MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Scholarship Winner

Monroe County Electric Cooperative is proud to announce that Lillian "Lilly" Arnold of Columbia High School has been selected as one of 16 recipients of this year's Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship. Lilly is the daughter of Matthew and Elisha Arnold of Columbia, Ill.

Lilly was selected from a competitive pool of 278 applicants from across the state. Each year, 16 $3,000 scholarships are awarded to the children of electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

Lilly will be recognized during the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Annual Meeting on July 30, 2026, in East Peoria.

Scholarship recipients are evaluated based on academic achievement —including grade-point average and college entrance exam scores — as well as work and volunteer experience, school and community involvement, and a short essay demonstrating their understanding of electric cooperatives.

This fall, Lilly plans to attend the University of Notre Dame. Throughout her high school career, she has earned numerous honors, including the AP Scholar Award, National Top School Recognition, Seal of Biliteracy, Student of the Month and Soaring Eagle. She is also on track to graduate as class valedictorian.

MCEC is honored to have a scholarship recipient and is excited

to see how Lilly will represent our community in the future. Your future is bright!

MCEC line outages April 2026

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
04/05/26	1:16	8	Mule Rd	Unknown	E. Carondelet
04/16/26	2:58	7	Trappers Creek Dr	Trees, Other	New Athens
04/18/26	1:08	23	Jennys Way	Unknown	Smithton
04/18/26	1:49	5	Glauber Rd	Trees, Other	E. Carondelet
04/18/26	0:47	2	Old Beck Rd	Small Animals or Birds	New Athens
04/20/26	1:01	7	Trappers Creek Dr	Equipment	New Athens
04/23/26	0:26	847	Millstadt Area	Power Supplier	Millstadt
04/26/26	1:18	10	Lakeview Hills	Small Animals or Birds	E. Carondelet
04/27/26	0:00	1033	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
04/27/26	1:19	1033	Smithton Area	Power Supplier	Smithton
04/27/26	1:23	14	Triple Lakes Ln	Lightning	E. Carondelet
04/27/26	3:22	7	Triple Lakes Rd	Trees, Other	Millstadt
04/27/26	1:29	367	Wagner Rd/Imbs Station Rd	Trees, Other	E. Carondelet
04/27/26	1:42	3	Rt 3	Trees, Other	Poe

Work Safely Near Utility Lines

Whether you're running heavy equipment or using handheld tools, working outdoors can put you dangerously close to overhead and underground utility lines. A line strike can cause outages, fires, fines, serious injury or death.

Look up: Overhead power line safety

- **Survey the job site** each day for overhead lines, poles, guy wires and pad-mounted equipment. Check carefully for lines hidden by trees or buildings.
- **Assume all overhead lines are energized,** including service drops from poles to buildings. Keep clear unless the utility confirms that a line is not energized.
- **Set a clear boundary:** Keep workers, tools, ladders and equipment at least 10 feet from power lines. When using cranes or derricks, keep at least 20 feet away. Follow OSHA guidelines for clearance at different voltages.
- **Use a dedicated spotter** to keep you, your crew and your equipment a safe distance from power lines.

Dig safely: Underground utility lines

- **Pre-mark the excavation area** with white paint (use black on snow), flags, chalk, lath or whiskers.
- **Use 811 or 811beforeyoudig.com** before you dig to have lines marked. Every job needs a locate request, even small ones.
- **Wait** for utilities to mark their lines before digging.
- **Expose marked utilities carefully** by hand or with soft excavation to verify location and depth.
- **Report** any utility strike or damage to the facility owner. Never cover up damage.

If equipment contacts a power line:

- **Stay on** the equipment. Tell others to stay back.
- **Call 911** and the electric utility right away.
- **Do not exit the cab** until utility workers say it's safe.
- **If fire or other danger forces you off,** jump clear and do not touch the equipment and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together. Shuffle away with both feet on the ground or hop away with both feet together.

Work safely to protect yourself, your crew and the public. Review your crew's emergency plan so that everyone knows what to do if a line is contacted.

SAVE ENERGY & EARN BILL CREDITS!

Join Our New PEAK POWER REWARDS Program

PEAK POWER REWARDS

Get rewarded for reducing electricity use during peak demand periods!

- $1 per kWh saved during events
- 24-hour advance notice given
- 2-4 hour event durations
- No penalties for partial or non-participation
- Utilize simple ways to cut energy use and earn credits

LEARN MORE & ENROLL TODAY!
Visit mcec.org/peak-power-rewards or call 618-939-7171

MCEC
Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Heat pumps: What are they and what do they do?

Heat pumps aren't a brand-new technology anymore. What's changed is how well they work (including in colder weather) and how many options homeowners have, from ductless mini-splits to high-efficiency, variable-speed systems. If you've heard the term and wondered what a heat pump actually does, here's the simple idea: It doesn't "make" heat like a furnace. It moves heat, which can make it an efficient way to keep your home comfortable year-round.

What are heat pumps and how do they work?

In general, a heat pump extracts heat from one place and transfers it to another (similar to how an air conditioner or refrigerator cools). In warmer months, a heat pump takes heat from inside a home and relocates it outdoors, helping to make your home cooler. In cooler months, it pulls heat from the outdoor air (even when it feels cold) and transfers it indoors. Some newer models use variable-speed (inverter) compressors that adjust output in small increments for steadier comfort and better efficiency.

Do they save energy?

Because heat pumps move heat instead of generating it, they can be very efficient — especially when replacing electric resistance heat (like baseboard heaters). The U.S. Department of Energy notes that today's heat pumps can cut electricity use for heating by up to 75% compared with electric resistance heating, though actual savings depend on your climate, home and the system you're replacing.

Heat pumps for larger homes can save energy with a zone-heating feature, warming only rooms that are in use. High-efficiency heat pumps also dehumidify better than standard systems, resulting in less energy usage.

Is there more than one type?

Four primary types of heat pumps exist:

- Air-to-air or air-source pumps are the most common and are powered by electricity. They have an outdoor compressor/condenser unit that warms or cools the coils inside the air handler. It then circulates the warmed or cooled air through the system and pushes the air through ducts back into rooms. For homes without air ducts, air-source heat pumps are also available in a ductless version called a mini-split heat pump.
- Absorption heat pumps are similar to air-source heat pumps except instead of using electricity to operate, they use alternative energy sources such as natural gas, propane or solar- or geothermal-heated water.
- Geothermal/ground source heat pumps can heat, cool and even supply hot water to a home by transferring heat to or from the ground (or nearby water source), according to Energy.gov. They have higher installation costs, but lower operating costs since they take advantage of relatively constant ground or water temperatures. They are typically more efficient, have steady performance and can be used in more extreme climates than air-source heat pumps, though air-source technology has improved — cold-climate air-source heat pumps are now designed to keep providing heat efficiently at temperatures below freezing, making them a realistic option in many northern states.
- Air-to-water heat pumps are a special type of air-source heat pump called a "reverse cycle chiller" that generates hot and cold water rather than air, allowing it to be used with radiant floor heating systems.

What to ask

- Ask about cold-climate performance for your area (and whether you'll need backup heat).
- Confirm the system is right-sized. (Bigger isn't always better.)
- If you're choosing ductless, ask about zoning and placement for comfort.
- Ask what electrical work (panel/circuit) might be needed before installation.

Heat pumps are electric appliances, so safe installation matters. Use a qualified contractor to determine the best heat pump system for your home, and if your installer recommends electrical panel upgrades, have them done by a licensed electrician.

To learn more about energy efficiency, as well as safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.