



Alan W. Wattles

CEO's Year-End Update

As I am writing this column in early December for the January 2021 Illinois Country Living magazine, it is hard to imagine the year we have had in 2020. MCEC has, up to now, had a very good year financially and operationally. It has not been without its difficulties, but we have managed to make the most of what we were faced with.

I would like to point out some of the more interesting things we have accomplished in 2020. If you have driven by the office headquarters, you will notice a new LED sign and a solar array. The sign will allow us to message better to our membership and make people aware of the things happening in our area. We are very satisfied so far with the

performance of the sign. The solar array is a 10-12 KW unit that would be suitable for a home. We put up the array to gather data and help show our membership what to expect from putting one in at their residence. The more we know and can share, the better we can help our members make decisions.

We are prepared to continue our way of operating in 2021 as we are ending 2020. Until the state of Illinois and the Monroe County Health Department allows us to open back up without any restrictions, we will continue to keep the lobby closed and only accept deliveries for materials. We want to keep this protocol in place to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

We are anticipating no rate change for 2021. As our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), continues to reshape its portfolio for energy, we hope no rate changes will be necessary. We would also like to design and add some new rates that will allow our members to save some additional dollars. These would be in the form of time-of-use and off-peak rates. 2021 will be used to review rate structures and re-design rates to better reflect the pricing signals from SIPC.

I do hope that you all will have a safe and happy 2021 and that you ended 2020 with a positive feeling that 2021 will be a good year. Thanks, and God Bless!

Jeff Hoffmann appointed to board of directors, Ross Mueller retires

Jeff Hoffmann of rural Waterloo was appointed to your MCEC board of directors at the November board meeting. Jeff is replacing long-time director, Ross Mueller from the southern district, who is retiring off the board of directors after 27 years of service.

At the 2021 Annual Meeting of Members next summer, Hoffmann plans to run for the southern district board seat after serving out the rest of the term for Mueller.

Hoffmann, 32, was born and raised in Monroe County. He is the son of Mark and Susan Hoffmann, also of rural Waterloo. He is

married to the former Coley Morris and they have two young daughters, Amelia, 2, and Ava, 9 months.

He and his father run a grain farming operation, which takes up most of his time. Hoffmann also handles a side excavating business that keeps him busy.

Hoffmann is an FFA Alumni member, and when he's not farming or excavating, he enjoys spending time with his wife and family.

Commenting on joining the board of directors, Hoffmann said,



Jeff Hoffmann



Ross Mueller

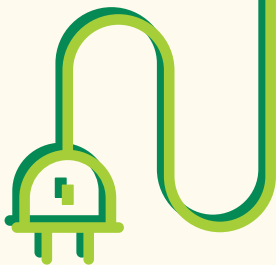
"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a great organization and look forward to gaining a deeper understanding of how the co-op works."

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source:
www.nrel.gov

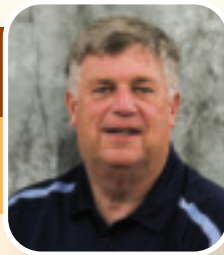


MCEC donates to Human Support Services

The board of directors of Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) voted to donate \$1,000 to the Human Support Services (HSS) of Waterloo. Because of lost funding, along with the cancellation of fundraising events, the HSS faces tough financial times due mostly to the COVID-19 pandemic. MCEC is committed to our community and aims to help local organizations that provide a major benefit to our town and surrounding areas.



Left to right: HSS employees Lea Chandrl, marketing director; Trisha Hoagland, HR director; MCEC directors George Obernagel & Richard Hollis; and MCEC employee, Allan Masterson.



Meet the Directors

George Obernagel

Board Chairman

What is the most important duty of a director?

I think the most important duties are working to provide the best service to our co-op members and keeping them informed with important cooperative issues.

What has surprised you most about serving as a director?

The number of classes you must attend to get updated on electric issues and the continuing education classes. There are several meetings we attend outside of the monthly board meeting such as committee meetings for our G&T. Overall, the large time commitment for being a director surprised me.

What is your projection of the future for the cooperative?

I think our cooperative will continue to grow. We are in an area that has the potential for huge growth, both residential and commercial, and we must prepare our co-op for that growth.

What person has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

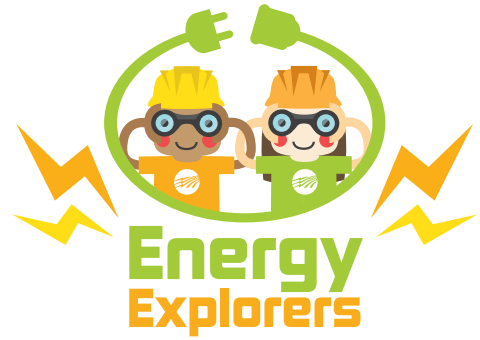
I would have to say my father had the greatest impact on my life. He had a strong work ethic and got involved with organizations. He taught me to work hard and help people out as much as you can.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to do lots of walking/hiking, and I collect tractors.

2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family's monthly bills – and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



JANUARY

Turn off ceiling fans when you leave room.



FEBRUARY

Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.

MARCH

Turn off lights when you leave a room.



APRIL

Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to help shade your home in the summer.

MAY

Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.

JUNE

Take short showers instead of baths.



JULY

Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

AUGUST

Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the A/C filter every 60-90 days.

SEPTEMBER

Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.



OCTOBER

Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.

NOVEMBER

Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.



DECEMBER

Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.

To mask or not to mask: That is (not) the question

Most people don't enjoy wearing masks. They are inconvenient and put the kibosh on social interaction. They can give us the sudden urge to take a deep breath and they can make it difficult for others to hear us, to name just some of the downsides.

However, as we all know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed its stance on mask recommendations from when COVID-19 first hit in the U.S. CDC experts first advocated not wearing masks but later changed that recommendation.

Since recommending mask usage, the CDC came up with these specific guidelines for wearing them:

- Wear masks that have two or more layers to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Masks are recommended for people 2-years-old and up.
- They should not be worn by children younger than age 2, people who have trouble breathing, or people who cannot remove it without help.
- People should not wear masks intended for healthcare workers, for example, N95 respirators.
- Although it might be better than nothing, the CDC does not currently recommend using gaiters or face shields. (A gaiter is like a thick headband you wear around your neck that you can pull up and over your mouth and nose.)

CHOOSE MASKS THAT:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.
- Completely cover your nose and mouth.
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps.

Source: CDC

How to select a mask

Although mostly common knowledge these days, here are some reminders about selecting types of masks and how to wear them.

According to the CDC, choose masks that:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.
- Completely cover your nose and mouth.
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps.

Do not buy or use masks that:

- Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe – for example, made of vinyl.

- Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape (or possibly enter).
- Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks.

If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire or reinforcement to help limit fogging.

Although tempting, a mask cannot do its job if it is worn around your neck, under your nose, on your chin, dangling from one ear or left in your car.

MCEC line outages - November 2020

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
11/11/2020	4:26	64	Kaskaskia Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults
11/14/2020	2:44	9	Fults	Unknown	Columbia
11/14/2020	14:06	8	Trolley Rd	Large Animals	North Waterloo



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