

MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Committed to a co-op culture for all

Over the years, you've heard me expound on why and how Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) is different – because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including MCEC, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly. Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA.

Equal access for all

When our electric co-op was founded, each member contributed an equal share in order to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families as well as the larger local community. Each member had an equal vote in co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. MCEC was built by and belongs to the diverse communities

and consumer-members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the co-op.

We encourage all members to vote in MCEC's director elections every year, and we invite all members to participate in co-op meetings to weigh in on discussions that set co-op policies and priorities, such as high-speed internet, community solar and electric vehicle programs or any other examples.

We know members of our community have different needs and perspectives, and we welcome diverse views on all issues under

consideration by the co-op. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was when MCEC was founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you – the members we proudly serve – is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.



School grant winners announced

MCEC recently awarded 15 grants to area schoolteachers. They were each awarded a \$500 Touchstone Empowerment grant for school projects that improve the learning environment or increase educational resources for the school. Below are the winning submissions and schools represented for years 2020/2021.

Teacher	School	Project
Jenny Vise	Waterloo Jr.	Making Christmas Circuit Cards
Sue Lewis	Imm. Conception, Col.	Chrome Books
Chris Thompson	Zahnow Grade	Fine Motor Skill Lessons
Karen Gale	Freeburg Primary	Document Camera/Ipod
Julie Lewis	Red Bud High	Balances & Bioplastics
Brad Keim	Waterloo High	Art Digital Program
Emily Brutton	Valmeyer High	Live Stream Camera
David Schauer	Gibault High	Smartboard/Projector
Nat Wesbecher	Freeburg High	Novels
Tony Meyer	New Athens Grade	Smart Weather Station-Stem
Betty Schmitz	St. John Lutheran, R.b.	Hover Cam
Matt Fisher	Red Bud Grade	Metronomes
Patti Kenetsk	St. James, Millstadt	We Do Z Curriculum
Teresa Fehrenz	Columbia Middle	Led Lighted Microscopes
William Pitts	Columbia Middle	3D Printer

Monitor your hourly energy usage



If you receive electricity from Monroe County Electric, you can access your usage data online! As your electric co-op, we're here to help you use energy wisely, and SmartHub is a great way to track your usage, down to the hour.

Getting Started

Go to [www.mcec.org](#) and go to the SmartHub icon. If you're an eBill account user, click the "Account Log-in" link along the top and enter your username and password. If you are not an eBill account user, select the "New User" link at the bottom. You will need your account number from your bill to sign up. Once you're logged in, click the "Usage" text link at the bottom to access your usage history.

You can view your electric consumption by month, day or hour. You can even overlay temperature data to see how the weather impacts your heating and cooling costs.

For more information

Call us at 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433 and speak to a member service representative during normal business hours. (7 a.m. – 4 p.m.)



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

What is the most important duty of a director?

In general, the number one priority of any director is to keep themselves informed and act prudently in serving the needs of your fellow member-owners. The single most important duty is to hire the most qualified person to fill the role of president/CEO and then advise and support him/her in the management of the cooperative.

What has surprised you most about serving as a director?

I had not envisioned the management team being so humble and transparent in their everyday relationships with the membership. I had not envisioned the family type atmosphere of our co-op and the resulting total commitment all the employees and directors alike have in serving every member equally. I was soon to realize that this was not unique to MCEC but was the same throughout electric co-ops nationwide.

What is your projection of the future for the cooperative?

Positive-positive-positive!

- 1) MCEC has always efficiently adapted to changing technologies and needs of their members.
- 2) MCEC is well positioned for the future with great leadership and solid financials.
- 3) Value, reliability and service continue to be the hallmark of MCEC commitment to its members.
- 4) Employees, directors and our co-op itself are all deeply involved in our local communities.

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

My parent's simple everyday lives laid-out a great pathway for me to attempt to follow. Family and friends were a major part of their lives. Both were very active and took on leadership roles in our school, church and community. They also respected each other and were a great team with strong work ethics. They always had a sharp eye towards the future which in part continually drove them to stretch their limits and take on new and challenging endeavors.



How do you like to spend your free time?

Not surprisingly, being a retired farmer, I am an outdoor person and unless it's too brutal my day is not complete if I haven't spent some time outside. The best of those days involves using a much smaller and safer version of my past farm equipment. However, our real joy as any grandparent will say are our grandkids. LouAnn and I have eight grandkids and six live only a few miles away. They come out often, and most times it involves some competitive sports activity. I'm almost always asked and admittedly enjoy being an active participant in most everything they do for as long as I can last.

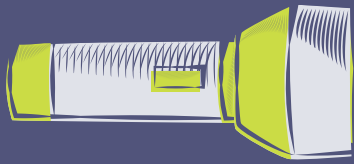


Stay Comfortable.

Space heating and cooling account for a large portion of the average home's energy use. A programmable or smart thermostat can help you control the temperature of your home and save energy.

Photo Credit: Consumers Energy

POWER OUT?



22 WAYS TO UNPLUG

If you are trying to keep yourself (or others) entertained during a power outage, save the battery power on your phones and other electronics for emergencies or weather updates, and consider some of these “unplugged” activities instead:

FUN FOR KIDS



Read a book



Play board or card games



Look at old photos



Tell ghost stories



Make shadow figures



Make a fort out of boxes and blankets



Sing your favorite songs



Play Simon Says

GET CREATIVE



- Write a story.
- Make up jokes.
- Draw or paint a picture.
- Set up an indoor bowling alley with plastic cups as pins.
- Fix something around the house.

PRACTICE SELF CARE



- Take a nap.
- Paint your nails.
- Go for a run or hike.
- Check in on your neighbors.
- Practice a skill, such as a second language, sewing, knitting, or tying knots.

AROUND THE HOUSE



Clean and organize your house



Rearrange your furniture



Fold laundry or organize your closet



Plant seeds or tidy up your yard

Safe Electricity.org®

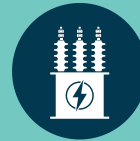
STAYING SAFE DURING AN OUTAGE

We work hard to provide the most reliable service possible. Rest assured, if the power is out, we are on it!

The length of time it takes to restore your power depends on several factors, including the:



Extent of the storm's destruction



Severity of utility equipment damage



Number and extent of outages



Accessibility to damaged equipment

STAY SAFE UNTIL POWER IS RESTORED

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines, which could be live and deadly.
- If you come across a downed line, immediately call 9-1-1 to report it.
- Never enter a flooded room; the water could be energized.
- If you are standing in water, do not turn on/off power or flip a switch.



Prepare for a storm by gathering these items:



Bottles of water



Non-perishable food



Prescriptions



Battery-operated radio

Flashlights



Extra batteries



Pet supplies



Warm clothing



First-aid kit

Hand sanitizer

THANK YOU for your patience during outages. When the lights go off, we are working safely and efficiently to restore power. The safety of our employees, as well as those we serve, is our TOP priority.

Safe Electricity.org®