

## Wind and tornado destruction

*Restoration of power timeline after Dec. 10 storm*

Jeremy Willis



Jeremy Willis



Dalton Whitley

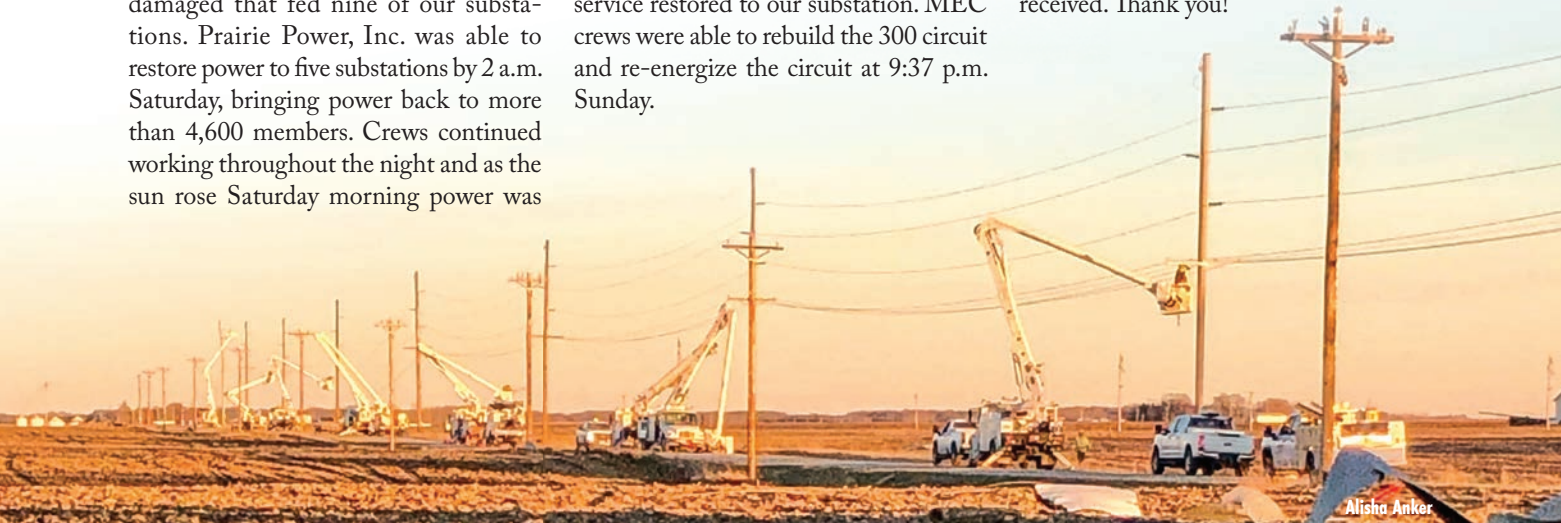
A severe storm featuring strong winds and tornadoes entered our territory shortly after 7:30 p.m. Dec. 10, 2021, just northeast of the Virginia area and moved quickly across our service territory, leaving downed lines and poles in its path of destruction.

Outages rolled in as poles and wires were flattened; more than 6,000 of our 10,000-plus accounts were out of service as transmission lines and poles were damaged that fed nine of our substations. Prairie Power, Inc. was able to restore power to five substations by 2 a.m. Saturday, bringing power back to more than 4,600 members. Crews continued working throughout the night and as the sun rose Saturday morning power was

restored to an additional 700 members, leaving about 700 still without service.

Crews from Adams Electric Cooperative and L.E. Myers assisted our linemen in repairing broken poles and lines to individual services and along distribution lines that incredibly windy Saturday. Outage numbers continued to lower but total restoration was delayed for some members in the Virginia area until transmission lines could be repaired and service restored to our substation. MEC crews were able to rebuild the 300 circuit and re-energize the circuit at 9:37 p.m. Sunday.

Even after outages were restored, our linemen continued working into the next week to make permanent repairs and replace broken poles. It is not a storm our employees, or members, will soon forget. We are incredibly thankful for the continued patience of our members as crews worked through difficult conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. We appreciate the many positive comments and thank you messages we received. Thank you!



Alisha Anker

# Little Free Libraries Project

**“The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.”**

**– Albert Einstein**

Little Free Libraries is the world’s largest book sharing movement. They are small structures filled with books and placed in public areas; readers are free to take and leave books as desired. We love the cooperative nature of these libraries and know that they are as good as community members make them as they take what they like and share what they can.

Our employees worked cooperatively to give back to four of our local communities by designing, building, installing and filling Little Free Libraries in the villages of Middletown, New Holland and Oakford and just outside our office in Petersburg.

Installed in October the boxes have already seen good use by all ages, and we hope that continues for years to come. There’s no better time to look for a Little Free Library near you to chase away cabin fever this winter. Locate the boxes we’ve built or visit the website [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org) to view a map and find a library near you.



**Oakford:** At the town hall on 100 W Center Street

Built by Area Serviceman Matt Wassell with Dispatcher Alycia Clifton, Billing Clerk Kim Kyes and her daughter Sophie Atterberry.



**New Holland:** Across from the town hall on Lincoln Street beside the community bulletin board.

Built by Forester Ross Cloninger and Engineering Technician Dave Groth with the rest of the Engineering Department.



