

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.menard.com

Students can win a trip to Washington, D.C.

Youth to Washington June 9-16, 2017

For over 55 years Illinois electric cooperatives have sent youth from their communities on an annual trip to Washington, D.C.

Last year, students visited the Capitol Building, Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, The U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum, and took a Potomac River cruise.

High school juniors who live with a parent/guardian who is an active member of the co-op can apply. Applicants must attend Youth Day in Springfield March 29. Applications and more information can be found on our website at www.menard.com or by calling Michelle at the office at 800-872-1203. Deadline to apply is February 21.



Capturing energy from the sun!

Bright Options Solar

Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI), our electric generation and transmission cooperative is offering us, and its nine other member distribution cooperatives, the opportunity for our members to purchase solar-generated electricity through the Bright Options Solar program. Bright Options Solar allows you the opportunity to buy blocks of solar energy generated from two 500-kilowatt solar farms operated

by PPI subsidiaries, without the risks, hassles and costs of having solar panels on your own roof.

Under Bright Options Solar, you would agree to purchase blocks of solar-generated energy, at an added cost. Three options are available: a 200 kWh solar block at \$12 per month, a 400 kWh solar block at \$24 per month, or a 600 kWh solar block at \$36 per month.

Participants may begin purchases at any time with an automatic renewal at the beginning of each calendar year. The cost associated with each block of solar energy purchased will appear as a separate line item on your bill and is in addition to all other normally billed charges.

To learn more or sign up visit our website at www.menard.com or www.ppi.coop/brightoptions or call our office at 800-872-1203.

Rate increase

The Board of Directors approved a small rate increase for 2017 and 2018 to the facility charge and security lights. The new rate will take effect on your March 7 bills. The inflationary increase on an average residential member is about 1.5%. See table below for increases.

Rate Class	Rate Code	2017	2018
Residential	10, 10S, 11, 11S, 13, 17, 17S, 18, 18S, 19, 19S	\$2.50	\$2.50
Small Commercial	20 and 21	\$5.50	\$5.50
Large Power	30 and 31	\$8.00	\$8.00
Irrigations	50 and 52	\$4.50	\$4.50
Commercial/ No Demand	60, 61 and 62	\$3.00	\$3.00
Security Light		\$1.00	\$0.50



Mark that new calendar now to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday evening, June 15, 2017.

The cooperative difference – it matters!

In this series we'll explore all the reasons we are proud to be a cooperative

Cooperative Guiding

Principle #7: Concern for Community

We were formed to improve the life of the members we serve. One way we do this is by working toward the development of our local communities through support for schools, charitable donations to community efforts and employee involvement in local organizations.

We won't repeat here the efforts we've told you about in recent previous issues.

One small example of this co-op principle we haven't shared is the charitable donations raised by employees and directors, both current and retired, in December. More than 200 new and like-new coats, boots, hats, gloves and scarves were donated to the Menard County Housing Authority's Give and Take Outreach Center, and over 200 food items and \$200 cash was given to the local food pantry.



Employee Erik Raikes delivered collected items to Menard County Food Pantry. Volunteers Susan Brauer and Shirley McCombs were on hand to sort and store the items as they waited to assist persons utilizing the choice pantry.



Employees Bart Bailey and Erik Raikes were on hand to deliver the van full of donated cold weather items to Anne Smith, Executive Director of the Menard County Housing Authority. She said she imagined the items would go quickly that weekend as adults and children prepared for colder weather to come.



Keep mylar balloons close

This Valentine's Day, if you or your child receives a gift featuring a shiny and fun mylar balloon, keep it close at hand – here's why:

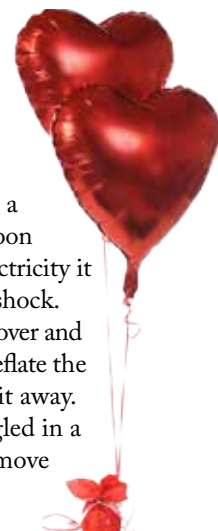
Mylar balloons have a metallic coating. Metal conducts electricity, making these balloons hazardous to our equipment.

If released outdoors, the balloons can come into contact with overhead power lines or substations, causing power outages and fires. Even if the balloon flies away and out of reach of power lines, the helium will slowly leak out of the balloon and it can come back down miles away from where it originated and come into contact with electrical equipment.

