Store
4700 N Prospect Rd, 309-688-3684

PETERSBURG

Petersburg Pharmacy
1 Centre Drive, 217-632-7777

Potter's Pharmacy
105 E Douglas, 217-632-2287

RIVERTON

Curry's Family Pharmacy
1279 N 7th, 217-629-7001

SPRINGFIELD

Complete Care Pharmacy
201 N 5th St, 217-528-8096

Watt Brother's Pharmacy
830 N Grand Ave, 217-522-3331

National Pharmacies

- County Market Pharmacy
- Cub Foods Pharmacy
- CVS Pharmacy
- K-mart Pharmacy
- Kroger Pharmacy
- Meijer Pharmacy
- Osco Pharmacy
- Sams Club Pharmacy
- Schnucks Pharmacy
- Shopko Pharmacy
- Target Pharmacy
- Walgreen Drug Store
- Wal-Mart Pharmacy

A complete listing of these pharmacy locations found in our service territory is available on our Web site www.menard.com.

Membership Has Its Privileges

Celebrate Cooperatives During National Cooperative Month

Why do we call those who receive electricity from Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) “members” and not “customers?” The answer is simple.

Service clubs like Lions and Kiwanis have a common mission — together the club accomplishes more than an individual could. The same holds true for high school clubs; they pool resources and work together to help each member succeed.

Membership at MEC offers many of the same benefits as clubs do, but with a big extra. You and the rest of our more than 8,000 members own the co-op! That means we answer to you, not investors who’ve never walked our streets or spent time in our schools. This structure harkens back to our origins.

MEC was organized by farmers and rural residents from this area in 1936, with support from the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA). At that time, investor-owned utilities said there wasn’t enough profit to be made to warrant the expense of building power lines into the countryside.

REA offered low-cost loans for bringing electricity to unserved homes and farms. So folks began forming electric cooperatives to meet the need. A fee of \$5 was collected from each family — making them co-op members and owners — to generate capital for borrowing. The rest is history.

You should be proud of what MEC has accomplished. We are an economic driver in the communities we serve. A 2009 study funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found electric co-ops across the U.S. employ 130,000 Americans, both directly and indirectly, with revenues topping out at \$45 billion.

Finally, and Best of all, every co-op operates on a not-for-profit basis. MEC doesn’t offer profits to investors — we return money over and above operating costs to you, our members, based on electricity consumption. Annually, electric co-ops nationwide return \$545 million to members through this “capital credits retirement” process; last May MEC members received over \$318,000.

Electric co-op membership remains as important today as it was in the late 1930s. And all of the nation’s 900-plus electric co-ops in 47 states share a common mission: to keep energy safe, affordable and reliable.

Working together through efforts like the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign, we’re keeping our needs at the top of Congress’s agenda. We’re part of something special — a nationwide network owned and controlled by people like you and me. That’s why membership matters.



New Web Site

Due for completion this month is our new Web site. It features lots of information about your co-op and a complete Co-op Connections Card business listing. Visit us soon at www.menard.com.

August 19 Storms and Tornadoes cont.



◀ *Four linemen from Spoon River Electric Cooperative in Canton arrived Wednesday night to help your co-op’s linemen restore power to members. Crews worked around the clock to remove trees, repair lines and replace poles in order to restore power quickly to the more than 200 members experiencing outages. Approximately 140 of those members had power restored by Thursday morning. The remaining outages were repaired by Thursday evening.*

Board Meeting Report

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael E. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seane and Steven L. Worner. Also present was Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco introduced Jay Bartlett, the new CEO of Prairie Power. Mr. Bartlett discussed and reviewed with the Board the status of matters with regard to Prairie State and his plans for Prairie Power. Mr. Bartlett also discussed the status of matters with regard to the climate change abatement and climate change legislation before the U.S. Congress.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. and reviewed the President's Report. He discussed the June energy costs.

Manager Frasco and Mr. Bartlett discussed the tour of Prairie State scheduled for August 19, 2009.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of June 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, as well as the Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reviewed the work done by the crews for the month. He discussed with the Board the issues with regard to the road closing of Geriet Road and advised that

the Road District Commissioner had chosen to close the road at the request of certain adjacent property owners. The matter had been appealed by other property owners to Tom Casson, the Menard County Superintendent of Highways. He reported on the hearing before Tom Casson, which had been continued for further testimony. He discussed a letter from Linda Brown with regard an issue of closing of a gate and access by the members to their property.

He advised that an individual for the cooperative was in the process of contacting local merchants to participate in the Co-op Connections Card.

He discussed the issue with regard to installation of air conditioning in a truck and advised of the estimated cost to do so. Manager Frasco reported that the installation would not be done until fall of this year. He reported on the status of the Web site development and advised that the first stage of the development had been completed and reviewed by. He believed that at next month's Board Meeting, he would have a draft product to present to the Board.

He discussed participation in the Department of Energy's Smart Grid Program and gave an update on the WiMax Application. He advised that NRTC had informed him that each cooperative would now be responsible for completing its own WiMax application. He advised that the current cost for operations and construction of a WiMax system are greater than first presented by NRTC. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of June. Year to date margins were \$537,539 compared to \$999,356 a

year earlier. Equity as of the end of June was 33.80 percent and the number of members served was 10,496 compared to 10,390 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of June was \$35,313,835 compared to \$33,939,394 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities. Director Goetsch and Director Brooks reported on issues with regard to the climate change abatement and the status of climate change legislation.