**Petersburg:** At our office on 14300 IL State Hwy 97

Built by General Manager Alisha Anker and member Tim Brown.



**Middletown:** At the town hall on the corner of Clinton and 7th Streets

Built by Accountant Julie Atwater and her father Bud Burnett with Director of Member Services Trish Michels.

## Chris Hinton retires

As he approached the receipt of his accounting degree from Sangamon State University in 1982, Chris Hinton spied an ad in his local paper for an Accountant at Menard Electric Cooperative. He applied and began working at the co-op in May 1982, pausing school a couple months before going back to finalize his degree.

That was nearly 40 years ago. Now the Manager of Accounting and Information Systems, Chris has been “keeping the books” for Menard Electric ever since. “When I started everything was a manual process of course - there were no PCs. Some functions were done on an old IBM with a punch card,” he says. “We have converted everything over time.”

Some of the duties of the Accounting Department include performance reporting, yearly audits, tax payments, rate design, large power account billings, managing the debt portfolio and liquidity, and year-end reporting, as well as paying the co-op’s bills and managing day-to-day finances.

When asked for other examples of changes over the years Chris says, “I think it is notable that the level of professionalism of our employees in every



department has continued to grow over the years with advanced degrees and certifications and training.” Having confidence in the co-workers who succeed him helped to make the decision of retirement a bit less stressful.

“In my first weeks at Menard Electric almost 5 years ago, Chris was very forthright in his assertion to provide the cooperative adequate notice of his intention to retire,” says General Manager Alisha Anker. “He did so in the spring of last year, and I would like to thank him for that publicly as it speaks

to the stewardship Chris has shown for this Cooperative his entire career. The members’ interests have been well-guided and guarded due to his diligent financial oversight.”

You will likely find Chris hunting rabbits with his beagles, enjoying the quiet of a deer stand, logging miles on his bicycle, improving his billiards game, soaking up a good book or playing the piano. We are confident that however he chooses to spend each day, he will make good use of and enjoy his time.

### Kilo Watt Korner




My fondest memories of visiting Grandma and Grandpa as a kid are flooded with the old radio Grandpa had playing in the shop as he tinkered on some gear thingy or engine part. I remember Grandma yelling from the kitchen, “Turn that thing off, we aren’t made of money!” Yet, the tunes would play day in and day out, regardless of Grandpa’s presence.

Playing the radio is just what you do in a shop or garage – at least that’s what we do here at the cooperative, just like Grandpa. Our mechanic’s “radio” of choice is an Aomais Go model equipped with Bluetooth (BT) speakers and a USB connector. He connects to it from Bluetooth devices – iPad or mobile phone, and

provides a variety of tunes all day from favorite apps such as Pandora and Amazon Music. In reality, this device is simply a BT speaker, but it pulls the same energy as a radio – ranging throughout the test month from a high of 2.0 watts/hr to 8.4 watts/hr. I’d like to think the energy-use variance depends on the popularity of the song, but more accurately, the volume at which the music is being played drives the power requirement.

So, the question becomes, what would Grandma say today about this “radio” playing day in and day out? Not to worry, Grandma. This device only pulled 1,205 watt-hours during the month, \$1.75/yr cost.

**Korner Recommendation:** Play that radio and dance like no one’s watching!

# Board highlights

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

## October 26, 2021

- All Directors present, also General Manager Alisha Anker, Attorney Charles Smith, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton & Director of Accounting & Finance Brian Hartsock.
- Co-op Staff presented 2022 Budgets.
- Anker reviewed monthly & YTD financial operating report, balance sheet & financial trends. Operating margins YTD as of 9/30 were \$2,310,299 compared to \$1,471,993 last year; equity at 44.83%; 12-mo TIER 3.81 & DSC 2.05.
- Anker presented Member Svcs report w/308 cutoff tickets generated; \$1,588.18 in write-offs. Reviewed Operations report w/53 incidents, longest outage of 282 minutes caused by transformer affecting 1 member; largest outage 176 members due to car accident.
- Resolution passed effective 1/1/22 to amend 125 Plan to provide for IRS code index of carryover balances.
- Next mtg 11/23/21.

# NEW!

Now you can choose to automatically pay with a Credit Card or your Checking Account each month.



## Pay the easy way!

Eliminate the worry of mail delays or forgetting to pay online by paying your bill automatically through your bank account or **credit card** on the 10th, 17th or 24th of each month.

Sign up on the back of your bill stub or download the form at [menard.com/waystopay](http://menard.com/waystopay)

You will still receive a bill each month telling you the amount to be deducted on your chosen date. To pay a consistent amount each month combine this option with our Budget *Wise* program. Sign up online to receive email notification when your bill is ready and to select paperless billing if desired.



## 2022 Youth to Washington Scholarship Program

- One \$1,000 scholarship to a 4-year college or university
- One \$500 scholarship to a 2-year community college
- One \$500 scholarship to an accredited technical school
- One winner selected from among scholarship winners for an additional all-expenses paid trip on the Youth to Washington Tour June 17-24, 2022.

- Applicants must be a high school senior or equivalent, graduating during 2022.
- Applicant's parent/legal guardian must be a Menard Electric Cooperative member with their primary residence or business served by the cooperative.
- See more details and apply at [menard.com/scholarships](http://menard.com/scholarships)
- Applications available January 1st and deadline is March 1, 2022.