

## Facility charge and outdoor light increase

by Alisha Anker, General Manager

This month I detail the rate change discussed in last month's column. The change is due to increased costs from inflationary economic factors, a tighter energy market and regulatory pressures throughout our industry. If you missed reading *Rising costs* in the January 2023 issue, I encourage you to do so for more information regarding these cost increases; you can find the article online at [www.menard.com/connect-newsletter](http://www.menard.com/connect-newsletter).

At the December 2022 board meeting your Board of Directors approved an increase to the fixed monthly charge for all rate classes to begin with the February 2023 billing. They also approved a \$1 per month increase to all outdoor lights.

For most rate classes, the facility charge is a monthly fixed charge that covers the expenses incurred to serve each consumer regardless of energy usage. It includes costs of many things; a few examples include poles, wires, meters, transformers, office expenses and employees.

The majority of members reading this article are on a residential rate and

will see a \$7 per month increase to the fixed charge. The rate determinations were calculated based on a detailed Cost of Service and Rate Study that carefully analyzed the costs of providing power to each rate class. Prior to that study, fixed charges were last updated in 2018.

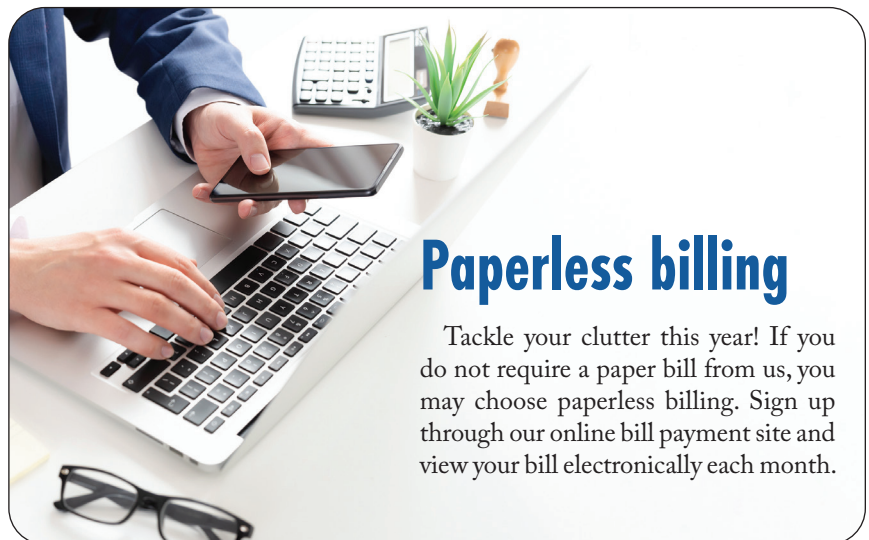
The chart below summarizes the changes effective next month for service taken on and after Jan. 1, 2023. You can find your billing rate in the top right corner on the back side of your bill. For details regarding each rate class, you can also view the rate sheets on our website at [www.menard.com/rates](http://www.menard.com/rates).

Rate	Description	Previous Charge	Updated Charge
10/11/13/ 17/18/19	Residential	\$37	\$44
50	Irrigation (Non-Interruptible)	\$69	\$228
51	Irrigation (Interruptible w/ Member Control)	\$69	\$208
52	Irrigation (Interruptible w/ Co-op Control)	\$69	\$228
20/21	Commercial w/ Demand	\$81	\$109
30/31	Large Power w/ Demand	\$121	\$145
60/61/62	Commercial no Demand	\$46	\$54
70	Load Management Service	\$173	\$210
81	Large Generation Station Power	\$500	\$550



**Scholarship applications  
are due March 1!**

*See page 6 for details.*



### Paperless billing

Tackle your clutter this year! If you do not require a paper bill from us, you may choose paperless billing. Sign up through our online bill payment site and view your bill electronically each month.

# “Why was my power out in 2022?”

When winds howl and snow blows, it can be easy to understand the cause of power outages, but not all outages are so easily identifiable by our members. System-wide, our members experienced a grand total of 19,784 consumer-hours of interruptions last year, a significant reduction from past years. This figure represents the total outage time accounted for when you compile every minute of power interruptions for every member on our system. The actual number of hours service was interrupted anywhere on our system was 1,122 (this number is much lower because each outage could affect multiple consumers).

