

Member  
 Spotlight

## Hot for Hemp



In the small town of Oakford, land-owners and Cooperative members Nancy and Kevin Thomas have partnered with fellow member Mark Beck to grow industrial hemp. Hemp derives from the plant species *Cannabis sativa*. Given the buzz surrounding the legalization of recreational marijuana in Illinois under the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act, we sat down with Mark to dispel the confusion and misconceptions between industrial hemp and its Cannabis cousin, marijuana.

“Industrial hemp” is defined statutorily as the *Cannabis sativa* plant and any part thereof having a delta-9 THC concentration of not more than 0.3%. THC stands for tetrahydrocannabinol -- the chemical component known to induce the euphoric “high” experienced by ingesting marijuana. “Marijuana” on the other hand is loosely defined as all parts of the same plant, excluding the mature stalks or derivatives thereof, and having no THC concentration limitation.

Production of hemp essentially ceased across the country in the 1950s due to market conditions and federal regulations. Since 2014, farmers have been restricted to growing hemp only if approved by discrete research programs. Mark has been an Ag/Farm Broker engaged in ag real estate ventures for well over a decade. He has traveled to many States and built relationships all over the country. This perspective allowed him to witness firsthand the positive impact hemp farming had on land prices in Colorado.

Fast forward to December 2018 when the federal Hemp Farming Act was incorporated into the U.S. Farm Bill, thereby green-lighting the production of hemp as an ordinary agricultural

commodity under States laws. With roots in Menard County, Mark started researching the feasibility of growing industrialized hemp here, however quickly found the crop to be hardly ordinary.

“This industry is like the Wild, Wild West,” says Mark. Very different from the production operations of corn and soybeans, the hemp farmer has a significantly higher risk portfolio. Crop insurance, for example, was fundamentally non-existent for hemp crops during the 2019 growing season. Environmental problems such as mold, worms and disease require unique methods to control. There are currently no pesticides labeled for use on hemp fields.

“Hemp has to essentially be grown organically. We can use peroxides against mold. We’ve learned natural predators need to be released to combat insects, something we didn’t do this year. Much of the weeding must be done by hand. In all, hemp is a highly labor-intensive crop that still must be rotated yearly,” he says.

**“Hemp will be a major factor in helping small farmers continue the legacy built by earlier generations.”**

In addition, you won’t find any futures market for hemp. Whereas a grains farmer may put risk capital toward a futures contract to gain financial leverage, all of the capital Mark and his partners put into this inaugural 50-acre crop was considered risk capital. “This is not for the faint of heart,” concludes Mark, “there is no substitute for experience.”

Mark’s knowledge of the ag and

hemp business partnered well with the Thomas’ farming experience. Hemp grows as a shrubby plant that can mature to heights of 6-8 feet tall. An acre can accommodate about 2,500 plants, however in rows much wider than corn or beans. Mark’s partners smartly modified a row crop cultivator to help control weeds between the rows. “Any investment toward reducing long hours is a smart investment,” believes Mark.

When asked what their most significant issues were with this first hemp crop, he readily answered “harvesting and drying.” To accomplish the harvest, each plant had to be cut manually by hand. No small task considering a hemp plant stalk is quite fibrous and very strong. The plants were then loaded and trucked from field to drying space like a caravan. “The key is getting the plants hung quickly in an environmentally-controlled space,” emphasized Mark. He leased a greenhouse site nearby as grain bins are not an ideal atmosphere for the tedious post-harvest work. For the following few weeks during drying and curing, the flowers of each plant were manually trimmed to present nicely to the buyer.

The flowers will be used to create CBD oil, a supplement that has become

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## Sharing success

General Manager Alisha Anker presented the final donation made possible by the co-op's participation in CoBank's Sharing Success program, which matches donations made to our local community. Anker is shown presenting the \$2,000 donation to Theatre in the Park at New Salem's Board President Kristin Wheeler during the organization's fundraiser for their 2020 season kickoff.

Theatre in the Park is central Illinois' longest running outdoor community theatre, providing live family-oriented performances that serve more than 10,000 patrons, actors, musicians and ushers. It also provides hands-on training and education to college and high school students.

"Menard Electric is pleased to present this donation to Theatre in the Park as it



continually seeks to improve the quality of its performances for the community and for so many of our members who attend each summer. They will use

these funds to purchase equipment to upgrade the current lighting system for additional flexibility and to prepare for future expansions," said Anker.

