


MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Director petitions available now

Petitions are available now at the office for directors in the north, central and south board districts of Monroe County Electric Cooperative. Petitions must be signed by no less than 20 members from the district you have primary residence in and must be received in the co-op's office by 4 p.m. on April 1.

One co-op member will be elected from each district to serve a three-year term. See a map of the districts at mcec.org, and click on "About Us" and then "Board of Directors" at the top. We recommend that you call our office and have one of our employees check your district as well. Seeking re-election are incumbent directors Joel Harres of Columbia, north district; Gary Gregson, central district and Amy Hoffmann-Rohlfing of Fults, from the south district.

A good director must:

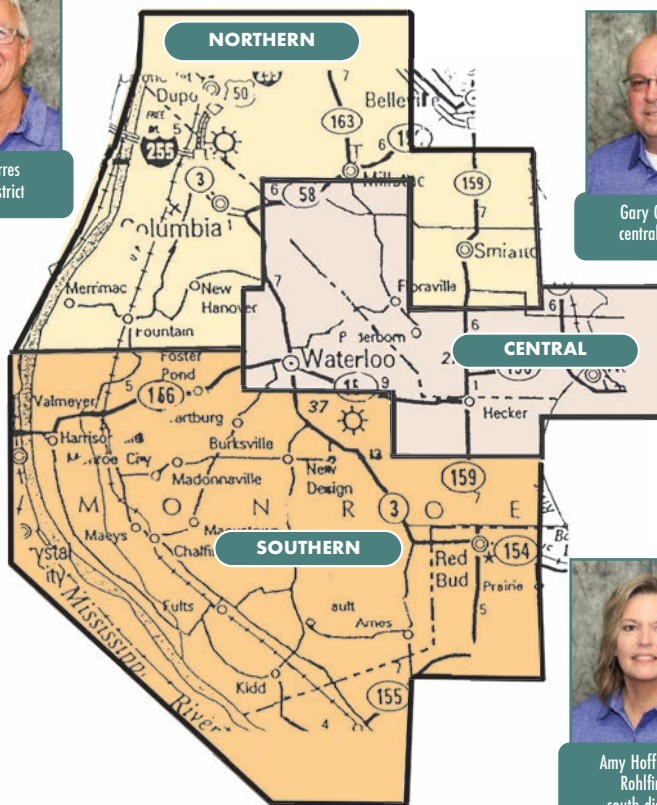
- Receive electric service from the co-op at their primary residence within the district, be a member in good standing, and not have conflicting business interests. (They pay the same rates for service and follow the same policies as all other members.)
- Be able to spend adequate time on board work and attend most regular board meetings held the fourth Tuesday morning each month for several hours at the co-op office.



Joel Harres
north district



Gary Gregson
central district



Amy Hoffmann
Rohlfing
south district

- Attend our annual meeting each year and other special board meetings, committee meetings, director's conferences and educational seminars as necessary.
- Be accessible to members within your district and willing to represent all members of the co-op.
- Acquire knowledge about the electric utility including

finances, management and public issues. (It takes time to learn the system and for that reason our directors have made long-term commitments to serving the co-op.)

- Establish policies and employ a general manager who is responsible for all operational details.

Additional details can be found in our bylaws.

Director Larry Kraft earns Director Gold Certificate

Recently, your board president, Larry Kraft, reached a milestone by achieving his Director Gold Certificate. Larry was presented with his certificate by Chairman Obernagel at the Jan. 26 board meeting.

Director Gold credential recognizes directors committed to continuing their education beyond the CCD (Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate) and BLC (Board Leadership Certificate) to improve their ability to serve as your directors.

Thank you, Larry, for your commitment to your cooperative and our members!



MCEC line outages January 2022

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
1/3/2022	0:12	1	Hoffman Ln	Small Animals Or Birds	Fults
1/9/2022	1:44	6	Hanover Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	North Waterloo
1/30/2022	2:44	116	IL Rt 156 East	Vehicles Or Machinery	Waterloo

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can impact the efficiency of your system.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Daylight Saving Time Begins March 13



www.mcec.org

6132 State Rt. 3 • P.O. Box 128 • Waterloo, Illinois 62298
618-939-7171 • 800-757-7433

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

Surge protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home. Let's look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere ... unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Like advice for a surge caused by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage – then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are two ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using

additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact Monroe County Electric Cooperative if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges.

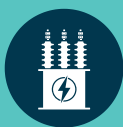
STAYING SAFE DURING AN OUTAGE

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



Portable phone charger



Prescriptions



Battery-operated radio

Flashlights



Extra batteries



Pet supplies



Blankets



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®



Smart tips for using space heaters and electric blankets

Many people turn to space heaters or electric blankets for added warmth in the winter. Safe Electricity reminds those who use space heaters and electric blankets to keep safety considerations in mind and use these devices with caution.

When buying a space heater or electric blanket, check for approved safety certification marks to verify that the product has been tested for safety. Look for a space heaters and electric blankets with safety features, including an automatic shut off. Be very cautious about buying used space heaters or electric blankets. They may not have up-to-date safety mechanisms. Your safety is worth the investment in a new heater or blanket.

Safe Electricity shares the following tips for using space heaters and electric blankets:

- Review and follow all manufacturer directions.
- Plug space heaters and electric blankets directly into outlets; avoid using an extension cord.
- Always remember to turn off space heaters and electric blankets when not in use. Never leave one of these devices on unattended or after going to bed.
- Many fires start when flammable products are placed too close to heating devices, such as space heaters. Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper, and other flammables.
- Place space heaters out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface — NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Be aware of pets and children near heating appliances. Pets should never be allowed to sleep on top of electric blankets.
- Keep space heaters and electric blankets away from water. If they become wet, do not turn them on to dry.
- Regularly examine cords to make sure there is no cracking or fraying. Do not use damaged appliances. Also inspect your electric blanket to ensure that it is not worn or damaged. It should not have any charred or dark areas. Replace old or damaged blankets.
- Store your electric blanket in a manner which avoids creasing. If it cannot be stored flat, loosely fold or roll the blanket in a cool, dry closet.

To learn more on how to avoid electrical hazards, visit SafeElectricity.org.