Attorney Smith reviewed the RUS loan documents with regard to the Cooperative's FFB Loan. It was moved and seconded that the Resolutions be adopted. Motion carried.

President Martin called the Board into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. President Martin adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened the monthly meeting.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

President Martin advised that next month's meeting was scheduled for August 25, 2009, at 6 p.m.

Under other business, President Martin reminded the Board that on Wednesday, July 29, 2009, there was scheduled a seminar entitled "Role of Renewables in Power Supply" at 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. He reminded the Board that the AIEC Annual Meeting was scheduled for July 30-31, 2009.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

inside

- Pop Weaver
Popcorn..... 16b-c
- Prairie State
Generating
Facility..... 16d-e
- Scholarships
Available 16f
- Cooking Efficiently.. 16g
- Board Report..... 16h



We are Thankful for You

When you are sitting around your table this Thanksgiving, giving thanks for all the good things in your life such as your health, your family and your friends, we doubt you'll say you're thankful for your electric cooperative. And that's the way it should be. Because you are the cooperative and we are thankful for YOU, our members.

We'd also like to say an extra Thank You to members ...

- Who are patient during outages
- Who pay their bills on time
- Who recognize our need to trim trees to keep service reliable
- Who stay informed about the cooperative
- Who attend the annual meeting

Office Closings

- Veterans Day..... Nov. 11
- Thanksgiving..... Nov. 26 & 27

14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

Pop. Pop. Pop.

Pop Weaver Popcorn is grown right here

The sound of popcorn popping, along with its distinct smell, can make your mouth water and send you searching for the special treat. It's a universal snack that appeals to all ages. For some it's also part of traditions – watching a movie, cheering at a ball game or strolling through a fair just wouldn't be the same without the buttery treat.

Even in the great depression, people were willing to spend a few cents on a bag of popcorn as a special treat for kids and adults alike.

"With popcorn you get a lot for your money," says Dan Sleaford, Production Manager of Pop Weaver. "There's a lot to eat in a box of microwave popcorn versus a bag of potato chips."

And many of us in central Illinois are big fans of the buttery treat – after all, it is the official snack food of the state. On the whole, Americans consume more than 1.1 billion pounds a year. And the United States is the leader in popcorn production, about 325,000 acres are devoted to growing the grain. Illinois is one of the major producing states and Mason County is the number one popcorn producing county in the state. That must be why Manito, a neighbor of Forest City, names its annual celebration the Popcorn Festival.

The Pop Weaver company produces 30 percent of the world's popcorn market. The company states its focus is on quality and value. "We are very quality conscious," says Dan. "From what the growers do in the fields to what we do here. And our product is Weaver from start to finish." Pop Weaver has hybrid seeds, each bred to bring out the most desirable traits for different methods of cooking, microwave versus concessions poppers for example.



Dan Sleaford proudly shows one of Pop Weaver's Blue Bags, filled with corn harvested in Mason County, that will be exported to another country.

The seeds are sold to growers, many of whom are in Mason County. "We do dry land and irrigation. Irrigation assures us of a crop. And this aquifer we're on here in Mason County is just excellent for irrigation," says Dan. Crops are also grown elsewhere in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri.

The corn is harvested at 17 percent moisture. Trucks bring the

crop into the storage facility in Forest City. A sample is taken from each truck as it's weighed. Dan says they do quality testing on the product throughout the process, and it begins with the truck samples. "We look for kernels that won't pop well and the grower is deducted for that," says Dan. "And we keep all of those samples, tracking which bin each goes into, for tracing and safe-

ty purposes." The storage facility is guarded by a locked gate and pin entry system, along with surveillance cameras.

The grain is stored in bins and air is blown from below to dry the kernels to 14-15 percent moisture, which Dan says is optimal for "pop-ability." The bins are on an automated system and the fans run according to the weather conditions outside to keep the kernels at optimal moisture levels. "Automation helps us be more energy efficient," says Dan. "We use a lot of power with all those fans running."

Once they are at optimal moisture level, much of the kernels are then shipped to the Weaver's main processing plant in Indiana, where they are packaged and distributed.

But after some expansion last year, some kernels are now packaged in Forest City, primarily for export. Pop Weaver corn is exported to more than 90 countries, including those in Europe, Russia and South East Asia. Dan says, "Each country is different and we try to cater to each. Germany likes a little sugar on their popcorn. Japan likes theirs in bulk instead of microwaveable packages. Many other countries don't consume as much popcorn as the U.S; for them popcorn is more of a special treat."

The packaging process in Forest City is a wonder of mechanical ingenuity. The corn is transferred from the bins to the facility, sorted, packaged and put on trucks all by

machines run by computers, and could be controlled by just two employees.

The popcorn shipped to Indiana is packaged in different ways, according to its hybrid. Microwaveable popcorn is very popular now and much of it is packaged that way. Weaver also sells to concession stands, movie theaters, ball parks and more. "If you're at a concession stand, it's about a 50/50 chance you're eating our popcorn," says Dan. "We also do a lot of store brands of microwaveable and some specialty popcorns."

For instance, the popular Trails End popcorn sold by Boy Scouts each year is produced by Pop Weaver. "They have a high-end product and we love working with the scouts. The best part is the biggest portion of the sales goes right back to them," says Dan.

Dan says much of the success of the company is based on three things: the local area, the quality of the growers, and the Weaver family's investment in the company and in setting up roots in the area. "It's great for this area. The growers earn money and that money stays here in the community," he says.

