

## 2019 Annual Meeting of Members

### Thursday, June 13th

#### Have you ever wondered what really goes on at our annual meeting of members each year?

- Upon your arrival, a lineman chauffeur you by golf cart from your vehicle to the front entryway.
- Inside the air-conditioned school, you'll show the registration card from your official notice (to be mailed in May) to secure your right to vote, receive an appreciation gift and be registered for prizes.
- You'll spot neighbors and friends to visit with, most likely some you haven't seen in a while, and hopefully you'll get to know our employees and board members a bit better as well.
- We will serve our always popular free grilled pork chop dinner.
- Later, you'll settle in to the comfy auditorium. This is when you'll hear from candidates and cast your vote for directors to serve the three districts up for election this year.
- You'll also learn about the past year in a brief presentation by General Manager Alisha Anker, Board President D. Jay Frye, and others.
- And lastly, you could possibly win a door prize, including some cash prizes and bill credits!

We hope you'll agree it sounds like a pretty good Thursday evening! We hope to see you there!



## Director petitions due April 29

Are you interested in becoming a Menard Electric Cooperative Director?

Are you a member in good standing with your primary residence in District 1, 4 or 6?

(You can view a district map at [www.menard.com/board-directors](http://www.menard.com/board-directors) or call us to verify)

Stop in the office for more details and to pick up a petition.

**Open Seat**



**District 1 Open Seat**  
(Roy Seaney retires)

**District 4 Incumbent**  
Dennis Ryan

**District 6 Incumbent**  
Steven Wornor

Petitions must be signed by no less than 10 members and must be received in our office by April 29, 2019. Elections will be held at our Annual Meeting of Members Thursday, June 13, 2019.

Detailed information regarding the duties of a Director can be found in our bylaws at [www.menard.com/Bylaws](http://www.menard.com/Bylaws) or call to request a copy.

Member  
Spotlight

## Triple Creek Farm Greenhouse

We visited members Bob and Brenda Conn, owners of Triple Creek Farm Greenhouse, in late February at a time we were long since tired of winter and longing for the spring we knew would eventually come. Tiny sprouts of green (germinated tomatoes, marigolds and more) were certainly a hopeful sight. As you read this, green will be sprouting all around you and the gardening season will officially be beginning.

Triple Creek Farm Greenhouse opens for their 31st season on April 1. As with many small businesses, Brenda says the family business has gradually built up to what it is today – a retail location in Petersburg and a retail and growing location on Route 78 between Virginia and Chandlerville.

The business idea blossomed years ago when Brenda planted a half acre of everlasting flowers that she cut and dried to take to farmers markets and craft shows. “I remember going to the farmers markets and having my daughter in her infant seat beside me,” says Brenda, who says she grew plants in 4-H and got back into it while looking for work she could do while being with her kids – noting she did a lot of reading at first to learn what she didn’t know.

Soon, she and Bob built a small greenhouse to start the cutting flowers and perhaps raise a few vegetables. There was a lot of interest from her customers, so more and more plants were added. Plants are now grown in



*Brenda demonstrates a seedling planter she won at a trade show. The tool uses an air pump, various needles based on seed size, and a suction release mechanism to grab and plant each seed.*

seven traditional greenhouses devoted to flowers and vegetables, one high-tunnel greenhouse reserved primarily for tomatoes, a 1.5-acre market garden for produce, and a 2-acre pumpkin plot.

They grow 95 percent of the plants and produce offered at their shops from seed or plugs. “People will call and ask if we’ve gotten our tomato shipment in yet,” she laughs, showing us the thousands of seeds she is starting this year and explaining how they differ in coating and size.

“Each of these trays holds 512 seedlings. I’ll plant 6,000 tomatoes here today,” she says. Each tray sits on a heated pad, keeping the soil at a steady 72 degrees, until germination, and then each will be transplanted by hand. “Some greenhouses have automated much of this work, but we do it by hand,” she says, noting she’ll have some part-time employees throughout the growing season.

She’ll plant over 15,000 tomato seeds, and all those plants will need nearly daily watering. Although the hanging

baskets are watered by an automatic system, the trays on the tables are watered by hand. “Each variety has different water needs, so I like to do it myself,” she says. “It can take seven hours to hand water all the greenhouses.”

