

# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

## President's update

Looking back at my update from 2020, it seems so long ago and not much has changed for MCEC. We have worked to “keep the lights on,” providing

service to our members. Some of the restrictions have been eased, but we are still trying to remain diligent in keeping our workforce healthy. Our employees have, over the course of the last 12 months, remained ready and able to work. We did have about three occasions where we had employees on quarantine, but it did not slow down or stop work from being done. We did have conversations with neighboring co-ops regarding helping each other out if needed to cover for employees recovering from COVID-19.

I want to thank the board of directors for stepping up to allocate funds to help us work remotely. Once the fiber was installed to the office by HTC, we needed to upgrade our phone system so it would enable us to have the option of working remotely with the inside employees. With the help of HTC, we accomplished this in late summer/early fall. This has proven to be quite helpful as we utilized this in the middle of February 2021 when our

area experienced the 10-inch snowfall and extreme cold temps. I appreciate the can-do attitude of our workforce and their resolve to not let the membership down.

The outside crews have been busy, non-stop it seems since March 2020. Last year was one of our busiest years with over 30 more new services than in 2019. Our biggest concern is the availability of material. Lead times for delivery of material have stretched out to lengths we have not experienced before. We are making sure we are watching our inventory stock levels closely so we can continue to meet the needs for new services, line maintenance and storms, if we have them.

With the unfortunate event of the pandemic last year, MCEC postponed the annual meeting that was to be held in June. We attempted to hold it in October but with the advice of our attorney and the restrictions that the state of Illinois had in place, we canceled the meeting for 2020. We have planned to have our annual meeting on Oct. 2, 2021. We truly hope that by that time of the year, most people will have had a chance to receive a vaccination. We also hope the state of Illinois will be in phase 5 with no restrictions and MCEC can hold our meeting to conduct the business needed to elect directors and engage with the membership again.

I would like to address the re-opening of the lobby at some point in time. Currently we are keeping the lobby closed and will do so until the vaccinations are available to all without age limitations. We are still having deliveries of material and other items left at the shipping dock and limiting contact with those individuals. We do have some employees with underlying health issues, and we need to maintain a healthy workforce to meet your needs.

We are having a couple of retirements at the end of 2021. Allan Masterson, Director of Member Services and Shirley Reinhold, Office Administration Coordinator are both leaving MCEC later this year.

**Last year was one of our busiest years with over 30 more new services than in 2019.**

We will miss them, but this brings an opportunity for us to hire some new employees. If you have not seen our advertisements, be sure

to look for them on our website. This may be a new career opportunity for someone.

Lastly, I hope you and your family are well and are having a good start to 2021. I look forward to the time we can return to normal for our everyday lives and get back to enjoying the day-to-day human interaction that we all miss.

God Bless, stay healthy and have a great spring and summer 2021.



# 15

## \$500 scholarships

*available to high school seniors who are sons or daughters of cooperative members.*

Application is available online at [mcec.org](http://mcec.org).  
Apply by May 28, 2021.

Watch for a



**Member Meeting Update  
in early June!**

# Lineman Jay Krump retires

Jay Krump, a lineman for your cooperative, retired effective March 12 of this year.

Jay (Jaybird) started employment at the cooperative in April 2006. His previous employer was the city of Waterloo where he served in the same capacity as a lineman for 13 years. Before that, Jay was employed with Don's Electric of Waterloo as an electrician for 5 years. His first job was with the old Gross Lumber in Waterloo where he worked for 11 years and started when he was 16 years old.

Jay was a volunteer on the Waterloo Fire Department for more than 24 years, retiring in 2009 as a captain. He also served as an assistant fire chief for 4 years during that period.

Jay is married to his wife, Karen. He has a son and a daughter, along with a stepson, two stepdaughters, five step granddaughters and two step grandsons.

"This will be a big transition from a work life to a retirement life. I will miss all my old co-workers because spending so much time with them day-to-day, they become family to you," Jay said. "I really look forward to spending more time with my wife, children and grandchildren."

In retirement, he plans to do more traveling with his family, which includes camping, hunting and fishing. Jay also enjoys woodworking as a hobby and will have more time now for his projects.