Pop Weaver is a family-owned business that began in 1928 and the fourth generation of the Weaver family is now involved. "The company is very direct, we have very close ties and I like that," says Dan. "I don't have to wait to get word from someone in California." He says another advantage to the company is that they are devoted to one product -popcorn.

Menard Electric Cooperative Manager Lynn Frasco says, "We're pleased Pop Weaver has become one of our top three largest commercial loads. A member since 1993, they have grown to six or seven times their original size. Their continued expansion is a recognition of the growing farm economy that has developed in Menard Electric's service territory over the last few years. Pop Weaver has been a great commercial member for the cooperative and we're grateful for their presence in our area."

So, the next time you hear that familiar "Pop, Pop, Pop" check to see if that popcorn is Pop Weaver. If it is, it was probably grown right here. Check out www.popweaver.com for recipes, nutritional information and even science experiments for kids. More fun facts and kids activities are available at www.popcorn.org.

Did You Know?

Popcorn is a whole-grain food that is high in fiber and cholesterol and sugar free.



Did You Know?



Popcorn is the result of a small explosion. When kernels are heated the moisture inside them turns to steam and the pressure builds until the kernel's shell explodes-that's the popping sound you hear. The kernel turns itself inside out.



Under Construction: Prairie State Energy Campus

Menard Electric Cooperative distributes electricity to you, our members, through our substations, wires and poles. We don't produce the electricity we provide. Our largest expense each year is wholesale power costs. We purchase it from our wholesale power supplier, a cooperative called Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI), located in Jacksonville.

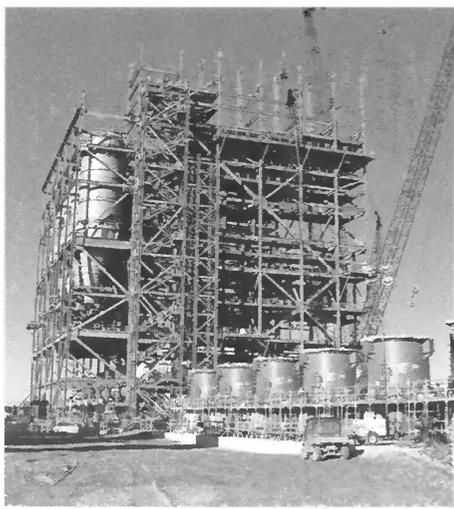
PPI continues to work to achieve the most reliable and affordable source of power for years to come to supply to us and its nine other cooperative owners. One way PPI is doing this is as a part owner of the Prairie State Energy Campus. PPI owns approximately 8.2 percent, or 130 MW of the campus.

Menard Electric Cooperative's board of directors and staff members recently toured the campus to learn more about its state-of-the-art features and the progress of construc-

tion. Seeing the plant up close truly conveys the enormity of the task of building such a large power plant and mine. We thought we'd share some of what we learned below to give our members an idea of what is involved in building the plant.

- The campus stretches across more than 700 acres in Washington County. That's the power plant, mine, equipment, pond and steel yards.
- More than 2,400 construction workers are currently working to build the 1600 MW state-of-the-art power plant. And an additional 90 workers are constructing the mine portion of the campus. It is currently the largest power plant construction project in the United States. And that's a lot of jobs to bring to Illinois.
- When completed it will be the cleanest coal plant in Illinois and one of the cleanest in the country, with emissions dramatically lower than the average U.S. coal plant. Even carbon monoxide levels, which are currently unregulated, will be 15 percent lower than typical U.S. plants. It also has the potential to accept greenhouse gas capture systems when the technology is commercially available.
- More than 500 highly skilled employees will work at high-paying jobs at the energy campus upon completion. The campus has partnered with local colleges to train and recruit the educated workforce that will be needed. That's a large, lasting economic impact on the state.
- It is estimated to bring \$125 million in annual economic benefits to Illinois, including \$74 million to the region.

- The power generated will serve more than 2.5 million families in nine states.
- The power plant will use 6.3 million tons of coal annually from the adjacent mine, the equivalent of more than 20 million barrels of oil.
- It takes one pound of Illinois coal to produce enough electricity to run your television for five hours. The coal plant's coal reserve spans 45 square miles and represents 200 million tons of recoverable coal. That's a 30-year supply of coal for the power plant.
- More than 165,000 cubic yards of concrete will be used in the plant. 10,000 yards are used in the stack alone. To give some perspective – an average concrete mixer holds 7-9 yards – that's a lot of truck loads. And the concrete used could fill more than 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools.
- It took 6 months to construct the 700-foot tall stack. It is 70 feet taller than the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.
- More than 42,000 tons of structural steel will be used to build the plant, about half the amount of steel used in the Sears Tower in Chicago.
- The plant is composed of two 800MW units. Each unit will use approximately 400,000 gallons a minute of cooling water



flow-enough to fill an Olympic size swimming pool in 1 ½ minutes.

- The mine will use 68 miles of fiber optic cable and 884,000 feet of belt line.
- Coal will be transported from the mine to the plant via belt line, eliminating transportation costs and carbon dioxide emissions associated with that.
- Coal will be mined in 2010. Unit 1 of the plant will come online in 2011 and Unit 2 will start operations in 2012. Construction is currently on schedule to meet these deadlines.



Continuing Education for Linemen

Menard Electric Cooperative Apprentice Linemen Jeremy Willis (left) and Dalton Whitley, both from Petersburg, attended a lineman training class for Second Year Apprentice Linemen at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield Sept. 21-25. The school was hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) as part of an overall lineman safety/training program. Roger Larkin, Manager of Lineworker and Apprentice Development for the AIEC, says, "The linemen first learned the proper use of protective apparel. They learned the proper and safe methods for installation of cross-arms, insulators, lighting arrestors and transformers. They also learned how to perform pole and bucket truck rescues."



