

MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

86th Annual Meeting of Members



The heavy rain didn't stop Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) members from attending their 86th Annual Meeting of Members on Saturday, June 14. Members and guests gathered at MCEC headquarters to enjoy a catered breakfast, a petting zoo, activities for kids, and, most importantly, updates from leadership about the state of the electric cooperative.

Board Chairman George Obernagel called the business meeting to order. In his report, Obernagel discussed the potential challenges facing MCEC, focusing on legislative issues, policy and economic pressures. He

highlighted a proposed energy bill that could have imposed significant costs on co-ops. Through grassroots efforts and member engagement, they successfully pushed back against the bill.

"We helped save this all for the time being. It was the grassroots effort by Illinois' electric co-ops reaching out to members to contact their local legislators to voice their negative responses to the bill through Voices for Cooperative Power," Obernagel said.

President/CEO Alan Wattles provided an overview of MCEC's financial performance and operational strategies from 2024. He highlighted

the co-op's strong financial year, with increased operating margins, equity growth and a balance sheet increase of \$1.6 million.

"From a financial standpoint, 2024 was a good year," Wattles said. "Operating margins were up over 2023. We continued to grow our equity."

In addition, he emphasized the co-op's commitment to maintaining reliable, affordable electricity for its members. There are further plans for system reliability improvements, including new transmission tie lines and breaker systems.

Part of maintaining reliable electricity includes tree trimming. "I know it's not fun to have your trees trimmed," Wattles said. "But, in a storm situation, it's a benefit to keeping the lights on."

Wattles also thanked everyone who attended the annual event. "I've seen co-ops struggle to get members to show up and be able to conduct an annual business meeting," he said. "That's one thing about Monroe County Electric members. They support their co-op, and that's greatly appreciated. ... This is one of our largest crowds in many years, and that's great to see."

(Continued on page 18B)





MCEC Attorney Kurt Schroeder conducted the board of directors' election. Members voted to reelect Mike Kovarik, Northern District; Gary Gregson, Central District; and Amy Hoffman-Rohlfing, Southern District, to new 3-year terms.

All registered members received a \$25 bill credit. MCEC also gave away 18 \$500 scholarships to recent high school graduates who attended the annual meeting.

2025 Scholarship Recipients



- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Gavin Braun | Brady Karsten |
| Ava Stumpf | Aidan Sensel |
| Emma Stumpf | Luke Gilbert |
| Dylan Clasquin | Christopher Britton |
| Chance O'Saben | Chole Cowell |
| Samantha Stampfl | Gabriel James |
| Drew Elliot | Kyndee Easter |
| Riley McDermott | Evan Rapp |
| Zoe Lawler | Jack Roscow |

MCEC LINE OUTAGES June 2025

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
06/01/25	0:07	1027	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
06/02/25	0:46	475	Smithton East	Equipment	New Athens
06/03/25	1:04	2	Rt 3	Other, Faulty Equipment	Poe
06/06/25	1:25	86	Fults West	Other, Faulty Equipment	Fults
06/07/25	1:12	1224	Waterloo South, Red Bud West	Lightning	Poe
06/07/25	1:12	538	Fults Area	Lightning	Fults
06/08/25	1:24	5	B Rd	Lightning	Fountain
06/11/25	0:10	268	Rt 3	Unknown	Poe
06/23/25	1:07	21	Konarcik Rd	Unknown	Waterloo
06/23/25	1:22	16	Foley Park	Maintenance	Smithton
06/28/25	2:25	206	Fountain South	Other, Utilities	Fountain



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

School buses are among the safest vehicles on the road — but the greatest risk comes when children are getting on or off the bus. Whether you're a driver, parent or student, knowing these safety tips will help keep everyone safe.

FOR DRIVERS

- **Slow down:** Reduce speed in school zones and near bus stops.
- **Keep your distance:** Stay back at least 10 feet from a school bus — this is the most dangerous area for children.
- **Know the signals:**
 - Yellow flashing lights: bus is preparing to stop — slow down.
 - Red flashing lights + stop arm: bus is loading/unloading — stop and wait until the bus moves again.
 - Never pass a stopped bus on an undivided road — it's illegal in most states.
- **Stay alert:** Watch for kids who may unexpectedly enter the road, especially near bus stops.
- **Respect the zone:** When flashers are blinking in a school zone, stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and take extra care to look for children near playgrounds, parks and residential areas.

