



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Local voices shape local solutions

October is National Co-op Month

When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Monroe County Electric Cooperative.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: They're led by the people they serve — and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land

O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives — like MCEC — provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit — it's to provide value, meet

unique local needs and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes MCEC different.

Our story began in 1938 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve.

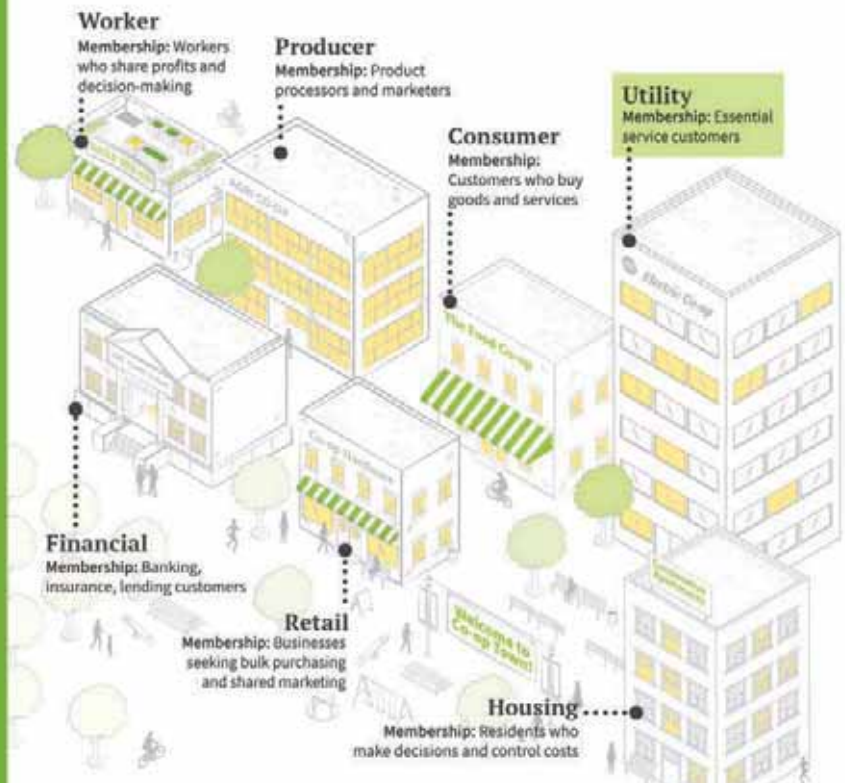
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KINDS OF CO-OPS

Cooperatives come in many forms—from electric utilities and credit unions to farm supply stores and housing co-ops—but all cooperatives are built with a common purpose: to meet the needs of the members they serve.

Co-ops strengthen local communities, keep decisions close to home and invest in long-term success.

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That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money. Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology or creating new opportunities for local students. MCEC gives back in many ways through high school scholarships, school grants, support-

ing local charities and events, and so much more.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm. The employees answering your questions when you call. The team members volunteering at community events. The board members — your neighbors — who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference, because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's MCEC, your local credit union or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible — and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.



Stay Safe Around SOLAR PANELS

Solar panels generate electricity and can pose hazards, especially when improperly handled or damaged. **Keep these six safety tips in mind:**

- 1 Keep your distance.** Stay at least 10 feet back from solar equipment and panels, even when power is disconnected.
- 2 Look up for power lines.** Keep panels, equipment, ladders and tools at least 10 feet away.
- 3 Keep children and pets away** from solar panels and equipment.
- 4 Do not touch damaged panels.** After storms or high winds, do not inspect, clean up or move damaged equipment.
- 5 Never cut or move wires.** They can remain energized even when power is off.
- 6 Never walk or climb on solar panels.** They can crack or break and expose you to electrical hazards.

! Safety tip: If you see damage, exposed wires, sparks, smoke or loose equipment, call a qualified professional.

MCEC line outages August 2026

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
08/01/26	1:31	3	Schmidt Rd	Unknown	Smithton
08/03/26	1:03	2	Kopp Rd	Unknown	N. Waterloo
08/06/26	0:42	3	Garleb Rd	Trees, Other	Fountain
08/07/26	1:09	5	Black Quarter Rd	Unknown	New Athens
08/07/26	1:17	38	Sterritt Run Subdivision	Other, Deterioration	N. Waterloo
08/12/26	1:11	12	Mullins Rd	Unknown	E. Carondelet
08/12/26	1:04	28	VV Rd/McBride Rd	Lightning	Poe
08/12/26	0:28	26	LL Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo
08/13/26	0:09	822	New Athens	Power Supplier	New Athens
08/14/26	1:28	23	Rustic Wood Ln/LL Rd	Other, Birds or Animals	Poe
08/16/26	2:08	23	Rustic Wood Ln/LL Rd	Conductor Sag	Poe
08/16/26	1:22	822	New Athens	Power Supplier	New Athens
08/17/26	0:38	65	Roachtown Rd	Lightning	Smithton
08/17/26	0:49	18	Sunflower Ln/Nollmann Rd	Unknown	Millstadt
08/22/26	1:22	3	Keim Rd	Small Animals or Birds	Millstadt
08/31/26	1:08	60	B Rd	Other, Deterioration	Fountain

Dinner & auction event supporting
Monroe Co. Extension
& 4-H programs.

Harvest Night

NOVEMBER 21, 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM • DINNER AT 6 PM

\$35 / PERSON

- Educational scholarships for 4-H members since 2003
- 4-H program fee and educational materials for over 300 members in 9 local 4-H clubs along with Jr. High Science club opportunities in local schools
- 29 years of summer Youth Cooking School
- 12 years of Baebler Educational Farm development and public events
- Annual Cloverbud and Gardenbud (ages 5-7) groups
- 30 teens form the 4-H Federation who assume hands on leadership at community events
- 15 trained 4-H Teens as Teachers who teach agriculture education to preschool youth, lead County Fair Tours and assist with other events
- Nutritional programs for adults and youth such as Wellness Wednesdays, Diabetes Support Group, Serve is Safely training, Sports nutrition & more
- 30 years of Conservation education for all 5th grade County students
- Scholarships for Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists
- Agriculture and Natural Resources programs
- 4-H educational project achievement at County, Illinois State Fair and DuQuoin State Fair

FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS VISIT HARVESTNIGHT.NET

Local University of Illinois Extension Office welcomes your calls and walk-ins.
901 Illinois Ave., Waterloo, IL 62298 • 618-939-3434

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Congratulations to our fair drawing winners!

Another Monroe County Fair is in the books! We enjoyed a great week visiting with members, friends, and neighbors who stopped by the MCEC booth.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello and entered our annual fair drawing. We're excited to congratulate this year's winners:



Daniel Crook
\$75 Annbriar gift card



Karla Rippelmeyer
\$25 Acorns gift card



Alice Biffar
\$50 Casa Romero gift card



John Patterson
\$25 Acorns gift card

Dan Mehner*
\$50 Silo gift card

Congratulations to all of our winners, and thank you to everyone who helped make another Monroe County Fair a great one. We always enjoy being part of this long-time community tradition and look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

**Not pictured Dan Mehner*



www.mcec.org

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