Need Help Paying Your Electric Bill?

LIHEAP may be the answer

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a one-time lump sum payment paid directly to Menard Electric Cooperative on behalf of a consumer. Payments are based on the number of people in a household and the gross monthly income of everyone in that household. The eligibility process can take approximately 30 days once an application is completed.

The LIHEAP program can help with other utilities as well, including gas, propane and heating oil. In some cases if the utility service is shut off, a consumer may be required to make a good faith payment to the utility before LIHEAP can make any promise of payment.

Check the requirements above to see if you may be eligible for assistance.

Number of people living in household	Gross income for 30 days prior to application date:
1	\$1,300
2	\$1,750
3	\$2,200
4	\$2,650
5	\$3,100

Please call your local office for additional amounts

If you think you may be eligible, please contact an agent in your area:

CAPCIL (Logan County)

1800 5th St.
Lincoln, IL 62656
217-732-2159, Ext. 251

CAPCIL (Mason County)

532 S. Schrader
Havana, IL 62644
309-543-2594

CAPCIL (Menard County)

809 Old Salem Rd
Petersburg, IL 62675
217-632-3878

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

1122 E. Marietta St.
Decatur, IL 62521
217-428-2193

MCS Community Services (Cass & Morgan County)

345 W. State St.
Jacksonville, IL 62650
888-288-4413

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

200 S. 9th St., Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
217-535-3120

Tazwood Community Service, Inc. (Tazewell County)

2005 S. Main St.
Morton, IL 61550
309-266-9941

Watch for Changes to Our Billing Schedule in 2010

We're implementing a new meter reading and billing schedule that will be clearer and more predictable for members. Utilizing our new automatic reading system, we will be able to read your meter at midnight on the last day of each month. You'll receive a bill for that month's usage the next month, about a week later than you receive it now, and it will be due at the office a week later as well, giving you the same amount of time to pay each month.

The change should be complete in February 2010. For now, you will see an extra day or two of usage added to your bills each month as we slowly move the meter reading date closer to the end of the month. In January and February's issues we'll tell you the specific details about this change.

College Scholarships Available

Seven scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2010 to eligible high school seniors through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.

A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. Last year, Rachel Jean Brooks of Oakford received this scholarship.



The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

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 that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

For more information contact the cooperative.

Cook More Efficiently This Thanksgiving

Preparing a Thanksgiving dinner can be a daunting task. It takes an energetic cook to plan, prepare and serve such a large feast. And the cook isn't the only one using energy – your kitchen appliances could be sent into overdrive, using much more energy than usual. Below are some ways to save a little energy, and a little money, this Thanksgiving. And isn't that something to be thankful for?

- Use efficient cooking methods. You don't have to steam veggies on the stovetop or bake Yams in the oven. A toaster oven uses one-third less energy to operate than an oven. And a microwave or slow cooker will use even less. See what will give you good results using less energy and give it a try.
- Put the right size pan on the right burner. If your stove is electric you'll

waste 40 percent of your heat if you have a 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner.

- Look at your pans. Copper-bottom pans heat up faster on the stovetop. Glass or ceramic pans can cook foods just as fast in an oven set 25 degrees lower.
- Black burner pans don't just look bad, they actually absorb heat, reducing the efficiency of your burners. They must be shiny to reflect the heat back up onto your pan.



- Defrost your food in the fridge before you cook. And only preheat the oven if really necessary.

- Cook multiple things together in an oven but stagger pans so the air and heat can flow around items.
- Stop looking at that turkey! Opening up the oven door wastes energy by lowering the temperature up to 25 degrees.
 - Turn off the heat a few minutes before the timer goes off on an electric stove or oven. The heat will remain to finish cooking your food and you'll save a little energy too.

Save Time and Money with Automatic Payment

Our Automatic Payment Plan allows you to have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. It's always on time and you don't need checks, envelopes or stamps! We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement.

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying MEC in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that MEC reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my MEC account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
August 25, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois.

On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, D. Jay Frye, Warren D. Goetsch, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Also present were Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith. Director Michael L. Carls and Director Michael E. Patrick were absent.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of July 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, Outage Summary and Safety Report.

Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco reported on work done by cooperative crews for the month. He advised that Trish Michels would be working at the Farm Progress Show at the Touchstone Energy Booth. He also reported that the staff had received the first draft for the new cooperative Web site. He discussed the Williamsville tornado damage. Manager Frasco also discussed the issue of flame retardant clothing in light of the pending Safety Accreditation Study.

He reviewed the Cell Net Pole Attachment Agreement and advised that it was a License Agreement allowing transmitters which provide meter reading data to Illinois Power to be placed on cooperative poles. He advised that there would be nine locations

where transmitters would be placed on cooperative poles and discussed the compensation to the cooperative by the License Agreement. After discussion, it was moved and seconded that the President be authorized to enter into the License Agreement, on the terms as set forth therein. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco advised that the cooperative had received formal notice of the approval of the Wholesale Power Contract from Rural Development/USDA. He discussed the USDA field audit and the letter advising that all amounts had been properly recorded and accounted for. Manager Frasco reviewed information from NRECA regarding the plan contribution for 2010.

Manager Frasco advised that he had been contacted by Engineers for the City of Virginia wanting to modify normal procedures and requesting that the cooperative put together plans and specifications in accordance with Federal and State bidding guidelines.