## Member Spotlight: Hot for Hemp

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popular for its medical and therapeutic applications for people and pets. CBD stands for cannabidiol, a compound naturally found in hemp plants. While industrial hemp must have levels of THC below 0.3%, the process of creating CBD oils can reduce that concentration level close to zero.

The USDA closely regulates hemp farming and all interested stakeholders are awaiting regulation changes for 2020. Draft rulemaking was circulated in late October contemplating revisions to acceptable crop sampling methods and timing requirements for crop testing, what to do with non-compliant plants, and other restrictions. An interim rule will be established for this year's growing season which could be changed yet again next year. The uncertainty of regulations

makes growth in the industry difficult and for those already involved, planning for next year becomes difficult.

And yet Mark is optimistic about the future of hemp farming. He trusts, "Hemp will be a major factor in helping small farmers continue the legacy built by earlier generations." Pending the outcome of USDA regulations, he anticipates the creation of a joint venture between the seed companies, his farming operation, a harvester and extractor to increase tenfold the acreage he cultivated during 2019. Well aware of the risks, he sees the potential.

"I believe the future of farming hemp in Illinois will be for seed and fiber," says Mark. Livestock producers will hopefully soon be able to use hemp seed and byproducts for feed. Hemp seed is high

in much-needed fatty acids, proteins, fiber and minerals. "Hemp fiber on the other hand is one of the strongest natural fibers available and has a lot of potential for building materials," Mark says, conceding that consumer education and acceptance will be vital for the product's growth in that industry. Developers and buyers will need to trust the products produced. From an ecological and environmental perspective though, he says hemp makes sense, "I can grow in 120 days what takes a pine tree 30 years."

Where will the hemp market be in another 100 years? What products or byproducts will emerge? Whatever will be, surely Mark, and other local farmers, will be involved.

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## Help us find these members

In 2019 our Board of Directors authorized a general retirement of capital credits earned in 1995 and a portion of 1996. Active members in 1995/1996 received a bill credit or check. Members who no longer receive

service from us were mailed a check. We used the last known address on our system, but were unable to locate those members listed below. This list can also be found on our website at [menard.com/capital-credits](http://menard.com/capital-credits) (you can

find previous listings as well). If you know any of these members, or the executors of their estate, please have them email [info@menard.com](mailto:info@menard.com) or call 800-872-1203.

360 Communication Co, Chicago  
 Ackerman, Karen, Virginia  
 Adams, Candice & Galen, Decatur  
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 Anders, Margie, New Berlin  
 Anderson, Doris, Springfield  
 Andrew, Coresta, Athens  
 Armbrust, Vicki Jo, Manito  
 Autrey, Myron & Barbara, Manito  
 Bartels, William & Marie, Springfield  
 Becker, Daryl, Ashland  
 Beckett, John, Pekin  
 Belatti, Patricia, Decatur  
 Bell, Kathryn, Topeka  
 Bender, Matt & Nicole, Peoria  
 Berkshire, James, Peoria  
 Betts, Vicki, Peoria Heights  
 Big M Tank & Trailer, Ashfield  
 Bigham, Bob, Sherman  
 Bird, JB Jr, Manito  
 Bitwell, Donald & Pamela, Petersburg  
 Boehl, Michael, Virginia  
 Boehler, James, Virginia  
 Bolen, Christian, San Jose  
 Bone, Brinda, Havana  
 Bouchard, Carl & Beverly, Watts, OK  
 Bowersock, R Joseph, Petersburg  
 Boyer, Katrina, Petersburg  
 Bratton, Barbara, Havana  
 Brenner, Russell & Kelly, Lake Mary, FL  
 Broeker, Jonathan, Auburn  
 Bryant, Marsha, Northbrook  
 Buckner, Eleanor, Springfield  
 Bunker, Joseph & Jennifer, Topeka  
 Burton, Russell, Petersburg  
 Calaway, Frank, Greenview  
 Camille, Terrance & Carolyn, Springfield

