



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Year and upcoming year in review

As we quickly approach the end of the year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on 2024. MCEC has had a very positive year financially through October, and we expect to finish on a strong note by Dec. 31. Both revenue and power costs have exceeded budget expectations, while expenses have tracked closely to what was projected. Our operating margins are set to improve over 2023, and overall margins remain healthy.

On the operational front, new service installations are down from 2023 levels. To offset this, our crews have completed multiple system improvement projects to enhance reliability for the future. Our tree crews continued to clear right-of-way, reducing potential outages, and fortunately, we didn't experience severe summer storms, which helped control outage-related expenses.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are preparing for what appears to be a steady year. SIPC has announced a rate increase and will finalize the transition to a fully coincident peak billing structure. We anticipate a 5% rate increase starting Jan. 1, 2025. To help mitigate this impact, MCEC will explore revenue deferrals and apply the ERTC credit we've received. These steps should help reduce most of the increase that we would otherwise need to pass on to you, our members.

SIPC is also developing a demand response program to help co-ops create member rates that allow greater control over monthly electric bills. We plan to introduce MCEC's incentive rates by the third quarter of 2025. Members may have a couple of rate options to consider. One possibility is a whole-home generator interruptible

rate, allowing members with backup generators to participate and earn benefits by helping to reduce peak load. Another option is a reintroduction of the time-of-use rate, specifically for members who can significantly reduce their usage during designated periods.

The new SIPC rate structure will eventually provide MCEC with more flexibility to manage load reductions, which could lead to lower power costs. How much we save depends on member participation. While we can make some system-wide adjustments, keeping costs down is a shared effort that benefits from each member's contribution.

As the holiday season approaches, we hope you enjoy time with family and friends. MCEC wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

from all of MCEC's employees, staff and directors.

Our office will be closed Dec. 25 for Christmas and Jan. 1 for New Year's.



Support area youth with a Christmas tree purchase from the Waterloo Optimist Club

The Waterloo Optimist Club will be selling Christmas trees at 725 N. Market St., Waterloo (across from the Rural King). The tree lot opens Saturday, Nov. 30. The types of trees for sale will be Fraser Fir, Scotch Pine and Balsam Fir.

The Waterloo Optimist Club is an organization committed to raising money for the benefit of the youth of our community. Please show your support by purchasing your Christmas tree from the Optimist Club tree lot and join us in helping our area youth.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products.

This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

Source: energystar.gov



Safety Tip

Lint buildup in your dryer can be a serious hazard, as it can easily catch fire if not cleaned regularly. By taking a few moments to clear out the lint trap before each use, you not only improve the efficiency of your dryer, but you also greatly reduce the risk of a potentially dangerous dryer fire.



Safe
Electricity.org®

MCEC line outages October 2024

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
10/02/24	0:33	8	Kern Rd	Unknown	Poe
10/10/24	0:55	2	Bluff Rd	Small animals or birds	Columbia
10/12/24	1:32	2	DD Rd	Small animals or birds	Columbia
10/13/24	1:04	7	Kropp Rd	Unknown	Millstadt
10/13/24	0:08	2	Ahne Rd	Other, faulty equipment	Waterloo
10/19/24	1:11	4	Forest Hill Lake Ln	Small animals or birds	E. Carondelet
10/20/24	1:02	16	MM Rd	Small animals or birds	Fults
10/20/24	1:21	9	Lakeview Hills	Vehicles or machinery	E. Carondelet
10/23/24	0:31	3	Sportsman Rd	Small animals or birds	Poe
10/29/24	0:23	6	G Rd	Other, faulty equipment	Poe



Keep your family safe and your holiday season merry with these fire safety tips

Cooking safety in the kitchen

The kitchen is often the heart of holiday celebrations, but it can also be a hot spot for fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for nearly 20% of holiday-related incidents. Here's how to stay safe.

- Never leave burners or the oven unattended. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies.
- Ensure children stay away from the kitchen, where hot appliances and sharp utensils can pose risks.
- Install smoke detectors at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances and test them monthly to ensure they're working.

Be aware of holiday fire risks

The combination of candles, fireplaces and flammable decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

Candle safety

- Only burn candles where you can keep an eye on them.
- Extinguish candles before going to bed, leaving the room or leaving the house.
- Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles, placing them out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep candles away from flammable items like trees, decorations, curtains and furniture.
- Opt for battery-operated candles near flammable objects.

Christmas tree fire prevention

A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.

- Choose a fresh tree. Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a sticky trunk bottom.
- Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, space heaters and vents.
- Check the water level daily to prevent the tree from drying out.
- Place the tree away from high-traffic areas and doorways.
- If using an artificial tree, ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.
- When discarding a real tree, place it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

Holiday lighting safety

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key.

- Purchase lights from reputable retailers and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.
- Only use lights designed for outdoor use when hanging outside.
- Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) for outdoor lights.
- Avoid water and snow when using extension cords and outdoor lights.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines while hanging lights.
- Check for broken sockets and frayed wires before use.
- Avoid plugging too many devices into a single outlet.

- Turn off indoor and outdoor decorations when going to bed or leaving the house.

Fireplace safety tips

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- Decorate wisely. Avoid hanging flammable decorations like stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.
- Perform annual maintenance. Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.
- Use a screen. Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.
- Burn responsibly. Never burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.

By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.



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.

HOLIDAY FUN WORD SEARCH

Can you find all the words associated with holiday fun in the puzzle below? Use the word bank to check your work.



WORD BANK

Jingle bells Santa Claus Snowman
Candy cane Mittens Hot Chocolate



N	H	C	H	P	B	D	H	S	V	G	Z	H	T	M
A	C	C	F	Z	Z	A	T	F	N	V	D	Q	Z	Y
M	H	L	V	Y	M	J	N	P	D	E	T	V	F	S
W	P	W	H	F	W	I	H	K	S	C	T	G	B	K
O	Z	K	D	Z	L	N	O	K	K	H	Q	T	C	F
N	F	I	O	U	R	G	T	F	C	L	P	E	I	L
S	S	V	S	U	A	L	C	A	T	N	A	S	C	M
Z	C	V	P	C	E	E	H	R	P	W	U	A	Z	Z
F	C	F	J	C	H	B	O	G	C	Y	N	G	V	E
G	M	V	X	D	L	E	C	V	N	D	T	S	F	W
Y	A	X	V	N	U	L	O	H	Y	V	C	L	U	A
H	G	V	L	L	X	L	L	C	M	J	M	C	I	U
P	J	Y	F	E	R	S	A	Q	E	Y	G	H	C	A
D	W	O	R	D	T	N	T	Y	H	X	Q	L	E	S
U	W	H	R	U	E	V	E	B	Y	B	F	L	W	R



Happy Holidays
from the Energy
Explorers!