Manager Frasco advised the City of Virginia that it would be necessary for the cooperative to hire a consulting engineer to prepare the plans and specifications in such a manner. He advised that if Virginia desired such to be done, that this added cost would be the responsibility of Virginia. He advised that discussions were ongoing with the City of Virginia Engineers. It was moved and seconded that the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of July. Year to date margins were \$714,224 compared to \$1,030,860 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of July was 33.88% and the number of members served was

10,492 compared to 10,416 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of July was \$35,369,761 compared to \$33,973,406 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Director Goetsch reported on AIEC Activities. He discussed the Climate Change Legislation Resolution from the AIEC Board to NRECA.

Manager Frasco reported on Prairie Power, Inc. and reviewed the President's Report, as well as the July Energy Charge Report.

Manager Frasco reviewed with the Board the CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis.

Manager Frasco discussed the Prairie State Power Plant tour scheduled for September 2, 2009, and the schedule for the tour.

Manager Frasco discussed the AIEC Annual Meeting and the NRECA-970-Renewal Power Supply Seminar.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estates Refund Report.

President Martin advised that the next Board Meeting was scheduled for September 22, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

President Martin reminded the Board that the NRECA Region V Meeting was scheduled for September 16-18, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, Illinois. He discussed the 2009 IEC Public Service Award, which would be presented to Representative Phil Hare at the Spoon River Electric Cooperative annual meeting on September 12, 2009.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

inside

Stockings of Savings... 16b-16c

Weathering Winter Outages 16d

Space Heaters..... 16e

Together We Save .. 16f

Changes to Billing . 16g

Board Report..... 16h

Holiday Decorating Safety

For millions of people every year, the holiday season comes with traditions of festive lights and decorations, extraordinary foods and lavish parties. Unfortunately, time-honored traditions can easily end in tragedy if precautions are not taken. Five years ago, Shawn Miller was one of these people.

His mother, Maria Worth, found her son on the ground with wisps of smokes coming from his body. Miller was unconscious and badly burned. He had been hanging holiday lights in the trees that lined her yard. As he tossed the lights up into the trees, 7,200 volts of electricity entered his body, traveling from the overhead power lines through his strand of lights.

"Power lines were the last thing on my mind that day," said Miller. "I was just hanging Christmas lights at my Mom's house like I do every year, only this time, I was decorating a new area, the trees that lined the front of the yard."

Although Miller suffered 27 exit wounds, the loss of his left hand and a finger on his right hand, Miller considers his survival to be miraculous and urges others to use caution this holiday season. He has joined forces with Safe Electricity's Teach Learn Care TLC campaign to spread awareness about the importance of electrical safety. "I'm lucky to be alive," Miller said. "I want everyone to be careful, be aware of power lines."

Outdoors

- Never throw holiday lights or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Don't nail or staple light strings, it could damage the cord.
- Use only decorations that say they are for outdoor use.
- Keep extension cords and lights away from standing water and snow.

- Look up before using a ladder if near power lines.
- Plug all decorations into a GFCI outlet or GFCI extension cord.



Indoors

- Inspect cords and wires—frays and cracks can cause an electric shock or start a fire.
- Use UL listed lights and decorations.
- Unplug decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- Don't connect more than three light strings together.
- Don't overload extension cords or outlets.
- Don't allow children or pets to play with decorations.
- Turn off all decorations before leaving or sleeping.
- Don't burn wrapping paper in a fireplace. It burns very hot, causes large flames and could ignite creosote deposits in the chimney.
- Remove trash, papers and boxes from around the tree or fireplace immediately after presents are opened.



Office Closings

Christmas and New Years Office Closings

Closed Dec. 24

Closed Dec. 25

Closed Jan. 1

14300 State Hwy 97
P.O. Box 200
Petersburg, IL 62675

1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com



Stockings of Savings

Think about energy efficiency when choosing gifts this holiday season

Giving energy-efficient gifts to your family and friends will help them save money all year round. Yeah, we know, the gifts aren't as glamorous as a new car or something, but let's be realistic. And honestly, they could be more useful than yet another tie or sweater for the dad who has everything. Or

they could be something intriguing for your "geek-ier" relatives.

Make up one of the energy-efficient gift boxes below, or add a few items to stockings. And remember to look for the EnergyStar label on any electronics; they'll use less power than other models to operate. Consult the EnergyGuide, the

large yellow label, on appliances to see how the model compares to others in energy savings.

Please note: Menard Electric Cooperative doesn't sell any of the items listed here. We suggest you check online if you're unable to find something at stores you frequent.

The You're Getting Warmer Container

- Programmable thermostat (if the giftee has a traditional furnace and air conditioner, not a heat pump)
- Filter whistle (makes a whistling sound when furnace filters are clogged or dirty. We all know that changing your filter can save money, this will help someone remember to do it!)



The Bright Box

Lighting is an easy way to save energy. Include these must haves:

- Energy-efficient nightlights (not just for kids, nightlights in bathrooms and hallways can save turning on lights. Look for LED models that turn on automatically when it's dark.)
- Rechargeable or crank flashlights (to save on batteries and ensure they are ready when you need them)
- Motion Sensor switches (for areas like garages, basement stairs, closets, etc.)
- CFLs (They use a quarter of the electricity as standard bulbs and last 10 times longer. It's a no brainer. Look for CFLs at the following stores—some locations have a deal with DCEO to reduce the price on each bulb. You'll see a sign that says so near the bulbs. Ace Hardware, CVS, Best Buy, Family Dollar, Kroger, Lowes, Menards, Sam's Club, and True Value.)

