

## 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 Digiiovanna 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:info@menard.com) to briefly discuss the election process and obtain a petition. Visit [www.menard.com/board-directors](http://www.menard.com/board-directors) for a district map.

5/29/23  
**MEMORIAL DAY**  
 REMEMBER & HONOR  
**OFFICE CLOSED**



### 2023 NO BARRIERS WARRIORS

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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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, Minonke  
Plut, John Marvin, Lincoln  
Pogge, Mariann Trustee, Springfield  
Poos, Louise E, Springfield  
Potts, Kenneth L, Springfield  
Potts, Stan E, Clinton  
Poulsner, 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, Chandlerville  
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

# Make Paying Your Electric Bill Easy

Sign up today for our Automatic Payment, BudgetWise, and Paperless Billing programs and rest easy knowing your electric bills are taken care of.

## Automatic Payment

Pay your bill automatically from a Credit Card, Debit Card or Bank Account on the 10th, 17th or 24th of each month. Visit [menard.com/ways-to-pay](http://menard.com/ways-to-pay) to download the form.

## Paperless Billing

Eliminate paper clutter and view your monthly bill online. Sign up through our online bill payment system in the MyMEC app or at [menard.com](http://menard.com).



## BudgetWise

Sign up for Average Billing or Budget Billing to eliminate large fluctuations in your monthly bills due to season changes.

**Average Billing:** The monthly payment amount is based on a 12-month rolling average use of electricity. This spreads any dramatic changes in bills across several months.

**Budget Billing:** This sets a specific payment amount based on the past 12 months' usage to be paid each month of the cycle. On the once yearly true-up month (June or November) a credit or additional amount due is applied based on actual electric usage for the cycle.

