

## Words on the Wire

*We're Listening...*



**Alisha Anker**  
General Manager

Menard Electric Cooperative recently received its 2020 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score of 86 on a scale of 0-100, and the results are impressive.

Menard Electric Cooperative scored 13 points higher than the Cooperative Utility score

of 73, as well as 14 points higher than both Investor-owned Utilities and Municipal Utilities scores of 72, per the 2020 ACSI Utility Sector Report.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives have been the gold standard and we strive to be best in class when it comes to member satisfaction. We are pleased with our Cooperatives' performance this year and are happy that you, our members, feel the same. This ACSI score confirms Menard Electric Cooperative's value and quality in the eyes of our members and we look forward to maintaining this level of satisfaction and furthering the co-op difference.

The ACSI is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Each year, the ACSI uses data from interviews with roughly 300,000 customers as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies in 46 industries and 10 economic sectors.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives have participated in the ACSI Monitor Program since 2011 and it was the highest rated cooperative energy utility group from 2014 to 2018 per the ACSI Utility Sector Reports showcasing our continued commitment to the cooperative difference in action. You can learn more about the ACSI by visiting [theacsi.org](http://theacsi.org).

Scores aside, one of the most intriguing components of the membership survey

results are the written comments. Over 30% of the randomly selected members who participated in the survey took the time to provide this additional level of feedback, which is quite impressive. To return the favor, let us answer and expand on some here...

To be exact, one-half of the comments provided positive feedback. To those who called out employees as going above and beyond to help with or discuss issues, we appreciate the support—that's the cooperative difference. To the widow who received a call from the co-op expressing condolences and offering assistance in reissuing your membership, those are simply good manners and again we are deeply saddened by your loss.

To those who appreciate a local courteous voice answering when you dial, we do too and are beyond frustrated by the lack of true customer service out there in today's environment. To those in appreciation of the extra efforts made by the co-op to assist members financially burdened by COVID-19, our pleasure. To those who appreciate their lights not flickering after we "cleaned" the trees from the lines, you are very welcome. And finally, to all the others who simply took the time to write how pleased and impressed you are by the prompt service you receive, we are touched and will keep up the good work to meet your future expectations.

Some comments were neither positive nor negative, actually more like questions. In response, Menard Electric does allow solar interconnections greater than 10kw. We also welcome wind turbines on the farm, just contact the office to speak with an Engineer about the details of these programs. Speaking of wind power, to the question about why there is a dependency on government funds for large-scale projects, the answer relates to the lack of grid parity. To explain, with most new energy

technologies, until the cost to build and operate that technology is equal to or lesser than the levelized cost of electricity from the grid, subsidies will generally be made available from the government to incent development, then thereafter phase out.

To the member expressing frustration about our water heater load control program, you do have a participation option. Simply contact the office to speak with an Engineer about removing that control device, if you so desire. And finally, to the member worried about the integrity of your power pole, we assure you it has been looked at and if necessary, added to the list of poles to be replaced, our goal being to get to all poles requiring attention before the end of next year.

Most of the constructive comments were related to the fixed nature of the co-op's monthly facility charge, the general rate structure utilized by Menard Electric, and concern that retiring capital credits increases the rates. Adequate margins are required to comply with our borrowing covenants. Please know that as a not-for-profit cooperative, we are required to return all operating margins to the members who contributed to those margins. When we do, that action reflects upon the equity portion of the co-op's balance sheet and has no impact on our current operating margins. Capital credits represent your investment in the co-op system. Every year we report the allocations earned by each member on your billing statement. If you'd like to inquire about your capital credits, please contact the office.

Again, our sincere appreciation to the members who participated in the survey and provided comments. Your experience and feedback are key factors that validate the important decisions made within our business. We will continue to work hard and serve you better. Till next time,

*Alisha*

## Help us find these inactive members

Earlier this year your Board of Directors authorized a general retirement of a portion of capital credits earned by members who had active service with us in 1996 and 2018. Active members received a June bill credit. Members who no longer receive service from us were mailed a check. We were unable to locate those listed below. (This list can also be found at [menard.com/capital-credits](http://menard.com/capital-credits).) If you know any of these members, or the executors of their estate, please ask them to email [info@menard.com](mailto:info@menard.com) or call 800-872-1203.