The Air Eliminator Carton

You can help someone save big by weatherproofing their home. Here are some easy-to-use items that can help keep the cold air out and warm air in. And for an extra touch include a "gift certificate" to spend an afternoon helping the giftee weatherize. Some items to consider include:

- Window shrink film (if windows are older)
- Rope caulk (to stop air infiltration at windows and doors)
- Tube caulk (to stop air around windows outdoors)
- Foam weather seal strips (to stop air around doorways)
- Spray foam (for large holes, around pipes, under sinks, etc)
- Switch and outlet foam gaskets (to stop air from coming in around outlets)
- Energy saving dryer vent closure system (eliminates air from coming back in through the vent. Available online for about \$20. You can even use it to vent your bathroom fan or range hood).

A Bucket of Hot Water

Water heating and water usage can be major expenses for some. Some items to include in your bucket are:

- Bath and kitchen faucet aerators (they reduce the amount of water used)
- A hot water heater blanket (if their water heater is electric)
- Water pipe foam insulators (these tubes of foam insulation can help reduce heat loss as water runs through pipes in crawlspaces or unheated basements)
- Showerheads (all of them on the market today are water-efficient, some more than others)
- Water Tummy (a low-flow toilet is hard to wrap but not so a water tummy. The unique name may be enough to intrigue some giftees. It's a refillable bag inserted into the tank of a regular flow toilet to reduce the amount of water stored for flushing. Less energy for pumping the water to and from your toilet as well as less water used. Toilets account for about 30 percent of a home's water usage.)



Here are some accessories to consider adding to other gifts.

- If you give electronics consider giving rechargeable batteries and a charger. They are more expensive initially but with well-used items they can really save.
- If you give a cell phone or accessory you could also give a crank-up charger, solar charger or even a wind-powered charger for your "greener" relatives.
- If you give a computer or television consider a power strip. Power strips can reduce the amount of power drawn by computer and television accessories when not in use. With a simple touch of the switch, you can turn off power to multiple items at once. And a couple of models can sense when devices are not in use and shut off the power automatically.

An Energy-Efficient Christmas

And just for fun here's a little play on the 12 days of Christmas to remind you of all the ways you can save. It might not flow as well as the 12 days of Christmas but hum the tune as you read this and you'll get where we were coming from.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my energy-efficient loved one gave to me:

- 12** CFLs
- 11** outlet gaskets
- 10** motion sensors
- 9** insulation inches
- 8** beads of caulk
- 7** squirts of spray foam
- 6** bits of weather stripping
- 5** Energy Star appliances
- 4** power strips
- 3** night lights
- 2** furnace filters

And **1** programmable thermostat



Merry Christmas

From the employees and board members of Menard Electric Cooperative

Board of Directors

Gary L. Martin, *President*
 Jerry W. Brooks, *Vice President*
 D. Jay Frye, *Secretary*
 Roy H. Seaney, *Treasurer*
 Michael E. Carls
 Warren D. Goetsch
 Don "Chuck" McMillan
 Mike Patrick
 Steve L. Worner

Employees

Lynn Frasco, *Manager*

Accounting

Chris Hinton, *Mgr of Accounting & Information Systems*
 Sue Freeland, *Assistant Accountant*

Office

Wayne Jones, *Office Manager*
 Janey Ames, *Clerk*
 Bart Bailey, *Data Processing Operator*
 Pam Davis, *Receptionist*
 Gene Kennett, *Custodian*
 Darlene McGee, *Clerk*
 Cheryl Milstead, *Radio Dispatcher*
 Rhonda Satorius, *Secretary*

Member Services

Trish Michels, *Director of Member Services*
 Michelle McNeal, *Communications Assistant*

Engineering

James Rechner, *System Engineer*
 Alan Horn, *Staking Engineer*
 Doug Pettit, *Senior Radio and Electronic Technician*
 Tim Schafer, *Engineering Technician*
 John Whitehurst, *Staking Engineer*

Operations

Terry Entwistle, *General Foreman*
 Randy Avery, *Crew Leader*
 Brandon Blair, *Lineman*
 Mark Bradley, *Area Serviceman*
 Bob Burris, *Area Serviceman*
 Daren Deverman, *Lineman*
 Casey Duncheon, *Storekeeper*
 Robert Hanner, *Lineman*
 Dwaine Heyen, *Area Serviceman*
 James K. Masten, *Lineman*
 John Morgan, *Mechanic-Groundman*
 Seth Parker, *Area Serviceman*
 Troy Shafer, *Leadman*
 Corey Stone, *Area Serviceman*
 Jeremy Willis, *Apprentice Lineman*
 Dalton Whitley, *Apprentice Lineman*

How To Weather a Winter Outage

Severe winter storms containing high winds and ice can cause widespread and prolonged outages. Always call your cooperative when you have an outage, and follow these steps to get through it safely.

Have the following on-hand this winter:

- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlights



- Extra batteries
- Extra blankets
- Spare containers you can fill with water for drinking/washing/hygiene
- Food that doesn't require cooking and a hand-held can opener
- Extra prescription medicines
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- A first aid kit

Close off any unused rooms. If you fear your water pipes will freeze and you don't have a well, turn the taps on slightly so water slowly drips. If you are on a well you can shut off the main water supply to your home and then turn all the taps on all the way to drain any remaining water (pour this wa-

ter into containers so you can use it for drinking, washing, etc.)