Carle, Eugene SR, Topeka  
 Casten, Mary, Athens  
 Castleberry, Louise, Jacksonville  
 Catlin, Andrew & Christene, Athens  
 Chandler, Mark & Bonnie, Springfield  
 Chastain, Steve, Greenview  
 Chenoweth, Anna, Murrayville  
 Childers, Bruce, Manito  
 Church of the Nazarene, Pittsfield  
 CJ Supplemental Needs TR, Duluth, MN  
 Clemons, Terry & Linda, Riverton  
 Coffey, Jeffrey, Bluffs  
 Collier, Michael & Mary, Kankakee  
 Collins, Bonnie, Pleasant Plains  
 Conlin, Lawrence, Lincoln  
 Conn, Jesse & Arleen, Oakford  
 Conroy, WM & Kriste, Rockton  
 Cooley, Velma, Beechgrove, TN  
 Coonrod Country Tavern, Springfield  
 Cory, James, Springfield  
 Courtney, Dan, Riverton  
 Crandall, Julie, Petersburg  
 Cress, Bruce & Betty, Chatham  
 Curry, Charles, Springfield  
 Dabbs, Deobrah, Lincoln  
 Dean, WM, Springfield  
 Dejanovick, Michael & Pamela, Athens  
 Denison, Teena, Jacksonville  
 Dennison, Jeffrey & Heather, Virden  
 Dewitt, Sherry, Girard  
 Dey, Walter, Springfield  
 Dodson, Wm & Kathy, Riverton  
 Dallins, Pam, Kilbourne  
 Doman, Elmer & Stephanie, Topeka  
 Dooley, Matthew, Auburn  
 Downey, Richard & Virginia, Petoskey, MI  
 Downs Property Mgmt, Pekin

Drone, Thomas & Linda, Pakucuh, KY  
 Ealey, Charles & Tina, Mechanicsburg  
 Easley, Brenda, Forsyth  
 Eaton, Wanda, Sherman  
 Edwards, A Michael, Riverton  
 Emerson, Larry, Springfield  
 Ericson, Paul, Petersburg  
 Erps, Howard, Petersburg  
 Fagan, James, Petersburg  
 Farney, Douglas, Peoria  
 Fedie, Scott & Angie, Pleasant Plains  
 Filyaw, Clarence & Earline, Green Valley  
 Findley, Keith & Julie, Hindsboro  
 Finnegan, Steven, Jacksonville  
 Finster, Linda, Manito  
 Foster, Jolene, Springfield  
 Fowler, Scott & Kim, Sherman  
 Freese, Rodney, Cantrall  
 Frey, Robert, Alexander  
 Fuller, Michael, Mayfield, KY  
 Gardner, John, Lincoln  
 Gentry, Curtis, Springfield  
 Gettings, Michelle, Athens  
 Gibbs, Carl & Lisa, Pekin  
 Gillespie, Robert & Debra, Springfield  
 Gilliland, Troy, Athens  
 Glasgow, Eugene & Ella, Sidell  
 Gordon, Francis, Lincoln  
 Graham, Erin, Petersburg  
 Greer, Larry, Ashland  
 Griffin, Becky, Havana  
 Gross, Bill, Danvers  
 Gurnsey, Hazel Belle, Springfield  
 Hall, John & Crystal, Manito  
 Hall, Timothy, Havana  
 Halverson, Kevin & Carline, Pekin  
 Hamby, D J, Lake Forest, CA

Hamm, Gary, Havana  
 Hansen, Alan & Elizabeth, Riverton, UT  
 Hanson, Gail, Athens  
 Hardesty, James & Carla Sue, Hartsburg  
 Harms, Ron, Springfield  
 Harr, Tammy, Manito  
 Harrison, Ted, Quincy  
 Harvey, Terry & Linda, Petersburg  
 Hayes, Richard, Mason City  
 Haynes, Richard, Beardstown  
 Haynes, Terry, Topeka  
 Head, Christina, Forest City  
 Heder, Michael & Patricia, Morris, MN  
 Hedrick, Lyle, Sherman  
 Heidreder, Teresa, New Holland  
 Henry, Jeffrey, Forest City  
 Hermsmeyer, Carl & Linda, Springfield  
 Himmel, Anthony, Topeka  
 Hofferkamp, Wilma, Springfield  
 Hollinshead, Earl & Angie, Springfield  
 Homer, Gladys, South Jacksonville  
 Hopkins, Lawrence & Terry, Springfield  
 Horn, Charles Sr & Mary, Springfield  
 Horner, Shannon, Topeka  
 Houston, Bradley, Olney  
 Howard, Ruth, Topeka  
 Hudspeth, Harvey, Springfield  
 Hunt, Linda, Decatur  
 Hurley, Joseph, Springfield  
 Indermark, Sheila, Cantrall  
 Jackson, Sandra, Pekin  
 Janssen, Michael, Middletown  
 Jenkins, Nina, Havana  
 Jewell, Joyce, Jacksonville  
 Jockisch, Steven, Virginia  
 Johnson, Dewight, Princeton  
 Johnson, Michael, Springfield