Agri Business Solutions, Pleasant Plains	Fox, Eric, Greenville, IN	Landholt, Vickie, Dawson	Robinson, Teresa, Sherman
Alexander Bros, Arenzville	Francis, Donald, Lincoln	Launer, Cleon, Virginia	Salter, Stacy, Havana
Amberger, Frank, Springfield	Fuchs, Cynthia & Thomas, Springfield	Lawson, Jennifer, Peoria	Salzman, Virginia, Lincoln
Ames, Sam, Petersburg	Gardner, Ferd, San Jose	Lawson, Roland & Denise, Virginia	Sampson, Kenneth, Lincoln
Anderson, Terrie & Michael, Mason City	Garner, Warren, San Jose	Leckrone, Kenn, Springfield	Sams, James, Havana
Armour, Dane, Carlinville	Gentry, Ernest, Springfield	Lee, Teddy & Abigail, San Jose	Schafer, Harold JR & Christi, Petersburg
Armstrong, Kenneth, Virginia	Gilroy, Heidi, Manito	Lewis, James, Virginia	Schleyhahn, Jason, Pleasant Plains
Ausmus, Susan, Sherman	Gleeson, Chris, Springfield	Long, Tobi, Manito	Schleyhahn, Viney, Pleasant Plains
Bacchus, James & Winnifred, Chillicothe	Goldesberry, Donna, Springfield	Lynn, Debra, Beardstown	Schnirring, Dorian & Paul, Springfield
Bell, Michael, Bloomington	Gondek, Michael, Petersburg	Magallon, Altagracia, Riverton	Schuh, Sonseah, Springfield
Bennett, Howard & Kathy, Tallula	Graceland Arabians, Covington, LA	Magee, Dawn, Bath	Schuppel, Mary, Riverton
Bileck, Lisa, Riverton	Graham, Dwayne & Christine, Springfield	Marcum, Margaret, Hillview	Schurman, Steve & Elizabeth, Athens
Birkmeier, Michael, Manito	Green, Russell, Mechanicsburg	Martin, Venola, Pekin	Schwab, Tim, Virginia
Blackley, William, Arenzville	Greer, Lisa, Springfield	Masten, Vance, Jacksonville	Shaver, Robert, Springfield
Blanchard, Erma, Ordway, CO	Griffith, Philip, Atlanta	May, Deborah, Milford	Sinclair, Hollis, Petersburg
Blythe, Robert & Lori, Warrensburg	Groh, Tim & Melissa, Oconomowoc, WI	McAllister, David, Springfield	Skelton, Christian & Kelsey, Middletown
Bobby T's Roadhouse, Manito	Hackman, Ann, Mt Sterling	McArdle, Justin, Springfield	Slobodyanyuk, Igor & Svetlana, Sherman
Bodamer, Wm & Jane, Decatur	Hall, Timothy, Havana	McAtee, Janis, Warrenton, VA	Smith, James & Karen, Cantrall
Bosaw, Larry Jr & Sandra, Springfield	Hanson, David, Dawson	McCormick, Mitzi, Pleasant Plains	Sommer, Frank & Gena, New Berlin
Bramel, Brian & Cathy, Laramie, WY	Harr, Tammie, Manito	McFarlin, Michael, Havana	Spann, Kenneth & Stephanie, Petersburg
Brent, Lynn, Athens	Harbers, H Terry & Sherry, Pekin	McGinnis, William, Petersburg	Standard, Fred, Morton
Brewer, Peggy, Beardstown	Harris, Jennifer, Greenview	McGuire, Ronald, Springfield	Stansbury, Wilamina, Las Vegas, NV
Bridges, Michael, Havana	Haury, Chester, Sherman	McKennedy, Sherry, Williamsville	Statzer, Richard, Springfield
Brinkley, Eugene & Herma, Springfield	Hawbaker, Ronald, Springfield	McLean, Edgar, Pleasant Plains	Steinhour, Terry, Greenview
Brown, Richard, Manito	Haynes, Richard, Beardstown	Melcher, Gary, Petersburg	Stevens, Wendy, Springfield
Burgess, Ralph & Cathy, New Holland	Haynes, Terry, Topeka	Merritt, Glenna, Havana	Stewart, John & Jean, Petersburg
Byerline, Rebecca, Riverton	Heffron, Roger, Riverton	Mid America Advertising Inc, Springfield	Stone, Kelly, Forest City