FOR PARENTS

Teach your child to arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early, and how to play it SAFE:

- Stay at least 10 feet — five giant steps — from the curb.
- Always wait for the bus to stop and the driver to signal before boarding.
- Face forward and buckle up if seat belts are available.
- Exit carefully, look both ways and cross in front of the bus — never behind. Make eye contact with the driver before crossing.

AS STUDENTS HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL, REMEMBER: A MOMENT OF CAUTION CAN PREVENT A LIFETIME OF REGRET.



Safety Tip

Keep plants and fences away from green transformer boxes — especially the padlocked side. Utility crews need at least 10 feet in front and 4 feet on the sides to work safely and quickly during outages. Keep a clear path to the transformer — even if it's in your yard, it's technically on an easement, and they still need access!



Safe Electricity.org



www.mcec.org

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Office hours:

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



Residential solar systems are becoming more attainable, and more homeowners are exploring solar systems as an additional energy source to power their homes. The amount of electricity produced by a solar system depends on several factors, including your home's sunlight exposure and the number of panels installed. In many cases, solar systems can generate an adequate amount of electricity to offset your monthly usage.

How does MCEC's net metering policy work?

MCEC offers a hybrid net metering program, which compensates members for excess production at a one-to-one ratio up to the break-even point. Production beyond the break-even point is bought back at MCEC's energy-only avoided cost.

There were a lot of words thrown around there, so let's break this down further. Many solar systems will produce more energy than the home can consume during midday hours; when this happens the meter keeps track of the excess energy production. The excess energy production is called "Received kWh" because MCEC is "Receiving" this energy from the home. On the contrary, when the solar system is not producing enough energy for the home, the home will consume energy from MCEC's grid. The meter also keeps track of energy the home consumes from the grid. This energy is called "Delivered kWh" because MCEC is "Delivering" energy to the home.

At the end of every month, we settle up by subtracting the "Received kWh" from the "Delivered kWh" — the difference is called "Net kWh." If "Net kWh" is positive, the member pays retail for the excess energy consumed. If "Net kWh" is negative, the member receives a credit for producing more energy than

consumed. The credit for excess energy produced is based on MCEC's energy-only power purchase cost.

While solar systems are the most popular renewable generation source for homeowners, it should be noted that net metering can also be applied to small-scale wind, hydroelectric, geothermal and biomass systems that generate electricity.

Who uses the excess energy produced by the solar system?

The excess energy produced by solar systems flows back onto the grid and is used by nearby MCEC members.

While generating electricity from the sun (and sending excess power back to the grid) is an exciting opportunity, it's important to thoroughly research the details before installing solar panels or any other type of small-scale renewable energy system.

MCEC members who install solar and participate in net metering will need to sign an interconnection agreement. Visit our website for more details at <https://mcec.org/solar-installation-information/>.

You should also work with a reputable solar vendor to ensure generation estimates are realistic and that your home is equipped for the system. Also, MCEC is here to answer any questions you have about installers or a quote.

It's important to note that net metering will not eliminate your energy bill. Even if you generate as much electricity as you use, you will continue to be billed for essential services such as grid access, service fees and other fixed costs that are necessary to maintain a safe and reliable system.

If you're interested in solar or would like to learn more about net metering, MCEC can help. By connecting with us first, you can gain a better understanding of the solar energy system, billing options and more.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Replace your cooling system's filter regularly to maintain strong airflow and boost energy efficiency. A clean filter means your system doesn't have to work as hard, saving energy and lowering your utility bills. Factors like allergies and pets in the home can impact how often filters should be replaced. Check the filter every month and replace it as needed. Changing filters regularly also reduces wear and tear on your cooling system, helping extend the life of the unit.

Source: energy.gov

