

## 5 REASONS BILLS RISE IN WINTER

1. **Warmth** – Even natural gas and propane systems use electricity to power the fan or circulating pump. So do space heaters, electric fireplaces and humidifiers.
2. **Outdoors** – Tank heaters, heat lamps and engine block heaters get plugged in when temps move below freezing; heating outdoor workshops and garages add up.
3. **Traditions** – The holidays just wouldn't be the same without your favorite light display or baked treats.
4. **Entertaining** – Inviting family and friends for an evening or hosting overnight holiday guests means more of many things, including hot water for showers, dishes and laundry.
5. **Lifestyles** – Lights are turned on sooner, hot baths are drawn, movie nights replace outdoor events, and ovens replace grills for dinner.

## 4 WAYS TO INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Caulk and weatherstrip all air leaks.
2. Check your attic insulation for damage and settling; add more if needed.
3. Service your furnace/heating system and replace filters as needed.
4. Lower the thermostat a degree and throw on an extra sweater, blanket or socks.

## 3 WAYS TO STAY SAFE DURING WINTER OUTAGES

1. Never touch a fallen line. Assume all downed wires are live, and beware of lines covered by snow.
2. Never use a generator or gas/charcoal grill indoors due to carbon monoxide.
3. Be prepared with an emergency kit. See following page for what to include.

## 2 SMART HIGH-TECH GIFT SUGGESTIONS

1. Smart home sensors can alert you anywhere of smoke, carbon monoxide or flood detection.
2. Smart thermostats, light bulbs or power strips can be set to make automatic changes to help you conserve energy.

## 1 WAY TO STAY CONNECTED

1. Download our **MyMEC** app to report outages, receive notifications, view an outage map and pay your bill online.

## Ways to pay

Things get busy this time of year. Here is a reminder of ways you can pay your bill. Sign up for automatic payments this month to simplify the new year!

- **Automatic payment:** Deduct payment automatically from a bank account or credit/debit card; form at [www.menard.com/waystopay](http://www.menard.com/waystopay).
- **Online:** Access the online payment portal from our App or website to pay by credit/debit/e-check.
- **Phone:** Call anytime 24/7 to pay by credit/debit/e-check.
- **At the office:** Stop in or use the drop box at 14300 Il State Hwy 97, Petersburg.
- **Mail in:** Send a check/money order to P.O. Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675.



## A Storm is Always Ready

### ARE YOU?



When Mother Nature threatens a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

### YOUR KIT SHOULD INCLUDE:



Bottles of water	Flashlights
Nonperishable food	Batteries
Portable phone charger	Can opener



First-aid supplies	Pain reliever
Hand sanitizer	Warm clothing
Prescriptions	Blankets



Battery-operated radio	Money
Toys, books and games	Baby supplies
Important documents	Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure batteries are fresh and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

Learn more at: [Safe Electricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

## NEW YEARS SAFETY RESOLUTIONS

Consider these safety-themed resolutions this year. They will help keep you and others safe!

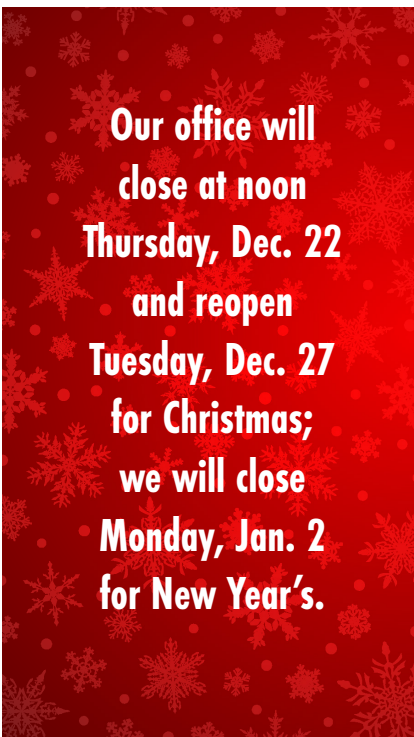
1. Do not drive distracted, especially near or in work zones.
2. Do not place a cell phone on bedding or under a pillow.
3. If you see a downed power line, stay away and call 9-1-1.
4. If you are in a car accident involving a downed line, do not get out.
5. Do not take on electrical work if you are not qualified.
6. Never use a portable generator indoors, in a garage or in an enclosed area.
7. Test GFCI outlets monthly to ensure they are working.
8. Ensure your home's electrical system is up to code.
9. Look up and look out for overhead power lines when working outside.
10. Call 8-1-1 prior to your next digging project.



## 15 scholarships - \$2,000 each

- Awarded through Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship Program.
- Details and applications at [www.menard.com/scholarships](http://www.menard.com/scholarships).
- Deadline for 4-year and 2-year college scholarships 12/31/2022.
- Deadline for lineman's school scholarship 04/30/2023.