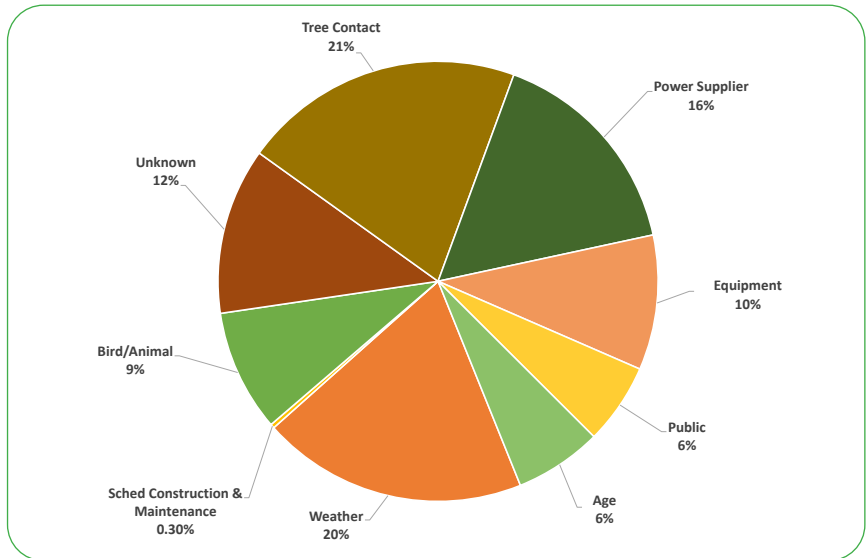
We strive to provide you with reliable service and work hard to continually improve our system’s reliability. Outage cause analysis is just one aspect of ensuring resources are wisely focused. To give you a better understanding of last year’s interruptions, we break down all the outage causes here. We are optimistic that they were well-balanced, and that no one cause loomed troublesome.

## 21% Tree Contact (aka Vegetation)

We do what we can to control this outage cause and diligently work our right-of-way clearing, spraying and vegetation management program. While not popular, the work is necessary to protect our equipment and reduce the number of outages caused by vegetation. Thank you for your patience when line clearance personnel are in your neighborhoods.

## 20% Weather

This year lightning was the leading weather-related factor, seconded by high winds. Our electrical facilities – poles, wires and structures – are built to withstand much of the harshness Mother Nature can bring, but service disruptions due to lightning, tornados, straight-line winds, ice and rain, and other environmental extremes are an unfortunate consequence of the electric industry.



## 16% Power Supplier (aka Transmission)

Power supplier outages occur when Prairie Power or Ameren Illinois lose a transmission line serving one of our substations, or when equipment failure occurs within a substation. We are pleased that this category has dropped this year. During most power supplier outages, we have the ability to backfeed from another substation so power to our members may be restored. However, this is not always possible, making this cause frustrating as it is entirely out of our control.

## 12% Unknown

Experience and knowledge of our system often lead our linemen to a quick answer as to why an outage has occurred. However, some causes leave no trace and remain an unsolved mystery.

## 10% Equipment

This number represents equipment failure separate from weather-related causes and due to general wear and tear with electrical devices, which can be expected on a system our size.

## 9% Bird/Animals

Despite our efforts to deter animals with the installation of shields and guards, tricky critters (mainly birds and squirrels)

climb and snoop around our electric poles and transformers, unaware of the danger to themselves and our system.

## 6% Age-Related Failures

Our entire electrical distribution system continues to get older. Each year we work to rebuild approximately three to five percent of our system’s miles. It is important that we continue to perform this rebuild, and we are working hard to keep obtaining supplies to do so.

## 6% Public and Member Accidents

This category involves multiple incidents, including several fires, farm machinery or vehicles making contact with our lines or equipment, and contact with our underground cables by excavators. For your safety please be alert when navigating vehicles or machinery near our equipment and always call JULIE before you dig.

## 0.3% Scheduled Construction and Maintenance

A very small number of outage hours were for the sake of scheduled construction and maintenance. We do our best to alert affected members in advance and to work efficiently to reduce daily life impacts. We appreciate your patience while our crews work safely to make needed repairs.

# WHAT'S ON YOUR BILL ?

## Account Details

This is the second of a three-part series highlighting different portions of our monthly bill statement.

1
2
3
4

Account Number	Meter Number	Service Period From	Service Period To	Number of Days	Meter Reading		Mult	Kwh Usage	Rate
					Prev	Pres			
14300	1234567	01/1/2023	2/1/2023	31	73874	74569	1	695	10

5

Previous Balance	\$122.80
01/24/23 Payment -- Thank You	(\$122.80)
02/03/23 Facility Charge	\$44.00
02/03/23 1--LED Basic Package	\$12.00
02/03/23 Electric Charge	\$86.18
02/03/23 Power Cost Adjustment	\$3.97
02/03/23 Tax	\$2.30
Total Current Charges	\$148.45
Total Due	\$148.45

6

7

Service Address: 101010 Willie Wire Road  
Petersburg IL 62675

TWACS Map Number: Residence 11-111-111

Office Hours 8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. Monday – Friday Except Holidays  
24 Hour Drop Box Is Available For Your Convenience • Pay Online At [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com)

8 **EXPLANATION OF TERMS:**

**Due Date:** Your bill is due and payable at the MEC offices on or before the date shown on the bill. The amount due after the due date will include a late payment charge of 3% per month of the past due amount or \$3.00 minimum.

**Demand KW:** The maximum level of electricity power demanded by a commercial service in any 15-minute interval during the month, measured in kilowatts.

**Facility Charge:** A monthly fixed charge that covers the expenses incurred to serve each consumer regardless of usage.