If using grills to heat food, use them outside only, away from the house, to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Don't open the refrigerator or freezer. Food can stay fresh in a full refrigerator for 24 hours, and in a full deep freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if only half full).

Stay inside when possible and dress in layered clothing.

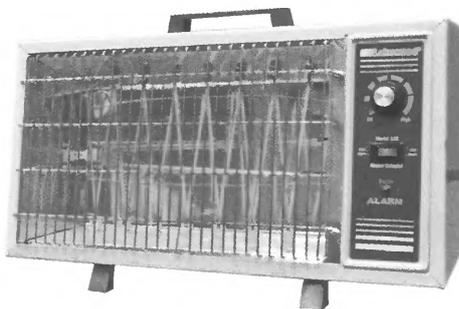
Warning: Never go near downed electrical lines. Even if your power is out, the lines could be energized. Call Menard Electric immediately and inform us of any dangerous lines.

Space Heaters

We all know that turning down our thermostats in the fall and winter saves us money. But a temperature degree that is comfortable for one person isn't always comfortable for another. If you find yourself continually turning up the thermostat every evening and heating your whole house when you are sitting in one room you might want to look into a space heater. If you have one, keep the following safety and efficiency measures in mind.

Safety

- Keep space heaters three feet from flammable items like curtains.
- Use a UL listed unit with a heating element guard and a tip-over shut-off feature.
- Don't leave it unattended and keep pets and kids away.
- Don't use it in a bathroom—the moisture can cause damage.
- Don't use with an extension cord.
- Don't fall asleep with it on—look for one with a timer if you need it.

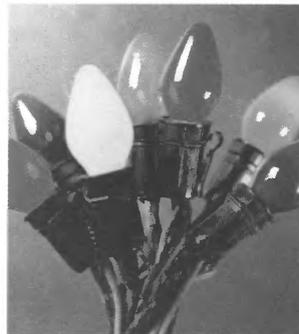


Efficiency

If you're using a space heater to heat a cold area of your home instead of turning up the thermostat, then it may save you money. Likewise if you're using a portable space heater to heat a small space in your home so you can turn down your thermostat.

The cost to operate a space heater will vary depending on the type of space heater you use and the room you are heating. A good general formula for calculating cost is this: kilowatts (divide watts by 1,000 to get kilowatts) x cost of electricity per kilowatt x amount of time running = cost of heating. For example, a 1,500 watt space heater running for 10 hours at a rate of \$.10 per kilowatt hour will cost \$1.50.

Decorating Efficiency



How much does that holiday lighting cost you? An average 300 bulb string of lights costs about \$4.50 over the course of the Holiday season. That's an average but gives you a starting point.

Add up all your lights and other decorations and see how much that decorating costs. If the number was higher than you'd like consider EnergyStar qualified LED light strings.

They consume 75 percent less energy, about \$.43 per 300 light string to operate over the course of the holiday season. In addition they last up to 10 times longer and are cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire.

The strands themselves cost more to purchase than standard lights so weigh the costs carefully or consider purchasing new strands during after-season sales so you'll be ready next year.

College Scholarships Available



Seven scholarships are available through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. Call the cooperative at 217-632-7746 for more information.

Four \$1,250 scholarships – sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.

One \$1,250 scholarship – the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee.

Two \$1,250 scholarships – students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

 **Menard Electric Cooperative**
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Together We Save

New interactive Web site helps you find ways to cut energy use and save money

Menard Electric Cooperative and 679 other Touchstone Energy co-ops nationwide have launched a new Web site at www.togetherwesave.com to help members examine ways they can reduce energy consumption. The calculators are based on a 3,000-square foot home in the middle of the United States. While they do not provide individual dollar-for-dollar savings accuracy, the interactive activities do show how reducing energy use can reduce costs. The site shows savings from taking simple steps, such as replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, to more significant changes, such as purchasing new energy-efficient appliances or adding insulation. It also provides step-by-step video guides.



FEELS BETTER AROUND THE HOUSE SINCE I SET OUR THERMOSTAT TO CHEAP.

We're gone most of the day. Didn't make sense to keep an empty house comfortable. But now when we get home, it's ready. I'm saving \$280 a year just by programming a thermostat. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.

 Menard Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

**For members with heat pumps, keeping a set temperature is more economical.*

Save Time and Money with Automatic Payment

Our Automatic Payment Plan allows you to have your electric bill automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the 10th of each month. It's always on time and you don't need checks, envelopes or stamps! We will deduct the net amount shown on your bill, and proof of payment will appear on your monthly statement.

Mail with a voided check to Menard Electric Cooperative, PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.

Name: _____ SS# _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone#: _____ Map Location # _____

Bank Name: _____

Bank Account # _____

Checking acct. Savings acct.

I, _____, authorize Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying MEC in writing. Both Menard Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that MEC reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that the amount of my bill each month will be drafted on the 10th or next business day after. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my MEC account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Need Help Paying Your Electric Bill?

LIHEAP may be the answer

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a one-time lump sum payment paid directly to Menard Electric Cooperative on behalf of a consumer. Payments are based on the number of people in a household and the gross monthly income of everyone in that household. The eligibility process can take approximately 30 days once an application is completed.

The LIHEAP program can help with other utilities as well, including gas, propane and heating oil. In some cases if the utility service is shut off, a consumer may be required to make a good faith payment to the utility before LIHEAP can make any promise of payment.

Check the requirements above to see if you may be eligible for assistance.