*Watch for information about Menard Electric's scholarships in future issues!*

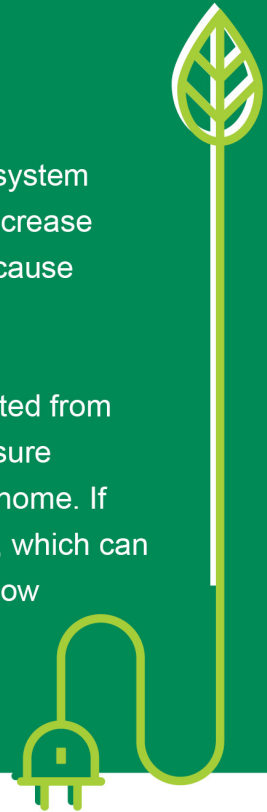


## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

*Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)*



## Need help paying your bill?

Contact your local agency to see if you are eligible for bill payment assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

- MCS Community Services, Cass/Morgan County, 217-243-9404, [morgancounty-il.com](http://morgancounty-il.com)
- CAPCIL, Logan/Mason/Menard County, 217-732-2159, [capcil.info](http://capcil.info)
- Decatur-Macon County Opportunities Corp, Macon County, 217-428-2193, [dmcoc.org](http://dmcoc.org)
- Sangamon County, 217-535-3120, [co.sangamon.il.us/communityresources](http://co.sangamon.il.us/communityresources)
- Tazwood Community Services, Tazewell County, 309-266-9941, [tazwoodcs.org](http://tazwoodcs.org)



# Board highlights

For full minutes visit [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or contact the office.  
September 27, 2022

- All Directors present except Jodine Tate & Steve Worner. Director of Accounting & Finance Julie Atwater, General Manager Alisha Anker, Attorney Charles Smith & Tom Hancock of Kelso Lynch auditing firm present.
- Approved 2021 Form 990 tax return as presented; Hancock left mtg.
- Atwater discussed creating account for unclaimed capital credits for educational scholarship purposes; she left mtg.
- Approved Resolution to file RUS Form 675 (Certificate of Authority) to authorize President Warren Goetsch, Anker and Atwater to sign RUS Form 595 (Requirement & Expenditure Statement).
- Anker reviewed monthly & YTD financial operating report, balance sheet & financial trends. Operating margins as of 8/31 were \$1,632,805 compared to \$1,944,247 last year; equity at 42.63%; 12-mo TIER 2.41 & DSC 1.61.
- Anker reviewed operations report w/95 incidents; longest duration outage 337 min affecting 8 members due to transformer damaged by tree; largest # affected by single outage 524 due to loss of PPI transmission to Poplar City sub for 1 hour.
- Reviewed IEMA correspondence supporting appeal of FEMA's denial of reimbursement; awaiting FEMA's response.
- Next mtg 10/25/22.

## Kilo Watt Korner

### Charging stations



This month we tackle the idea that power strips do not draw electricity when no devices are plugged in.

Market research indicates power strips and charging stations are useful tools for managing a home or office's electrical usage, especially when several devices are plugged into one power source and can be turned off collectively to avoid phantom loads. Most power strips tout that they do not use electricity when they are turned off, nor when each receptacle in the strip is not utilized whatsoever, but our research and investigation found there are some exceptions. Some models do draw a small amount of power, including the so-called smart strips.

This month we monitored a Powramid Power Center and USB Charging Station that rests on the board table at the co-op office. This charging station is plugged in around the clock; however, we were on watch to be certain no one used the device. It is equipped with an on/off button, and we tested in both modes. We found that when the station was turned off, no power was being drawn, therefore no concern was had from an electrical usage perspective. However, when we turned the charger on, yet did not allow any devices to be plugged in, the charger did draw approximately 350 watts of electricity during the month, costing us about 4 cents.

While the cost is negligible, we did some advanced research on why energy is drawn by the empty charging station. It seems there are switches inside the device that control how much electricity each receptacle, and therefore the device, uses. Those switches are controlled by a microcontroller chip which monitors when devices turn on and off, thereby adjusting the charger's own settings to accommodate. This microcontroller chip is programmed to respond quickly and automatically to changes in energy demand from a device, and the chip is ready to go even when no devices are connected to the receptacles. Thus our 350 watts (let's call them "ready-watts"). Further, our research warned against turning the charging station off, as doing so would deactivate the microcontroller chip, essentially requiring a larger draw of electricity each time the charger is turned on to power devices.

**KW Korner Recommendation:** While we myth-busted the question of whether empty power strips do consume energy, we recommend following the manufacturer's advice on whether the on/off button should be used to de-power all common devices. Our recommendation if wanting to avoid the phantom loads would be to actually unplug your power strip or charging station when not in use. Doing so not only saves on phantom loads, but also provides an element of safety as something unplugged cannot create other hazards.



# Merry Christmas

*from Menard Electric Cooperative*

## **General Manager**

Alisha Anker

## **Accounting**

Julie Atwater, *Director of Accounting & Finance*

Pam Davis, *Accounts Payable Clerk*

## **Engineering**

Brady Smith, *Engineering Manager*

Bart Bailey, *Engineering/IT Coordinator*

Ross Cloninger, *Forester/Field Tech*

Dustin Crosier, *Senior System Engineer*

Doug Pettit, *GIS/Technology Specialist*

Tim Schafer, *Field Engineer*

Dave Groth, *Engineering Tech*

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Kim Kyes, *Billing Operator*

Michelle McNeal, *Communications*

Audra Sturgeon, *Receptionist*

Nick Schachtsiek, *Lineman*

Troy Shafer, *Area Serviceman*

Justin Turner, *Lineman*

Levi Vogt, *Lineman*

Matt Wassell, *Area Serviceman*

Jeremy Willis, *Storekeeper Leadman*

## **Operations**

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Austin Baskett, *Apprentice Lineman*

Jason Beggs, *Leadman*

Brandon Blair, *Crew Leader*

Robb Hanner, *Area Serviceman*

Austin Harvey, *Apprentice Lineman*

Dwaine Heyen, *Area Serviceman*

Stormy Hild, *Lineman*

Kyle Hill, *Lineman*

Michael Justice, *Mechanic-Groundman*

Carrigan McMahon, *Apprentice Lineman*

Seth Parker, *Area Serviceman*

## **Board of Directors**

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Gary Holloway

Gary Martin

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Steve Worner