

Storm restoration



Alisha Anker
General Manager

We want to say thank you for the outpouring of support we received from our members during the storm that hit March 31, 2023. Our line crews appreciated all the kind words and messages we received. Here's a little information about what happened to our system

during that destructive night.

Just shortly after 5:30 p.m. the high winds, rain, hail and tornadic activity entered our service territory. The storm traveled at speeds as strong as 80 mph as it cut through our area. Outages came right away from Topeka, Virginia, Ashland, Tallula and Petersburg. At 5:50 p.m. we lost Ameren-owned transmission to our substations in Petersburg and Virginia for 14 minutes. Shortly thereafter Prairie Power Inc. (PPI)-owned transmission was lost to our Barclay and Lanesville substations until 7:57 p.m. Meanwhile our line crews progressed through our territory rebuilding portions of our line and restoring individual outages, working all through the night.

The north edge of Sherman at I-55 and Sudduth Road was hard hit by a tornado, and our members in that area were unable to have power restored that night. Three Ameren steel lattice transmission towers were twisted into piles, PPI's wooden transmission poles were snapped, and our underbuilt lines on those poles collapsed. This area was a tangle of metal, conductors and debris. All the utilities and contractors worked to rebuild the transmission system and our underbuilt line. Most members were restored Monday at 4 a.m. and the remaining few dozen at 6 p.m. that evening.



Country Road Relics

Member
Spotlight

Co-op member Debbie Heffner is the owner of Country Road Relics, a shop and seasonal greenhouse on her rural Athens property, that sells unique items curated and created by herself and dozens of others.

When asked what she sells, Debbie replies, “I simply say we have a little bit of this and a whole lot of that.” Due to the uniqueness of items and Debbie’s frequent display changes, customers are sure to discover a different store each visit. Visitors are sure to find antiques, vintage, farmhouse, furniture, plants, housewares, upscale resale, collectibles, jewelry, soaps, candles, honey and so much more.

“I’ve noticed that a lot of customers like to be able to stop in with a \$20 bill and leave with a little change. We have plenty of items in here for them to do that,” Debbie says. Customers appreciate the benefits of personal service and having the ability to support numerous individuals at one shop.

“I had the relics and acquired plants from a local greenhouse, but I knew the shop would need more,” she says. Debbie partners with individuals creating handmade items she feels will sell well in her shop. “Most of the vendor items are handmade. I know the challenges they face and wanted to be a place that supported individuals,” she says.

“Some places have monthly fees to rent space; I do not, I charge a small commission on each sale. Vendors set their own prices, and each has their own sales tax number and takes care of that themselves,” she says. It requires meticulous bookwork, but Debbie admits, “I’ve never minded that part of it. I always loved math.”

When Debbie speaks of the vendors in her shop it is easy to see how fond she is of them and how much she wants them to succeed. She can tell you about the teenage girl saving for college, a woman who enjoys her granddaughter’s help, a retired veteran who volunteers, a couple that just began their business, and so many more.

Most vendors live within Menard County, a few in other rural Illinois



counties, and just one from Missouri whom she worked with long before the store began. Some vendors may make just one item and others a selection of things. It would be impossible to guess how many pieces are in the shop; each is unique, some with a history and others with a story behind the artisan who created it.

The shop has its own story, too, of course, which began long before the doors opened in November 2020. It all began with a simple hobby restoring and painting furniture. When Debbie wanted to visit her son while he was stationed with the military, she decided to sell some furniture pieces to pay for the trip. That success soon turned into more, and in 2016 she became Chubby Chic Creations. Debbie found her time filled with traveling through Illinois and Missouri to primitive and upscale resale vendor fairs selling furniture pieces and relics.

“I enjoyed the vendor shows, but they were seasonal. In the winter I wanted somewhere to sell my items,” she says. She rented a booth at a store in Petersburg until it closed. The onset of Covid then eliminated vendor fairs and rental spaces, and Debbie thought the time may have come to liquidate her inventory.

But she’d always had a vision tucked away of owning her own place, and with her husband’s encouragement, she began looking for spaces. “It just wasn’t feasible to rent or buy anything at that time,” she says. “That’s when we started drilling other ideas.” Soon they had a new vision — to build a place on their own property. Opening a rural business wasn’t without its hurdles, but you can tell by the excitement and care Debbie shows when speaking of her customers and vendors that it has been an adventure worth taking.

Want to visit?

Country Road Relics is nestled in the countryside just two miles south of Athens at 24514 Digiovanna Ave. and is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday (and other days by appointment). Cash, check or credit/debit card with a 3% fee.

Vendor fairs are held each summer and fall. Christmas trees are sold in December. Visit www.facebook.com/countryroadrelics to see events and displays of items. Debbie can be reached at 217-971-0603.