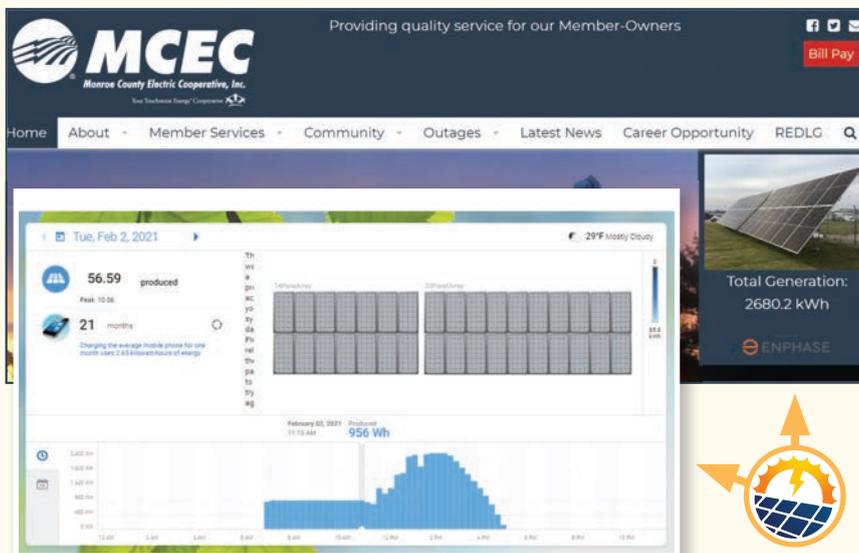
We will miss Jay's easy-going smile and general good nature and laugh here at the office, but we also want to wish him the very best in his retirement!

## Check out our solar panel output at [mcec.org](http://mcec.org)

On Feb. 2 of this year, our solar panels were installed/connected and are generating electricity to our cooperative headquarters. The 10 kV array consists of two panel sets; one being a 14-panel array and the second is a 20-panel for a total of just more than 10 kVA of metered output.

Over the last several years, we have gotten many questions on solar and if it is a good investment for the members to help them offset the cost of traditionally delivered electricity. Are there still tax incentives? Are there still credits available? How big of an array should I have put up? Do I get paid back for any electric I generate over what I use, and if so, how much per kilowatt hour? Does it generate at all if it's cloudy? How much maintenance is required and how long do they last?

Our 10 kV array is a common size to what most houses would have installed.



If you are interested in knowing what our system is generating on a daily basis, we have linked the generation totals to our website homepage at [mcec.org](http://mcec.org), where a link shows up on the right side. Click that link and it will take you to the generation accumulation page that illustrates current and historical hourly/daily totals.

Any member interested in having a solar panel system installed is encouraged

to click on the "Member Services" tab on our website and select "Solar Installation Information" at the bottom. This will give you valuable information about PV (Photovoltaic) systems, along with a copy of our "Interconnection Policies" (bottom of page). We are here to help you should you choose to have a PV system installed safely. For any questions, you can email [kjones@mcec.org](mailto:kjones@mcec.org).

## MCEC line outages March 2021

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
3/24/21	2:28	6	Regtown Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults
3/28/21	3:39	77	D Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Columbia



## Meet your board members

### Gary Gregson

#### What is the most important duty of a director?

As a director, it is our fiduciary responsibility to take advantage of our opportunity to further educate ourselves in the electric industry. With this knowledge it is our responsibility to guide the cooperative in a safe and efficient direction.

#### What has surprised you the most about serving as a director?

I would say how impressed I have been with the strong moral values of co-op leadership. I never realized how our co-op and electric co-ops in general felt so strongly about their community and serving their members (owners) of the co-op.

#### What is your projection of the future for the cooperative?

I feel the co-op has many governmental regulations that will be challenging, but I feel confident the leadership will continue to make good decisions and the co-op will continue to provide our members (owners) with the excellent service they deserve.

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

Contrary to being asked this question 40 years ago, I must say my parents. My parents taught me real life values which helps guide you through life whatever path you choose.

#### How do you like to spend your free time?

I enjoy spending time with family. I recently became a grandfather for the first time and so far, I would consider it to be the highlight of my day.



### Follow Us

What are you missing on Facebook?

- Power outage information & restoration
- Electrical safety reminders & tips
- Learn more about the people behind your power
- Updates on weather, storms & things that impact the power grid
- Energy saving tips & ways to save money
- What's new at your co-op & much more



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

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

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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