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Johnson, Kerry, Virginia  
Jones, Anne Marie, Manito  
Kavadas, Spiro, Athens  
Kester, Mark & Julie, Pekin  
Ketcham, Georgia, Peoria  
Kimbrell, Monica, Havana  
Kruski, Walter, Athens  
Land, Douglas, Green Valley  
Landry, Bradley & Anita, Havana  
Langan, Robert & Carmen, New Holland  
Laura, Dubois, Athens  
Ledgerwood, Roy, Topeka  
Leeper, Charles, Rapid City, SD  
Leezer, David & Patsy, Athens  
Leininger, Kent & Beth, Sanford, FL  
Leithoff, Robert, Havana  
Lerch, Perry, Kilbourne  
Liesman, Kelley, Athens  
Lionberger, John, Lees Summit, MO  
Lisenbee, Shane, Beardstown  
List, Sheila, Petersburg  
Livingston, Randy, Havana  
Lloyd, James, Ozawkie, KS  
Lobello, Kathy, Manito  
Lockhart, Margaret, Jacksonville  
Logsdon, Keith, Canton, MO  
Long, Karen, Mount Auburn  
Lopez, Domingo, San Jose  
Loveall, Laverne, New Holland  
Lovell, Chester, Pawnee  
Lovins, Marshall, Pekin  
Lucht, Albert, Petersburg  
Lumpkin, Michael, Topeka  
Lyons, Nicky, Bluff Springs  
Lyons, Ricky, Mount Sterling  
Maddox, Amy, Chandlerville  
Manker, Frederick, New Berlin  
Manning, David, Sherman  
Martin, Robert, Chandlerville  
McAndrew, Loretta, Forest City  
McBride, Timothy, Springfield  
McCafferty, Bradley, Chandlerville  
McCarty, Ronald, Niantic  
McCullough, Gerald, Havana  
McGinnis, Scott & Dawn, Beardstown  
McGuire, David & Donna, Petersburg  
McKinney, Michael, Manito  
McLaren, Mark & Trudy, Delavan

Mendenhall, Ashleigh, Rochester  
Merold, Ronald, Mount Pulaski  
Merritt, Lonnie, Forest City  
Messervy, Rex, Sherman  
Miles, Bradley, Forest City  
Miller, Paul & Frances, Topeka  
Miller, William III & Brenda, Havana  
Moore, Michael, Petersburg  
Moore, Steven, Greenvew  
Morris, Chris, Manito  
Murray, John & Marcella, Springfield  
Myren, Dennis & Rita, Foosland  
Nance, Mary, Taylorville  
National Mobile Television, Tukwila, WA  
Naughton, Nancy, Springfield  
Needham, John, Petersburg  
Nelson, Paula, Manito  
Nickelson, Tabitha, Springfield  
Noltensmeier, Scott, Chandlerville  
Norsworthy, William & Beverly, Creve Coeur  
Olsen, Richard & Rebecca, Springfield  
Orman, Harry & Clara, Mackinaw  
Osborn, Donnie, Topeka  
Parr, Michael & Maria, Brownsburg, IN  
Patterson, Robert & Renee, Litchfield  
Payne, Reggie & Tracy, Lincoln  
Perea, Pacifico, Edgefield, SC  
Peters, Randy & Peggy, Petersburg  
Phillips, Randy & Amanda, Peoria  
Pickett, Frances, Elkhart  
Pickrell, Jacqueline, Athens  
Pier, Brett, Athens  
Pirone, Arthur, Ironia, NJ  
Pote, Evelyn & Steven, Mason City  
Pratt, Diana & Julie, Petersburg  
Pratt, Laura, Havana  
Presswood, Robert & Stephanie, New Holland  
Preston, Arthur, Petersburg  
Priest, Grahame, Sherman  
Propst, Warren, Petersburg  
Pugh, Angela, Jacksonville  
Puyear, James, Athens  
R D Offutt Co, Lamoure, ND  
Radar, Donna, Buffalo  
Rathbone, Teresa, Athens  
Reed, Curtis, Lewistown  
Renaud, David & Elizabeth, Lecanto, FL  
Rhodes, Nancy, Springfield  
Richards, Deanna, Havana