Apply now for Sharing Success Grants opportunity

Each year we partner with CoBank to provide funding to local projects sponsored by eligible 501(c)(3) charities serving a public purpose in local communities within our service territory. These might include schools, government agencies, service/civic organizations, fairgrounds and many more. Funds were used last year to support a food pantry, purchase summer meals and school supplies for kids, and to help restore a public park.

Application and details are available at www.menard.com/sharingsuccess. Deadline to apply is June 4, 2023.



3 electrical safety tips

1. Install GFCI outlets in bathroom, kitchen and outdoor locations.
2. Do not overload electrical circuits by plugging too many devices into power strips or ignoring tripping breakers.
3. Ensure your pool pump is plugged into a GFCI outlet, long handled skimmers won't tangle with overhead lines, and everyone knows to never touch the pump, cord or other electric device when wet.

Visit our Facebook Page throughout May for more tips. #ElectricalSafetyMonth

Petitions due May 26 for director election

Our board of directors is made up of nine members, each representing a Director District and serving a three-year term. Three districts are up for election each year. This year those districts are:

District 3: Arenzville, Beardstown, Jacksonville, Virginia areas; Open Seat

District 7: Lincoln, Mason City, Middletown, New Holland areas; incumbent Michael Patrick is seeking re-election.

District 8: Athens, Elkhart, Sherman, Williamsville areas; incumbent Warren Goetsch is seeking re-election.

Members who reside in Districts 3, 7 and 8 may submit a petition for the director election by 4:30 p.m. on May 26, 2023. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting of Members July 12, 2023, at Athens Christian Church.

To run for director, please call our office at 800-872-103 or email info@menard.com to briefly discuss the election process and obtain a petition. Visit www.menard.com/board-directors for a district map.



We want to nominate veterans from within our co-op family for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend a No Barriers Expedition fully paid by CoBank. Find more details at www.menard.com/nobarriers.



JULY 12, 2023

SAVE
THE
DATE

ANNUAL MEETING OF
MEMBERS AT
ATHENS CHRISTIAN
CHURCH

Board highlights

For full minutes visit menard.com or contact the office.

February 28, 2023

- All Directors present except Steve Worner; also present Attorney Kim Smith & General Manager Alisha Anker.
- Staff joined to hear from new AIEC President & CEO Craig Sondgeroth.
- Director of Accounting & Finance Julie Atwater discussed 1099s issued by MEC.
- Approved Moraine Sands Wind Farm Station Power Agreement.
- Anker reviewed monthly & YTD financial operating report, balance sheet & financial trends. Operating margins as of 01/31 were \$1,312,208 compared to \$1,303,324 last year; equity at 42.77%; 12-mo TIER 2.61 & DSC 1.71. Reviewed Long Term Debt Maturity Schedules.
- Reviewed operations report w/35 incidents; longest duration outage 192 minutes affected 27 members due to equipment failure in cold snap; largest # affected by single outage 136 due to equipment failure recloser 1 hour.
- Safety report listed 1 lost time & 1 reportable incident.
- Irrigation build delays are possible due to supply chain difficulties.
- Approved moving June mtg to 6/29/23. Next Mtg 3/28/23 @ 8:00 a.m.

Uncashed capital credit checks

This is the final installment of names for capital credit checks sent to inactive members who had service in 1999 and 2000 that were not cashed.

If you know any of these members, have them contact us at info@menard.com or 800-872-1203. Active members with uncashed checks are not listed here and had the check amount applied to their March 2023 bill. March and April Connect issues contained additional names. The entire list can be found on our website at www.menard.com/capitalcredits.

Pagan, Richard M, Jacksonville
Palmer, Donald Ray, Manito
Paoli, Steven, Springfield
Parks, Rocky & Ruth, Pekin
Parlier, Christopher N, Virginia
Patrick, Alberta Eloise, Springfield
Pauza, Tim A & Mary, Marlton, NJ
Payne, Larry Howard, Pekin
Payne, Ronald L & Tammy, Springfield
Pearson, Terry Lynn, Pekin
Peddicord, William, Clinton
Penn, Denton M, Green Valley
Peterman, Terry A, Sherman
Peters, Cinda K, Illiopolis
Petro, Linda D, Lawndale
Pfeiffer, Scottie J, Pekin
Phillips, Juli S, Havana
Phillips, Marlane L, Taylorville
Phillips, Randy Lee, Athens
Pickrel, Douglas M, Auburn
Pierce, Dwight D, North Pekin
Pierceall, Charles L, Athens
Pinkham, Harold W, Mionke
Plut, John Marvin, Lincoln
Pogge, Mariann Trustee, Springfield
Poo, Louise E, Springfield
Potts, Kenneth L, Springfield
Potts, Stan E, Clinton
Poulsion, Warren G, Orem, UT
Pruehsner, Harold W, Springfield
R A Cullinan Inc, Tremont
Raley, Marjorie D, Sherman
Ratcliff, Michael A, Lincoln
Rector, Bobby Dean, Athens
Reed, Sandra A Nilhas, Winchester, KY
Reichart, Bernard, Springfield
Reif, Thomas Dale, Athens