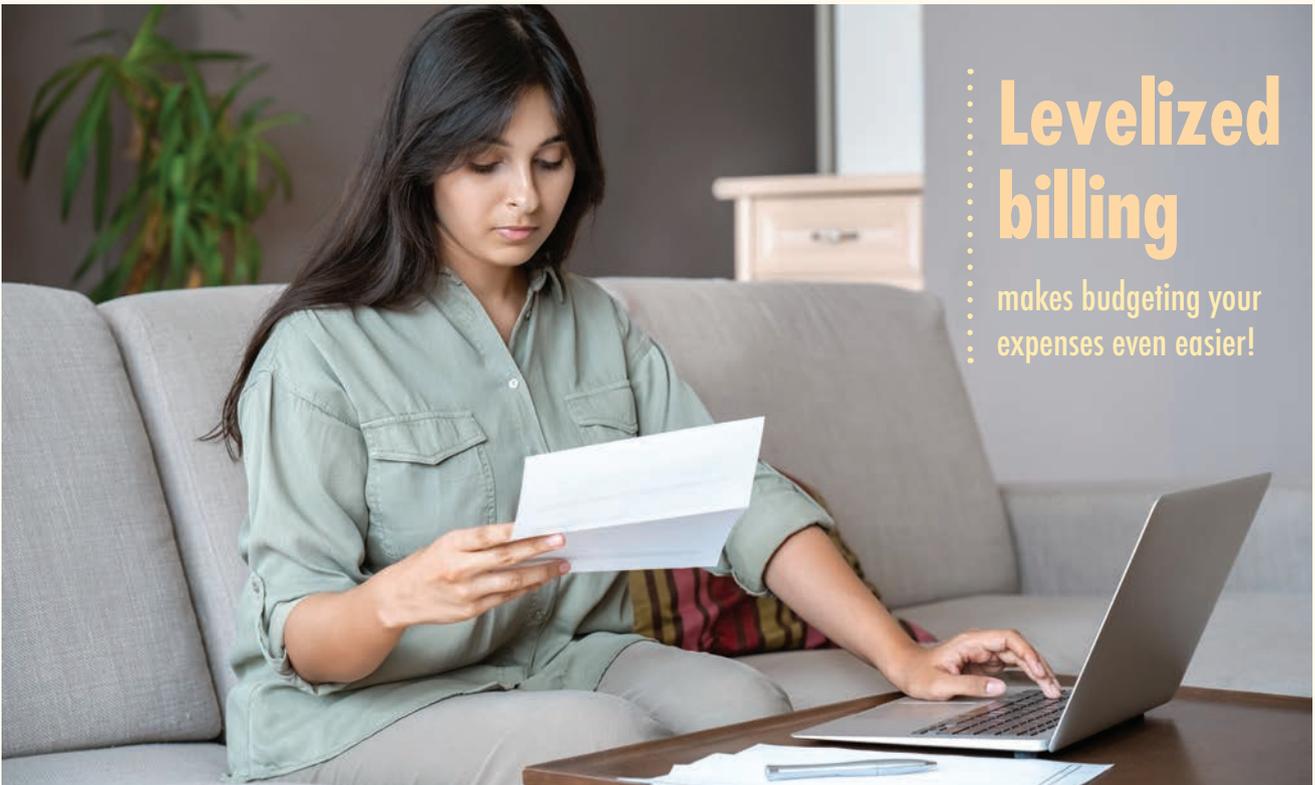
Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat.

The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.



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





## Levelized billing

makes budgeting your  
expenses even easier!

Levelized billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play “catch-up” at the end of the year. The program is designed to keep your electric bills consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan. It’s the ideal way to accurately anticipate your monthly electric bill, which makes budgeting your expenses even easier.

With levelized billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a “rolling average” of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher. Our levelized billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 12 months of service history.

Members can deactivate the levelized billing program at any time by contacting our billing department. If a member on levelized billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

For more information on levelized billing or other billing related questions, please contact us at 800-757-7433.



### New Phone Number?

Help us keep our records up to date

If you have changed your phone number or disconnected your landline phone and are now using a cell phone number, Monroe County Electric Cooperative would like for you to help us keep our records updated.

Check your latest bill stub to see which number(s) are currently linked to your account. To update your phone number(s), simply call us at 800-757-7433, email us at [mcec@mcec.org](mailto:mcec@mcec.org), or correct the info on your next bill stub. We can record up to three numbers to

associate with your account, including cell phones. We won't sell or share your contact information with anyone else.

By having your current phone number(s) on file, it will also help our automated system to work more efficiently with auto-calls. Periodically, we send out auto calls to alert members of a planned outage or activity we want the membership to be aware of ahead of time. If we don't have valid numbers, the message does not get through to you.

# Save the Date!

**2021 ANNUAL MEETING  
DATE SET FOR SATURDAY,  
OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>**

*Correction to the "Steve Candler, longtime cooperative employee, passes" story that appeared in the April 2021 issue: Steve and his wife Anne have nine grandchildren, not seven.*