

Menard Electric Cooperative's

# Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

[www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com)

## THANK YOU - You gave us our highest score yet!

**W**e would like to thank all those members who completed the random survey we conducted earlier this year. We appreciate your feedback and find the information valuable as we assess how we are currently performing, where we can improve, and what programs we can implement in the future to benefit our membership as a whole.

The survey was conducted in part to determine member satisfaction, perceptions about our performance, and members' attitudes regarding energy efficiency, technology use and communications.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is an indicator that measures satisfaction of consumers across the United States. It

provides us with a good benchmark on how we are performing compared to other utilities. We achieved an ACSI score of 85! That is our highest score to date, up from 80 on our last survey in 2013.

This year's score of 85 was well above the average scores of Touchstone Energy cooperatives (80), investor-owned utilities (74) and municipals (73).

Your employees and board members take great pride in working to provide you with excellent customer service. We were happy to see that our ACSI score has improved and were pleased to find that we had higher ratings in all of the top attributes for satisfaction than in 2013. Some of the areas in which we were given excellent marks included knowledgeable and competent

employees, employee performance, prompt outage response, reliable electricity with few outages, and providing excellent customer service.

We'll continue to work hard to provide you with great customer service. We want you to know that we took all of the responses seriously and the board of directors and employees went over all the survey results and the comments provided. We heard you, we identified a few areas we could continue to improve on, and we are making efforts now to do so.

Remember, as a cooperative, we are owned and democratically controlled by our membership. And that is something we are very thankful for! Learn more about what makes us unique at our website [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com).

## Lineman's rodeo

**L**eadman Jeremy Willis and Apprentice Linemen Levi Vogt and Stormy Hild won the Mystery Line Lift Event at the 19th annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo. They competed with linemen from other Illinois co-ops in events that emphasized speed, accuracy, and above all, safe work practices. Events included a hurt man rescue, H-structure obstacle course, mystery underground event, and a 30-foot climb with a raw egg in their mouth.



## Veteran's Day

# From submariner to lineman

Area Serviceman Robb Hanner shares some similarities of his service in the U.S. Navy and his work at Menard Electric.

I joined the Navy in 1988 and was a torpedoman on the USS Chicago, a fast attack submarine. I gained a working knowledge of every part of the complex array of systems on a submarine from the high pressure air systems to a nuclear reactor.

The qualifications required to become a full fledged submariner were extremely difficult, but that is not unlike learning how to switch out a substation or work with high voltage electrical lines.

While in the Navy, our submarine just arrived into port after an extended deployment in the Western Pacific when the weapons department was called back and we immediately got underway for Operation Desert Storm. As linemen we sometimes get done with a storm in our territory and are called to help out another co-op. We load up and get going. In both jobs we know there are people that need help and we jump at the chance to help out.

In the Navy, and as a lineman, the hours are sometimes long and at times it is tough to stay focused, but in both jobs there are lives on the line and one mistake can cost lives.

Because of that there is a brotherhood in the co-op culture that is a lot like the military. The linemen I work with every day care for each other, watch each other's backs, and worry about each other, very much like we did in the military. An electric co-op has that same family value that you learn to have in the military.

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## \$2,000 Scholarships

- **9 College Scholarships**

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

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



- **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, or who have served/are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard.



www.menard.com - for information and applications. No Internet? Call Michelle at the office at 800-872-1203.

## Let your voice be heard

*www.vote.coop encourages co-op members to vote*

Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline – with the occasional uptick here and there. Illinois saw a 2016 primary election voter turnout of 38.9 percent, which leaves a large number of voters who aren't making their voices heard.

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we

PROUD 5-STAR ELECTRIC CO-OP



may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

America's electric cooperatives are doing our part by informing members through Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November.

Visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) to learn about your candidates, access voter registration information and more.

**Our office will be closed Nov. 11 for Veterans Day, and Nov. 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving.**



# Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or contact our office.

Present were Directors Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate and Steven Worner. Also Manager Eric Hobbie, Attorney Charles Smith and Director of Member Services Trish Michels.

Approved new policy entitled Sick Leave, Attendance Monitoring Policy and Bereavement.

Michels presented ACSI Report. She presented 2017 NRECA Health Insurance and R&S Rates; she advised the co-op should not see much of a premium expense change.

IBEW Contract approved.

NRECA 401k Pension Loan Option & Adoption Agreement approved.

Wholesale Power Contract approved and adopted as amended.

Approved \$1,000 donation to the Association of Louisiana Cooperatives Relief Fund for flood relief for co-op employees.

Hobbie reviewed balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, irrigation load control project, and work done by co-op crews.

Hobbie advised that he did not believe the co-op was required to comply with Limited English Proficiency Program requirements. The program would have required the co-op to have information available in Spanish.

He discussed upcoming CoBank director election.

He stated that per previous discussions the annual employee and board Christmas party would be changed from an evening event to a lunch provided at the co-op.

He advised Aaron Stallings would

present the KRITA review at next month's meeting.

Hobbie presented the financial report for the month of July. Year to date margins were \$2,133,718 compared to \$1,422,428 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of July was 38.59% and the number of member accounts served was 10,851 compared to 10,796 a year ago. Net utility plant at the end of July was \$44,813,676 compared to \$43,561,957 last year. The cooperative continue to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Goetsch reported on AIEC activities.

Martin reported on Prairie Power, Inc. energy charge and status of Prairie State.

## Tip of the Month

### Lighting

As daylight savings time ends outdoor lights come on earlier and run longer. To save energy, utilize motion sensors or timers as appropriate and consider LED lights.

## LIHEAP program

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may be able to help pay your electric bill. Contact your local office as soon as possible to see if you qualify to receive benefits.

- **Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)**  
[www.capcil.info](http://www.capcil.info); Logan County-217-732-2159;  
 Mason County-309-543-6988; Menard County-217-632-3878
- **Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.**  
 217-428-2193; [www.dmcoc.org](http://www.dmcoc.org)
- **MCS Community Services** (Cass & Morgan County)  
 217-243-9404; [www.morgancounty-il.com](http://www.morgancounty-il.com)
- **Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources**  
 217-535-3120; [www.co.sangamon.il.us](http://www.co.sangamon.il.us)
- **Tazwood Community Service, Inc.** (Tazewell County)  
 309-694-4391; [www.tazwoodscs.org](http://www.tazwoodscs.org)