Cadigan, Jack, Chatham	Hennon, Rodney & Phyllis, Wichita, KS	Miller, Eula, Ashland	Stott, Corey, Memphis, MO
Cantrall, Deborah & Barton, Ottawa	Herz, Kenneth, Peoria	Miller, Patricia, Middletown	Stribling, L E, Ashland
Carlock, Paul, Pekin	Heyen, Edward, New Holland	Mole, Joseph & Helen, Palm Harbor, FL	Sweatman Hereford Farm, Cambridge
Chambers, Darel & Robin, Easton	Hicks, Maranda, Pekin	Moleski, Joellen, Tallula	Taylor, Brandon & Kara, Beardstown
Chastain, Chase, Athens	Hill, James, Springfield	Moore, Robert Jr & Eileen, Auburn	Treadway Duck Club Ltd, Forest Park
Clendenny, Monica, Canton	Hill, Michael, Hales Corners, WI	Morris, Pamela, Pekin	Turner, Michael & Carol, Alexander
Creasy, Patsy & Mark, Virginia	Hoagland, Ronald & Dawn, Alexander	Mosley, Jeffery & Erin, Buffalo	Vanorman, Forrest, Pekin
Crowe, Adam, Carlinville	Holcomb-Densmore, Tim, Warren, MI	Myers, Jerry & Jennifer, Springfield	Vaughn, Dale & Elizabeth, Springfield
Daniels, David & Mildred, Mechanicsburg	Holzwarth, Linda, Virden	National Mobile Television, Tukwila, WA	Vaughn, Reginald & Beckie, Bath
Davis, James, Athens	Honeycutt, Joseph, Springfield	Nolting, G William & Lorena, Athens	Vice, Apryl, Athens
Davis, Victor & Linda, Virginia	Hopps, Joy, Bath	Norman, Helen, Petersburg	Walker, Michael & Lisa, Havana
Deavers, Wallace, Lincoln	Huddleston, Ron & Penny, Dawson	Old Gillett Farm, Covington, LA	Warden, Rebecca, Virginia
DeMarco, Jeff, Springfield	Hulva, Vern, Mason City	Owens, Phillip & Angela, Petersburg	Warrick, Joan, Springfield
Diegel, Wayne, Emden	Imhoff, Kenneth & Norma, Springfield	Payne, Barbara, Topeka	Watret, Jeff & Kristy, Alexander
DiMichel, Thomas & Joy, Peoria	Jacobs, M Gary & Michele, Sherman	Petri, Linda, Mount Sterling	Watson, Donald & Rebecca, Table Grove
Douglas, Jack, Springfield	Johnson, Jennifer, Athens	Pharris, Dennis & Norma, Springfield	Watson, John & Mildred, Havana
Dow, Jennie, Pekin	Kapper, Michael & Krista, Illiopolis	Phillips, James & Carla, Springfield	Watson, Ryan & Jody, Petersburg
Dowell, Gary, Forest City	Kauffman, Larry, Austin, TX	Pile, Richard & Tina, Athens	Wayland, Michael, San Jose
Doyen, Joyce, Oakford	Kaulen, Lisa, Renton, WA	Pomrenke, Brian, Petersburg	Weingand, Richard & Terry, Chatham
Dunn, Kathryn & Paul, Decatur	Kelley, Myra, Lincoln	Premier Partners III, Champaign	Weller, Daphne & Elbert, Athens
Eilts, Melissa, Springfield	King, Jeffrey & Peggy, Bartonville	Pullum, Brenda, Topeka	Westfall, Fay, Springfield
Elmore, James & Trisa, Petersburg	Knox, Kricenda & Leslie, Springfield	Richardson, Charles & Vicki, Manito	Wheatley, Gary, Pekin
Evans, Robert, Mill Creek, WA	Knox, Lyle, Arenzville	Richardson, David, Athens	Wilson, Mildred, Springfield
Fahey, William Jr & Patricia, Springfield	Knox, Verna, Williamsville	Rickard, John, Mason City	Woodbridge, Chad, Ashland
Farley, Mae, Springfield	Koriath, Manfred, Petersburg	Riebeling, Brian & Debbie, Bath	Zweifel, Richard, Murrieta, CA
Fink, Frank & Patricia, Pekin	Kurian, Joseph, Petersburg	Riverview Communications, Mechanicsburg	
Forsman, David, Chapin	Kuykendall, Connie, New Holland	Roberts, Daniel & Kelly, Dawson	
	LaFrance, Thomas & Beverly, Decatur		



