


# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

## Across The President's Desk

## COVID-19 Update

Things have been very busy for Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) this year. Currently, we are well ahead for new services through June 2020 over last year. We are still working at maintaining a healthy work force to serve our members. MCEC continues to keep the lobby closed for walk-in traffic, as well as only allowing drop off for material deliveries to keep the office/warehouse at a minimum for a non-employee presence.

MCEC did have a small scare with a spouse of an employee testing positive for COVID-19. As soon as we were made aware, we had the employee and four other employees quarantined. The employee whose spouse tested positive has not shown any symptoms as well as the four other employees. Those four employees have all cleared their quarantine time and have returned. As soon as the employee whose spouse tested positive has a negative test, that employee will return as well. It is imperative that we keep our outside employees healthy. We need linemen able to work as we are now in the summer storm mode and sometimes it is all hands-on-deck.

We are moving to improve our ability to remote work with help from HTC. Our phone system is being transferred to a VOIP or Voice Over Internet Protocol. HTC is installing fiber to the office and once that is completed, HTC will begin hosting



our phone system at their main office. This will give us the ability to have employees answer phones from their homes in the event we have a need to work remotely for a period of time. This will also give the employees of MCEC more flexibility to have work hours that can be adjusted to meet more of our member's needs.

You will be seeing new signage at the front of MCEC's headquarters. We are going to be installing a

new LED sign to help us improve messaging to our members. Look for this new sign soon.

We hope you are all coping well with the "new normal." We understand it can be difficult at times, but rest assured that MCEC will be here to help when needed.



# Make time for safety this harvest season

**H**arvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. Monroe County Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity provide safety tips to help farmers make this harvest season a safe one.

Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins. Be sure you can see well in work areas. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

Take time to look up and out for electrical lines. Always be aware of where they are in relation to your equipment. Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment. If you see a sagging or low power line, contact us. Also keep an eye out for guy wires. While these wires are not energized, if hit or damaged, they can bring down live lines.

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. Yet, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on the surroundings. Recognize when you need to take breaks so you can be active and engaged in the farm work.

Additional electrical safety tips include:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.



- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
  - Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
  - Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance. If the machinery you are operating makes contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.
- Only on the rare occasion that the machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Never touch anything in contact with a power line.
- For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)



[www.mcec.org](http://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

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## Meet the Employees

### Ron Rusteberg

Journeyman Lineman

#### Tell us about yourself.

I have two daughters, one granddaughter and one grandson on the way.

#### When I was a child, I wanted to be:

When I was young, I wanted to start a hatchery.

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

Any food on the table is always a blessing.

#### Do you have a collection of something?

I have a collection of call ducks.

#### Describe the best vacation you ever took:

Growing up, I've always been busy raising livestock and farming. We did not vacation much.

#### What was your favorite thing to play as a child?

I just enjoyed being outside in the country.

#### What do you see yourself doing after you retire?

I look forward to finally taking a vacation.

## MCEC line outages - July 2020

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
7/1/2020	0:48	35	Ll Rd/Harbaugh Ln	Lightning	New Athens
7/3/2020	1:42	2	Robinson School Rd	Vehicles or Machinery	New Athens
7/8/2020	0:55	24	Imbs Station Rd	Trees, Other	East Carondelet
7/15/2020	1:11	6	Bluff Rd	Lightning	Fountain
7/15/2020	2:23	6	Fleckenstein Rd	Trees, Other	New Athens
7/15/2020	2:50	28	Vv Rd	Lightning	Poe
7/17/2020	8:09	2	Bluff Rd	Unknown	Columbia
7/19/2020	13:12	817	New Athens/Hecker Area	Power Supplier	New Athens
7/19/2020	9:33	999	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
7/19/2020	2:49	17	Bohnemeier Church Rd	Trees, Other	East Carondelet
7/20/2020	0:26	999	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
7/21/2020	1:56	6	Otten Rd	Lightning	East Carondelet
7/21/2020	1:11	26	Bluffside Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
7/21/2020	0:14	18	Columbia Quarry Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
7/22/2020	2:16	4	Lou Dell	Other, Deterioration	North Waterloo
7/24/2020	3:37	8	Mule Heights Dr	Other, Faulty Equipment	East Carondelet
7/25/2020	2:40	1183	Waterloo South/Red Bud Area	Small Animals or Birds	Poe
7/25/2020	3:59	541	Fults Area	Small Animals or Birds	Fults
7/26/2020	2:24	41	Briarlake Estates	Electrical Overload	East Carondelet
7/30/2020	0:38	116	Ll Rd/Kern Rd	Small Animals or Birds	Poe





# We're here for you

This is a challenging and uncertain time, but we've been through difficult times before. As we did then, we'll continue to serve you anytime, day or night, 365 days a year. You can count on that.

*Brought to you by Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc.*



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