

MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

As I sit here on April 29, 2020 writing this update, our governor has extended the shelter-in-place through May 30. What does that mean for MCEC? We will be continuing our split work force schedule through May. We have been able to do some remote work from employee homes. This has been significant for us to be able to keep up with the more pressing needs of the cooperative. Our outside crews are still split up and are also keeping up with new service requests, security light repairs, JULIE underground locates, miscellaneous meter requests, outages and we are also doing tree trimming and spraying on our right-of-way areas.

We do plan to look at bringing all the crews in so we can address

the important need for system construction. These projects are vital to maintaining system reliability for our members and we must determine how we will bring our crews in and still maintain the social distancing issues to keep our workforce healthy.

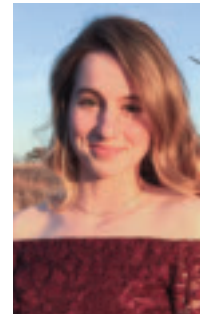
One of the key items we have noted is the needed upgrade to our phone system to work more remotely. This is an issue we will address after workflow returns to normal and we conduct business in a more usual way.

It has been a trying time and we greatly appreciate your patience. We hope we have been able to meet your needs and we continue to work toward that goal of being the best cooperative we can be.

Hope Kapelski selected for Washington trip!

Will attend in 2021

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, Youth Day in Springfield and Youth to Washington trips were both canceled.



Hope Kapelski

This year's winner of the trip to D.C. was Hope Kapelski of Smithton. Hope is the daughter of Kevin and Jennifer Kapelski. Hope was invited and then accepted to attend next year's Washington trip in June 2021.

Annual Meeting of Members POSTPONED

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have postponed our annual meeting of members that was scheduled for June 13.

With your elbow grease and worn out boots, you never failed to put us first.

Happy Father's Day on June 21st.



I hit a power pole or other electrical equipment. Now what?

We all think it will never happen to us, but it can in an instant.

Drivers veer off the road and run into power poles. Farmers sometimes contact a power line while driving tractors or other machinery. Dump or feed truck drivers raise or lower their bed and snag a power line.

People can become dangerously close or enter electricity's path. **Knowing what to do in that situation can save your life.** Incidents with power lines or other utility equipment break the electrical current's usual path. This can make the ground, vehicles and other equipment electrified.

If you hit a utility pole, pad-mounted transformer (green box) or other electrical equipment, **DO NOT** get out of the vehicle. Instead, **call 9-1-1** and **wait for utility crews to come** to de-energize power. Call 9-1-1 in all of these instances:

- Your tractor or car **strikes a guy wire** (guy wires are the wires staked into the ground that stabilize utility poles). Under normal conditions, the guy wire is neutral, but if the wire is weakened, pulled out of the ground or otherwise damaged, it could become energized.
- You hit a patch of ice and go off the road and **hit a utility pole**. Or you are in a car accident and **one of the vehicles strikes a power pole**. Only get out of the car if there is smoke or a fire; otherwise, stay put. If there a fire, make a clean jump or hop from your car or truck (without touching it), and hop with your feet together or shuffle keeping your feet on the ground at least 30 feet to safety. Think of the

downed line sending electrical current across the ground in a ripple-like effect. Each ring of the ripple represents a different voltage. If you step from one ring to another, **this is called step potential** and it can electrocute you.

- You see an accident that involves **a downed power line**. **DO NOT** approach the scene.
- You hit **a pad-mounted transformer** or other type of **electrical box**.
- Your vehicle hits a **substation**.
- You ran off the road, hit a pole and it's dark out, but **YOU DON'T KNOW** if lines are down.

Other situations

- You get something stuck in power lines (drone or remote-control device): Do not try to retrieve it.
- You see kids climbing or sitting on pad-mounted transformers: Tell them not to sit or play on it.
- You are carrying a tall ladder or pole: Look up for power line locations and keep at least a 10-foot clearance at all times.
- You see kids climb trees that have power lines above: Warn them not to climb trees near power lines.
- You are using a portable generator: Never plug it into a wall outlet. This can cause backfeeding into the line and kill a lineworker or neighbor.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Meet the Employees



Chris Summers
Tree Trimmer

Tell us about yourself.

I've been married to my wife Jackie for 16 years. I have three sons: Ethan, 16; Kadin, 14 and Lucas, 9.

When I was a child, I wanted to be:

A firefighter

If I could have any meal to eat, it would include:

Chicken and dumplings and any kind of seafood



Describe the best vacation you ever took.

We took a cruise to Cozumel, Mexico, which was amazing

Do you have a collection of something?

I collect baseball and football cards.

What was your favorite thing to play as a child?

As a child, I had three figurines that were my favorites: He-Man, G.I. Joe and Hulk Hogan

What do you see yourself doing after you retire?

My wife and I would love to try and visit all 62 national parks in the U.S.

MCEC line outages - April 2020

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
4/6/20	1:29	39	Sand Rock Rd	Public Accidents, Other	Smithton
4/8/20	1:18	49	Brandt Rd	Unknown	Fults
4/8/20	2:21	994	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
4/8/20	2:20	802	New Athens Area	Power Supplier	New Athens
4/13/20	2:13	14	Country Acres Estates	Trees, Other	East Carondelet
4/14/20	1:08	11	Schiermeier Rd	Unknown	Smithton



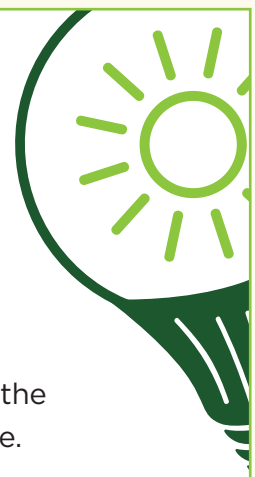
www.mcec.org

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Office hours:
Monday through Friday
7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference, the more energy you will save.





Considering solar? We're here to help.

Today's consumers want and expect options, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a less expensive form of energy with ongoing savings. Some are looking for a green energy source. These two motives are why many homeowners are exploring solar panels.

The interest in alternative energy sources is also being fueled by decreasing costs for solar, the availability of financial incentives and the proliferation of companies offering solar panel installation.

However, as attractive and popular as rooftop solar may appear, it is important for consumers to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings. To determine whether solar is right for their situation, homeowners must undertake their due diligence.

We're here to help.

As your trusted energy advisor,

Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC), can offer an assessment of your specific situation. After all, MCEC has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We constantly strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently.

Unlike a solar company that has one objective – to sell their products and services – we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. While solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all.

Sizing the system appropriately is key. It's in your best interest to offset only the energy you consume. Energy sent back to the grid receives credit for about 3 cents per kilowatt hour, not the 10-12 cents retail rate. The retail rate that members pay includes the costs involved in getting power from the power plant to members' meters, which is a large portion of MCEC's bill from our wholesale supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC).

There are several financial factors at the utility level to consider when you are contemplating solar or any type of distributed generation.

- Will the service need to be upgraded to accommodate the load?
- What is the cost of a \$1 million liability insurance policy that is required?
- If the system is over 10 kW there could be a metering cost, monthly administrative fees, etc.

MCEC recognizes that consumer interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their best options. Please visit: mcec.org/solar-installation-information.