## When the weather outside is frightful...

- Be prepared for power outages caused by winter winds, heavy snow and ice.
- Stay connected during an outage with our MyMEC App.
- Have a backup generator? It must contain a transfer switch to avoid backfeeding to our system. You or your installing contractor should submit the generator application at [menard.com/generators](http://menard.com/generators)
- Prepare now by making sure the emergency kits in your car and home are fully stocked. Visit [ready.gov/kit](http://ready.gov/kit) for information on what to include.



## Holiday Closings

Our office will close at noon  
**December 23; it will close December  
 24 & 25 for the Christmas Holiday  
 and January 1 for New Year's Day.**



Funds are available to help pay your electric bill through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Program year 2021 is open. Contact your local agency as soon as possible to see if you are eligible.

**MCS Community Services**  
 Cass/Morgan County  
 217-243-9404

**Community Action Partnership  
 of Central Illinois**  
 Logan/Mason/Menard County  
 217-732-2159 • [capcil.info](http://capcil.info)

**Decatur-Macon County  
 Opportunities Corporation**  
 Macon County  
 217-428-2193 • [dmcoc.org](http://dmcoc.org)

**Sangamon County**  
 217-535-3120 • [co.sangamon.il.us](http://co.sangamon.il.us)

**Tazwood Community Services**  
 Tazewell County  
 309-694-4391 • [tazwoodcs.org](http://tazwoodcs.org)

## For Sale

### 2010 Ford F-250 4X4

5.4L V8 Auto 153,000 mi  
 Reg Cab Utility Bed

### 2011 Ford F-150 4X4

3.7L V6 Auto 144,000 mi  
 Ext Cab Short Bed

Vehicles sold as is. Sealed bids need to be received in the office by 2:00 p.m. on Monday, 12/14/20. Contact Brady Smith at 217-632-7746 with questions or to make an appointment to take a look.



## \$2,000 Scholarships

### 11 College Scholarships

available through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarship Program.

Scholarships are available for children of electric cooperative members and employees attending four-year colleges and universities or two-year community colleges.

**Deadline: December 31, 2020**

### 1 Line School Scholarship

available through the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship for Lincoln Land Community College.

Available for children of co-op members, co-op employees or directors, those presently enrolled in the lineworker school, and those who have served/are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard.

**Deadline: April 30, 2021**

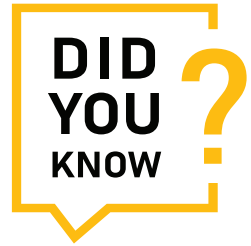
Visit  
[www.menard.com/scholarships](http://www.menard.com/scholarships)  
 to apply.

# Board highlights

September 22, 2020

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

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Holloway, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan & Jodine Tate (by Zoom) Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, Engineering Manager Brady Smith, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles K. Smith. Director Steven Worner absent.
- Brian Adams of AIEC discussed & reviewed Cost of Service Study.
- Smith, Anker, Frye, Ryan: Discussed member site vegetation management; Board consensus to make available the options discussed & proceed with management plans.
- Motion carried to enter into assignments for capital credits of two dissolved entities.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet & budget; member services report & past due notices; write-offs; operations & reliability report; safety report; Connect newsletter; CFC Directorship vote & discussed linemen aid to co-op affected by Hurricane Laura.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power Inc. report.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened; motion carried to confirm & ratify all action taken.
- Next Board meeting 10/27/20.



## Why Bills Rise in the Winter

- \* Holiday Light Displays
- \* More Baking & Cooking
- \* Increased Furnace Fan or Boiler Circulating Pump Usage
- \* Space Heaters
- \* Electric Fireplaces
- \* Fireplace Dampers Left Open
- \* Cold Drafts/Lack of Weatherstripping
- \* Humidifiers
- \* Electric Blankets
- \* Tank Heaters
- \* Engine Block Heaters
- \* Heat Lamps
- \* Hot Tubs
- \* More Hot Water Use/Baths
- \* Lights Turn on Earlier
- \* More Movie Nights/Television Use
- \* Increased Computer/Video Game Time

You may have already noticed an increase in electric usage due to staying at home more this year. Keep that in mind this winter as early sunsets and cold weather coupled with less events and get togethers could keep you home even more.



Michelle McNeal  
Communications

## Almond Butter Buckeyes

- 1 1/2 cups almond butter
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup coconut oil, softened
- 1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons blanched almond flour
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups dark chocolate, melted
- toothpicks

Cream almond butter and syrup with mixer. Add oil, flour, salt and vanilla. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Roll into about 25 balls and place on a parchment paper lined tray. Insert a toothpick in the center of each and freeze 30 minutes. Dip each ball 2/3 of way into chocolate. Return to tray and freeze until firm. Store in fridge or freezer.

Michelle says, "These are a favorite of my teen boys and a recipe they can make themselves. They are also an easy treat to share at the holidays with family and friends who avoid gluten, and depending on the chocolate used, those who avoid dairy or refined sugars or follow a paleo or vegan diet."