If you think you may be eligible, please contact an agent in your area:

CAPCIL (Logan County)
1800 5th St.
Lincoln, IL 62656
217-732-2159, Ext. 251

CAPCIL (Mason County)
532 S. Schrader
Havana, IL 62644
309-543-2594

CAPCIL (Menard County)
809 Old Salem Rd
Petersburg, IL 62675
217-632-3878

Number of people living in household	Gross income for 30 days prior to application date:
1	\$1,300
2	\$1,750
3	\$2,200
3	\$2,650
5	\$3,100

Please call your local office for additional amounts

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.
1122 E. Marietta St.
Decatur, IL 62521
217-428-2193

MCS Community Services
(Cass & Morgan County)
345 W. State St.
Jacksonville, IL 62650
888-288-4413

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources
200 S. 9th St., Room 311
Springfield, IL 62701
217-535-3120

Tazewood Community Service, Inc.
(Tazewell County)
2005 S. Main St.
Morton, IL 61550
309-266-9941

Cooperative Web Site Redesigned



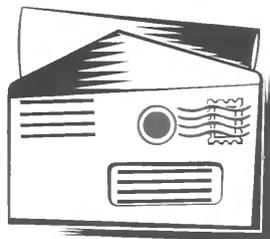
We encourage you to check out Menard Electric Cooperative's new Web site at www.menard.com.

All the information you need about your co-op should be at your fingertips. Some of the items you can find include: information about your co-op employees and board, rates and rebates available, Co-op Connections Card business listing, programs offered, services provided, energy efficiency, safety tips, co-op news, applications for services and products, and much more.

If there is a major storm outage that affects many members at one time, we'll post information about it on our home page. Though you may not have electricity at home, you may be able to check for updates at work, or have a family member check for you.

Watch for Changes to Our Billing Schedule in 2010

We're implementing a new meter reading and billing schedule that will be clearer and more predictable for members. Utilizing our new automatic reading system, we will be able to read your meter at midnight on the last day of each month. You'll receive a bill for that month's usage the next month, about a week later than you receive it now, and it will be due at the office a week later as well,



giving you the same amount of time to pay each month.

The change should be complete in February 2010. For now, you will see an extra day or two of usage added to your bills each month as we slowly move the meter reading date closer to the end of the month. In January and February's issues we'll tell you the specific details about this change.



Board Meeting Report

Menard Electric Cooperative
From the Board Room
September 22, 2009

The monthly Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative was called to order by President Gary L. Martin at 6:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the cooperative, 14300 State Highway 97, Petersburg, County of Menard and State of Illinois. On roll call the following Directors were present: Jerry W. Brooks, Michael L. Carls, D. Jay Frye, Gary L. Martin, Donald E. McMillan, Michael E. Patrick, Roy H. Seaney and Steven L. Worner. Director Warren D. Goetsch was absent. Also present were Manager Lynn A. Frasco and Attorney Charles K. Smith.

President Martin reviewed the Consensus Agenda. It was moved and seconded that the Consensus Agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Manager's Report for the month of August 2009. He reviewed the Balance Sheet, Budget, as well as the Outage Summary and Safety Report. Under the Operations Report, Manager Frasco discussed the revised estimate sent to the City of Virginia Engineers with regard to the City's Well Project. Manager Frasco reviewed correspondence from Jim Rechner to The Farnsworth Group advising that the cost estimate for the project had increased due to increases in material and labor since the original estimate had been given to the city.

Manager Frasco advised that the Web site redesign was two-thirds to three-fourths done and was going along well. He reviewed a summary of the irrigation load for 2009. He discussed the Our Energy/Our Future Member Card Appeal and its

results and costs. Manager Frasco advised that a letter had been received from RUS advising that the loan with RUS had been approved and funds could now be requisitioned. He advised that there was correspondence from United Utility Supply advising that patronage dividend allocation was being made with a cash payment to the cooperative of \$2,596.

He also advised that the safety accreditation inspection and evaluation would be done in the very near future. He advised that on September 9, 2009, he attended the AIEC Public Service Award Ceremony. Also that area servicemen were now doing their time sheets on the computer. He reported that he was going to Richmond, Ind. to look at a WiMax Internet Project. It was moved and seconded the Manager's Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco presented the Financial Report for the month of August. Year to date margins were \$975,346 compared to \$1,286,206 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of August was 34.28% and the number of members served was 10,485 compared to 10,426 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of August was \$35,362,853 compared to \$34,017,349 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Under AIEC Activities, Manager Frasco advised that there was no meeting. He did, however, review the schedule of courses and continuing education programs.

Director Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. and reviewed

the President's Report. Manager Frasco discussed the August Energy Charge and the Power Cost Forecast. Manager Frasco discussed proposed revisions to Policy Section VII "Vacation." It was determined to consider the changes as a first reading and move the revised Policy for adoption at the next monthly meeting.

President Martin called the Board into Executive Session. President Martin adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened the monthly Board Meeting.

Manager Frasco reviewed a proposed Amendment to the Co-Bank Master Loan Agreement. It was moved and seconded that the Amendment be approved and adopted. Motion carried.

Manager Frasco advised who had attended the NRECA Region V and discussed the meeting. The Board also discussed the Prairie State Tour.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

President Martin advised that next month's Board Meeting was scheduled for October 27, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Manager Frasco advised that the Menard Electric Cooperative Christmas Party was scheduled for Dec. 4, 2009. He also advised that the NRECA Annual Meeting was scheduled in Atlanta, Georgia on Feb. 14-17, 2010.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