Always keep balloons weighted and tied down. But, don't tie the balloons to children, especially with a metallic ribbon; if the balloon came into contact with electricity it could deliver a dangerous shock.

When the celebration is over and the enjoyment has faded, deflate the balloon before you throw it away.

If a balloon does get tangled in a power line never try to remove it yourself.



Let the fire ignite in your heart, not your home, this Valentine's Day

Are you preparing a special candlelit dinner on Valentine's Day? Keep these fire safety tips in mind to stay safe.

Candles

Open flames should be used with caution. Make sure candles are placed away from flammable objects like table center pieces, shower curtains, window curtains and bedding. Place candles on sturdy structures – not small ledges, stair cases, or anywhere a curious pet could tip it over. Stay in the room while in use.

Dinner

Preparing a special dinner can be stressful – as we race around trying to make everything perfect, distractions can often take our attention away from the stovetop. Keep the phrase “watch what you heat” in mind and stay near the food.

A common cause of kitchen fires is when grease ignites and cooks panic – moving the pan or using water to put out the flames.

If you have a grease fire, don't touch the pan – place the lid slowly on the pan to cover and put out the fire, turn off the burner and leave it on the stove at least 20 minutes. No lid? Use a cookie sheet or pizza pan. If you have an oven fire, keep the door closed and turn off the oven.

Some other tips include keeping oven mitts, towels, food packages and other flammables away from the stove, not cooking while wearing loose sleeves or clothing, unplugging unused appliances, and testing GFCI outlets monthly.

In case of a fire anywhere in your home leave the area and call 911.

Notes about fire extinguishers

If you do fight the fire with an extinguisher, make sure your family is leaving and you have a clear way out. Keep fire extinguishers in plain sight on each floor of your home, keep one in the kitchen (away from the stove) and one in the garage near the door.



EFFICIENCY

Fireplaces

Remember to close the damper!

Department of Energy

Board Highlights

For full minutes visit www.menard.com or contact the office.

November 29, 2016

- Present were Directors Jay Frye, Dennis Ryan, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney & Steven Worner; Jodine Tate absent; Manager Eric Hobbie, Attorney Charles Smith; Lynn Frasco.
- Hobbie: Summarized 2017 financial budget with options for revenue producing purposes & PPI deferred revenue for 2015, 2016 & 2017.
- Hobbie: Discussed finance committee meeting.
- Facility Charge increase with amendment authorized.
- Martin appointed regional NRECA voting delegate; Goetsch appointed alternate.
- Hobbie: Discussed balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, crew work, NRECA annual meeting, death of Doris Bell & \$100 contribution to IEC Memorial Scholarship fund, & issues before state legislature on energy bill & power plant bailout.
- Hobbie: Gave October financial report. Year to date margins \$3,033,523 compared to \$2,228,928 last year. End of October equity 40.06%. Served 10,873 member accounts. Net utility plant \$45,755,241 compared to \$43,958,360 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, & NRUCFC.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC activities & executive summary.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. update.
- Board entered executive session; reconvened; actions of Board taken in executive session approved.
- Hobbie: Discussed capital credit estate refunds report. Discussed finance committee proposal to assign capital credits from Prairie Power to co-op members based on kwh usage; details to be presented next month.

Need payment help?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may be able to help pay your electric bill. Contact your local office as soon as possible.



Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)

Logan County-217-732-2159; Mason County-309-543-6988; Menard County-217-632-3878

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp. 217-428-2193

MCS Community Services (Cass & Morgan County) 217-243-9404

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources 217-535-3120

Tazwood Community Service, Inc. (Tazewell County) 309-694-4391

Manager search

At the end of 2016, General Manager Eric Hobbie left the co-op to serve as President/CEO of Prairie Power, Inc., our wholesale power provider. Lynn Frasco has been appointed as Interim Manager; he previously served as General Manager from 1999 until his retirement in 2015.

The Board of Directors continues to work on selecting a new General Manager. They hope to select a qualified candidate this month and have the position filled by early Spring. We'll post any updates on our website and Facebook page.

SAFETY

Space Heaters

Keep 3 ft. from flammable items
Don't leave unattended
Don't use overnight

More tips @ www.menard.com