Richards, Edwin & Margaret, Sherman  
Richardson, Lori, Manito  
Ring, Jerry & Tammy, South Jacksonville  
Rishe, Bryan & Peggy, Charlotte, NC  
Ritchie, Marty & Stacie, Manito  
Ritzheimer, Robert & Jean Ann, Tunas, MO  
Robertson, Paul & Jill, Montello, WI  
Robinson, Michael & Susan, Murrayville  
Rokash, James, Decatur  
Roth, Yvonne, Springfield  
Royal MFG Homes, Springfield  
Saigal, Kanta, Fort Wayne, IN  
Salanda, Douglas, Bonita Springs, FL  
Sathoff, Charles, Oakford  
Savant, April, Petersburg  
Schaefer, Jim, Pekin  
Scheidegger, Michelle, New Holland  
Schleyhahn, Viney & Glenda, Pleasant Plains  
Scott, Joel, Athens  
See, Clayton, Topeka  
Seton, Forrest & Melva, Wheaton  
Setzer, Travis, Oakford  
Sharp, Bridgette, Sherman  
Shaver, Robert, Springfield  
Sheley, Dennis & Carol, Elkhart  
Shelton, Gladys, New Holland  
Silver Creek Cattle Co, Springfield  
Sims, Larry & Cheryl, Pleasant Plains  
Sims, Pauline, Springfield  
Smith, Bonny, Easton  
Smith, Christine, Petersburg  
Smith, Edgar & Keri, Petersburg  
Smith, Jeffrey & Linda, Pocahontas  
Smith, Patricia, Sherman  
Smith, Ralph & Elizabeth, Lehigh Acres, FL  
Smith, Roger & Velda, Lincoln  
Snodgrass, Herb & Sheila, Auburn  
Snyder, Mary, Athens  
Sosa, Ernest JR, Topeka  
Speaks, Barbara, Petersburg  
Spencer, Wilmer, Lewistown  
Spicer, Christie, San Jose  
Spradlin, Nadine, Williamsville  
Stacy, Jerrie, Petersburg  
Stark, Rose, Springfield  
Statzer, Richard & Carol, Springfield  
Stephens, Stephen & Paula, Kilbourne  
Stevens, Jacqueline & Walker, Springfield  
Stevens, Drew, Petersburg

Stone, Ervin & Janice, Kilbourne  
Strader, Delma, Petersburg  
Strange, Michael & Vickie, Athens  
Stroupe, David, Springfield  
Stults, Michael, Petersburg  
Suter, Carl & Susan, Dawson  
Swan, Richard & Jona, Lincoln  
Sweet, David & Carolyn, Franklin  
Taylor, Angela, Mason City  
Taylor, Everett & Opal, Topeka  
Tezak, Loretta, Petersburg  
Thames, Daniel & Cheryl, Mackinaw  
Thomas, Dorothy, Oakford  
Thompson, Todd, Delavan  
Tremain, Michael, Havana  
Turner, Curtis, Topeka  
Turpin, Robert, Taylorville  
Urbain, Wanda, Petersburg  
Vanetten, Cecil & Freeda, Kilbourne  
Verardi, Susan, Springfield  
Wagenblast, Ronald & Patricia, Kevil, KY  
Walker, Robin, Petersburg  
Ward, Dawn, Athens  
Warden, Anna, Virginia  
Warren, Joseph, Springfield  
Wasik, Victor & Vicki, Mount Pulaski  
Wasson, Leo, Topeka  
Watkins, Paul, Virginia  
Weitzel, Beverly, Springfield  
Wells, Michael, Springfield  
Westfall, Dale, Springfield  
Wheatley, Harry & Betty, Topeka  
White, James & Kimberly, Springfield  
Wilcut, James, Springfield  
Williams, Angela, Springfield  
Williams, Candy, Springfield  
Wilson, Bernard, Peoria  
Wilson, Marie, Pekin  
Witherell, Robert, Havana  
Wood, Maxine, Petersburg  
Wood, Susan, Ashland  
Wood, Mark, Springfield  
Woodruff, Kenneth & Shelly, Springfield  
Wordeman, Janice, Easton  
Wright, Sam, Divernon  
Wulf, John, Virginia  
Wurschmidt, Ted, Peoria  
Young, John, Springfield  
Zenisky, Francis & Emily, Petersburg

## Board highlights

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

October 22, 2022

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan & Jodine Tate, Operations Manager Dalton Whitley, Director of Member Services Trish Michels, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, Engineering Manager Brady Smith, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith. Directors Steven Worner & Gary Holloway absent.
- Staff: Presented 2020 budgets.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet, budget, member services report & cut-offs/write-offs, security report, internal critical vulnerability breakdown, safety report, employee educational courses & property loss trend analysis.
- Anker: Gave September financial report. Year to date margins were \$2,811,866 compared to \$2,445,015 last year. End of September equity 42.59%. Served 10,937 member accounts. Net utility plant \$50,710,219 compared to \$49,172,284 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Board adopted resolution adding \$20,000 for total \$160,000 for retirement of capital credits to estates in 2019.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Next Board Meeting 11/26/19.