**KWH (Kilowatt-hours):** The basic unit of electricity energy usage. One 100-watt light bulb burning for 10 hours will consume one KWH.

**Power Cost Adjustment:** The energy cost adjustment that reflects the difference between the cost of energy assumed in the energy rate and the actual cost of purchased energy.

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The example bill shown here is for a residential member on our Rate 10.

- 1 The Account Number and Meter Number are unique to each service.
- 2 The time period measured on this statement.
- 3 The previous and current meter readings, the multiplier required by your meter, and your kWh Usage. The present meter reading minus the previous reading and multiplied by your meter multiplier provides the Kilowatt-Hours, a measurement of the amount of electricity used by the service during the defined service period.
- 4 This is your Rate Code number. Additional letters would indicate a franchise or a Net Metering or Net Billing Rider. You can find all Rate Sheets and Riders at [www.menard.com/rates](http://www.menard.com/rates).

- Note:** Members with solar will see an additional line showing the kWh received. Commercial services with Demand will see a Demand charge added below.
- 5 Details of your account charges.
    - Your previous balance, a late fee if applied, and all payments received within the service period are included.
    - The Facility Charge is a fixed monthly charge (see page 18a for details).
    - The LED Basic Package is the optional fixed monthly charge for an outdoor light.
    - The Electric Charge is the amount of kWh used by the service multiplied by factor determined in your Rate.
    - The Power Cost Adjustment is an energy cost adjustment that reflects the difference between

- the cost of energy assumed in your rate and the actual cost of purchased energy. This charge can vary monthly and will be positive, negative or neutral (\$0).
- We must pass along State of Illinois Utility Tax.
- Total Current Charges includes all charges for service in the defined Service Period.
- The Total Due could be different than the Current Charges if you have any previous balance or credit.
- 6 This graph shows the previous 12 months kWh Usage.
- 7 The service's address, map location number, and an identifier such as Residence, Irrigation, Shed, etc.
- 8 A reminder of definitions of important terms used on the bill.

# Board highlights

November 29, 2022

For full minutes visit [menard.com](http://menard.com) or contact the office.

- All Directors present except Jay Frye. Also present General Manager Alisha Anker, Director of Accounting & Finance Julie Atwater & Attorney Charles Smith.
- 2023 budget discussion including PPI rate increase forecasts, irrigation committee report of cost of service study review & possible rate component adjustment to all classes. Formal action delayed to next mtg.
- Motion carried to defer 2.3 mils per purchased kWh during 2022 to PPI for use in 2023; 2023 revenue deferral set at 0.0 mils.
- Member Survey results discussed.
- Anker reviewed abbreviated monthly & YTD financial operating report & balance sheet. Operating margins as of 10/31 were \$2,160,323 compared to \$2,538,211 last year; equity at 43.89%; 12-mo TIER 2.32 & DSC 1.58
- Anker reviewed Operations report w/60 incidents; longest duration outage 313 min. affecting 5 members due to vehicle/pole accident; largest # affected by single outage 60 for 1 hour due to tree contact; 4 solar installations.
- Frye named delegate & Director of Member Services Trish Michels alternate for ICWCG/RSI Ann. Mtg.
- Motion approved to donate \$500 to CFC Integrity Fund.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened; ratified actions taken.
- Next mtg 12/22/22.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



## KiloWatt Korner

### Heated Blankets

This month we take a quick look at a Biddeford heated throw blanket. The blanket has a temperature control much like that of a heating pad with six levels of warmth. Our tester used the blanket a few evenings on the lowest, medium and highest settings over two-hour periods while putting together a puzzle or watching a movie.



The highest setting used 115 watts, for a total of 0.17 kWh over the two-hour period, costing just two pennies to operate. Used each evening for a month we would spend about 65 cents. The high setting gets pretty warm, and medium will often suffice, dropping usage to 60 watts, just 0.05 kWh and about ½ cent for two hours. The low setting would be just a few pennies for the entire month but would be hardly worth the trouble as it did not add much coziness.

**Safety note:** It is important to follow all manufacturer's directions for safe use and storage of heated blankets; note all precautions for use and examine the blanket and cord regularly for wear; also look for the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label.

**Korner Recommendation:** When used safely, a heated throw blanket is an inexpensive way to warm up. And if compared to plugging in a space heater, which we reviewed last month, costs are far lower.



# Apply Now!

## 2023 Menard Electric Cooperative **Scholarships**



**\$2,000** 4-year college or university

**\$1,500** 2-year community college

**\$1,500** technical school



**BONUS**

**Eligibility**

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Applicants must be a high school senior or equivalent, graduating during 2023.

Applicant's parent/legal guardian must be a Menard Electric Cooperative member with their primary residence or business served by the cooperative.

**Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.**

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One applicant also will receive an all-expenses-paid trip on the Youth to Washington Tour, where he/she will travel with other Illinois students for a weeklong tour of Washington, D.C., June 16-23, 2023.

See more details and apply at [menard.com/scholarships](http://menard.com/scholarships) by March 1, 2023.