Renken, J Weldon, Urbana
Richardson, Dusty E, Sherman
Richmond, Carl K Jr, Henning, TN
Rivera, Philip R, Draper, UT
Robbins, Randall P, Sherman
Roberts, Albert James, Riverton
Robertson, John A, Springfield
Roesch, Troy Allen, New Berlin
Rogers, Michael L, Decatur
Rohlen, Corinne F, Akron, OH
Rollins, Debra A, Denver, CO
Rominger, Roger K, Springfield
Roth, Sharon Ann, Springfield
Russell, Raymond David, Chillicothe
Russell, Raymond E, Ft Worth, TX
Sandoval, Joseph P, Springfield
Sargalski, Cam, Springfield
Schelinski, Thomas A & Lisa, Petersburg
Schermerhorn, Craig R, Venice, FL
Schnirring Farm, Springfield
Scogin, Allan Lee, Springfield
Scott, Edith Lorene, St Louis, MO
Sebolt, Frank A, Peoria
Sebring, Bettie, Springfield
Select Specialties, Springfield
Shanle, Charlene M, Dawson
Shanle, David D, Springfield
Shaw, Susan M, Athens
Shepherd, Virginia M, Topeka
Shields, Christine C, Dawson
Shinn, Scott L, Abingdon
Shipley, David J, Springfield
Shores, Roger Blaine, Springfield
Short, Francis Forrest, Venice, FL
Sidener, H Patricia, Edinberg
Simmons, James F, Wenona
Sipes, Mary Leona, Rochester

Skiles, Scott A, Murrayville
Smith, Andrew John, Springfield
Smith, Barbara E, Springfield
Smith, Donald Edw, Cantrall
Smith, Eric C, Sherman
Smith, Henry K & Brenda L, New Berlin
Smith, Jeffrey L, Virginia
Smith, Jeffrey Scott, Beason
Smith, Phillip Victor, Springfield
Smith, Terry Denoy, Virginia
Smith, William F, Springfield
Snodgrass, Herb L, Auburn
Snyder, Donald E, Phoenix, AZ
Soeken, Lori A, Champaign
Somers, John A, Petersburg
St Johns Lutheran Church, Mason City
Starr, David L, Pekin
Steinmetz, Ronald Joseph, Greenview
Stenzel, Anita L, Springfield
Stephens, Nancy Cornelius, Ashland
Stevens, Wayne Eugene, Pekin
Stewart, Melinda Marie, Sherman
Stoever, Eldon G, Lewis, IN
Stone, James D, Cookeville, TN
Stone, Richard L, Springfield
Stout, Janet L, Springfield
Strawn, Jess L, Pekin
Stuper, John Charles, Springfield
Suelter, Robert Eugene Sr, Peoria
Swingle, Pamela K, Atlanta, GA
Taft, Neil T, Rochester
Tega, Carl J, Springfield
Temple, Harold H, Douglas, WY
Theisen, Harold, Peoria
Thomas, Bruce David, Sherman
Thomas, Robbie Ray, Forest City

Thurman, Eldon G, Peoria
Tillman, Katharine M, Havana
Tom, Wesley F, Sherman
Tracy, Bertha E, Virginia
Tupy, Delbert K, Springfield
Turner, Barbara Jean, Alexander
Umphryes, Vern L, Hartsburg
Valasek, Michael Patrick, Springfield
Vance, Karen L, Topeka
VanMeter Family Farm, Neenah
Velez, Jose & Linda, Richmond Hill, GA
Venzon, Gene A Jr, Peoria
Vette, Mary L, Chandlerlerville
Vogel, David R, Manito
Wadsworth, Ronald J, Foley, AL
Walker, Jeff S, Aloha, OR
Walker, Justin Dale, Parker, CO
Wanless, Robert R, Riverton
Wanless, Robert T, Springfield
Watkins, Dennis Wayne, Williamsville
Watkins, Tisha Ann, Hurley, WI
Watson, Kenneth J, Springfield
Watt, Gregory A, Taylorville
WDBR, Radio, Springfield
Webster, Ernest, Taylorville
Welch, Clarence Russell, Rochester
Werries, Kevin Scott, Shawnee, KS
Weyant, Barbara J, Manito
Whalen, Michelle, Armstrong
Whipp, Wilfred A, Bartonville
White, Judy Kay, Taylorville
Wilcox, John D, Springfield
Wildt, Leslie, Arenzville
Williams, Loretta J, Springfield
Wilson, Jacqueline L, Houston, TX
Winning, Richard L, Cantrall
Wirtz, Elizabeth V, Springfield
Wombwell, Stephen Charles, Petersburg
Woodruff, Denise Louise, Godfrey
Wright, Charles D, Oshkosh, NE
Yackley, John A, Havana
Yarmat, Trena Denise, Springfield
Yoder, Jonathan D, Casselton, ND