While a deep well has performed adequately providing all that water so far, it’s always in the back of her mind that water is critical to their operation. If the well doesn’t produce, the plants will die. “It’s always a concern. Everyone who owns their own business has worries,” she says. “Water supply is just one of mine.” Time at the greenhouse is also at a premium. “We don’t get vacation or sick days. The work isn’t seasonal. Winters are spent cleaning up the greenhouse, planning and prepping for the planting season which begins as early as Christmas Day. There isn’t really an off-season.”

We ended our visit by talking about the difference in services provided by a small local greenhouse business versus



a big box store. In a word, it's about the care you receive from a local establishment. Whether just small touches, like adding water crystals to the soil or a time-released fertilizer in the hanging baskets, or large touches such as assisting with a specialized planting arrangement, the Conn's care. For those less savvy, their knowledgeable planting advice can keep everything looking beautiful long after the sale, and their suggestions on how to prepare new veggie-side dishes such as honeynut squash will keep customers coming back for more. Triple Creek strives to provide the very best in customer service, which isn't a recipe the box stores can match.

Bob and Brenda encourage those who are interested to visit their shop in addition to the many small shops and restaurants in Petersburg and your local communities. These businesses are so vitally important to the local economies. Buy Local, Stay Local.



**PRO TIP**

*Brenda and Bob agree if you cut back the flowers draping over the edge of your hanging baskets after your Fourth of July party, so that you can see at least half of the basket, the flowers will bloom longer and look better. "It's hard for people to do – cut those flowers off – but it really does wonders," Brenda says.*



### Where can you find them?

Beginning April 1st open Sun-Sat 9 a.m.-6 p.m. The main greenhouse is located at 10931 IL Rt 78 in Virginia. It offers a large variety of plants and produce in the spring/summer, and pumpkins, gourds and mums in the fall.

A retail location at 116 South 5th St. in Petersburg sells all products plus gifts, local jams and jellies, and even Christmas Trees. This location also showcases workshops and special events.

You'll also find plants and produce every Saturday during May through October at the Jacksonville Farmers Market, downtown 7:30 a.m. – noon.

Call 217-452-3381 and visit Facebook.

# Call JULIE before digging

It's the law! You must notify JULIE before you dig. The depth of utility lines can vary for many reasons – that's why digging even just a few inches can cause problems. Striking a line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and outages.

Plan ahead and call 8-1-1 or visit [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com).

## Office closing - Good Friday - April 19

# Board highlights

For full minutes visit [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or contact the office.

## January 22, 2019

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith.
- CFC Representatives Kerry Rollins & Jason Strong presented Cost of Service Study results & rate structure alternatives for discussion & consideration.
- Board approved new Co-Bank Credit Agreement, Promissory Notes & Restated & Amended Line of Credit.
- Board approved Sept. 1, 2018 Engagement Letter for Jackson Thornton & Co., P.C.
- Anker: Reviewed 2018 accomplishments, operating statement, balance sheet & budget, member services, safety, reliability, operations, irrigation, IT security, rebates & capital credit reports; Illinois Power Agency Adjustable Block Program; tabled mission statement review.
- Anker: Gave December financial report. Year to date margins \$2,035,768 compared to \$1,923,387 last year. End of Dec. equity 41.38%. Served 10,918 accounts. Net utility plant \$49,320,394 compared to \$47,596,439 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC activities & executive summary & ACRE memberships.
- Board voted to designate Worner/McMillan as AIEC Annual Meeting Delegate/Alternate; Goetsch/Patrick as NRECA Director from Illinois Election Delegate/Alternate; Goetsch/Worner as AIEC Director from Menard Electric Delegate/Alternate.
- Martin: Reviewed Prairie Power, Inc. President's report, January executive summary & December energy charge.
- Board approved resolution for capital credits based on Finance Committee recommendations; to retire \$600,000 as a general retirement & \$140,000 for estates, for a total retirement of \$740,000 in 2019.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened; confirmed & ratified all action taken.
- Next month's board meeting 2/26/19.



### New employee

Join us in welcoming Austin Harvey as a first-year apprentice lineman. Austin grew up in the Thayer/Virden area and earned his lineman certificate from Lincoln Land Community College. After graduating, he completed an internship with Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative in Auburn. Austin will work through our four-year apprenticeship program. Welcome Austin!



*Assistant Accountant Sue Freeland is processing payments received. This machine reads each remittance slip and check, and Sue doublechecks and posts the payments to member accounts. She could process over 10,000 payments in a month's time!*