

Words on the wire

Strategic planning goals set



Alisha Anker
General Manager

As we enter February and take stock in the fact most New Year's Resolutions have long been abandoned, I'm comforted to share the goals set by your cooperative's board of directors during a recent strategic planning session are in full swing for implementation.

Members of the board along with management met for two days in early December to think strategically about the co-op's future. The session was facilitated by representatives from the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC), a financial lending and business services organization of which Menard Electric is a member.

In large part, the ideal outcome of any strategic planning session is to achieve consensus on the mission and items of strategic focus for an organization. "Establishing a plan which proactively prepares for unfavorable scenarios while establishing a sense of direction are key benefits to engaging a Board for strategic planning. The strategic planning team at NRUCFC was proud to help make Menard Electric's session a success," commented Brian Stagen, Central Regional VP.

The strategic goals for focus over the upcoming three years are appropriately spread across all departments of the cooperative. In no particular priority order:

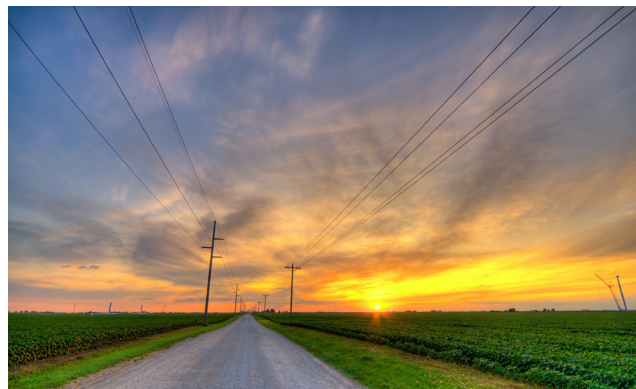
The first involves finance and the development of a comprehensive

financial plan with particular emphasis on achieving a rate structure which aligns with the costs of providing service to various member classes. Synchronizing our rates with

power supplier costs, electricity-use incentives, energy efficiency initiatives and load control programs sounds simple on the surface, but much work will go into assuring the co-op has a rate program capable of withstanding the test of time and technologies impacting our industry.

The second involves engineering and the creation of a long-range work plan focused on improving (lowering) our system's line loss factor and integrating distribution automation. The last Long-Range System Planning Report for Menard Electric was penned in 1983, and while that plan looked out 30 years, the authors couldn't begin to imagine the growth in technologies now available to the electricity distribution sector. The future Long-Range Plan will focus on enhancing system efficiency and reliability, improving power quality, and containing costs over a 10-20-year horizon.

The third goal involves member relations and crafting a communications plan focused on enhanced member engagement. Your co-op currently interfaces with members through a few media channels (including this magazine!), however expanding our messaging across more channels will be the initiative. Included in this goal is



also the development of more member education about the co-op and its needs. We may even be reaching out to you, our members, for ideas of what you'd like to hear and learn more about. Also, look for an easier-to-understand monthly billing statement and targeted messages for various member classes, such as for those interested in renewable energy alternatives, specific product offerings or cooperative events/activities.

Last, but certainly not least, as Safety is a core value for the cooperative, the operations goal includes developing and enhancing internal and public safety programs. We've built a strong safety record internally, however will be strengthening that culture by inviting a member of the board to attend our monthly Safety Days throughout the year. In addition, our line department will be improving our public outreach by designing and hosting programs and education sessions for area first-responders, school groups and community organizations on the importance of staying safe around electricity.

Look for updates and news on each of these strategic areas of focus as the year progresses. Until next time, have a fun and heart-warming Candy & Love month!!

"Why was my power out?"

2018 Outage Causes

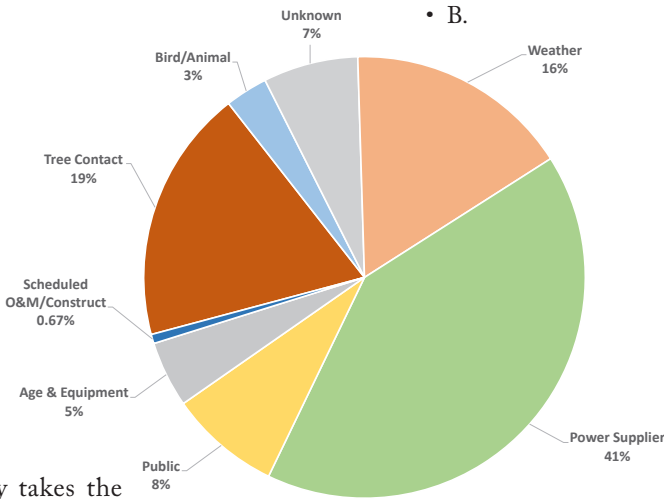
In early 2018, the co-op implemented a new Outage Management System which readily tracks what caused your outage hours. Here are 2018 outage causes in review.

41% Power Supplier (aka Transmission)

Up significantly from last year, Power Supply takes the prize in 2018 as the leading cause of outage hours. When Ameren IL or Prairie Power lose a transmission line, our substations served by those lines are entirely out. We are able in most cases to backfeed from another substation to restore power to members, however this cause is still frustrating as it's largely out of our control.

19% Tree Contact (aka Vegetation)

Happy to report this percentage is much less than last year as a result of our aggressive vegetation management program. Reliability means a lot in the electricity industry. Unfortunately, trees and power lines do not interact well together. Contact to our lines from trees and limbs in the right-of-way often results in outages, whether from snow/ice weighing down, limbs breaking or



just the gentle breeze swaying limbs into the lines too much.

16% Weather

Our poles and wire do endure the day-to-day elements of nature, but some days the wrath of Mother Nature is too harsh. Outage events due to weather are caused during tornadoes, lightning, high winds and ice storms, which we experienced plenty of in 2018.

5% Age & Equipment Failure

Down significantly from last year, general wear-and-tear of our electrical infrastructure does contribute to equipment failures. Age impacts us all, including the electric system. Each year our goal is to rebuild a small percentage of the system, which should continue

to lessen outage hours resulting from equipment deterioration.

3% Birds/Animals

Sadly, animals like to roost, climb and snoop around our electric poles and transformers. Birds, squirrels, raccoons, snakes, opossums and other critters do like the warmth of energized equipment, which doesn't always work out well for them. We have installed shields and guards to protect certain devices, but these tricky critters still unfortunately find a way to create faults.

8% Public (Member Accidents)

Vehicles and farm equipment can take out energized power lines and cause damage to our system resulting in large- and small-scale outages.

7% Unknown

Believe it or not, many times the cause of an outage is just not readily apparent. These remain a mystery.

< 1% Scheduled Construction & Maintenance

Never tracked before 2018, the hours members are without power for sake of scheduled construction and maintenance. We do our best to alert members ahead of time when these incidents are scheduled.

Download the MyMEC App today!

Mother Nature may have a few more winter weather events up her sleeve – and any high winds, snow or ice accumulations could cause power outages.

You can report outages with our MyMEC App, through our website at www.menard.com or by calling 800-872-1203.

The quickest way to report an outage and keep in contact with us is through the MyMEC

App, where you can report outages and other electrical issues, view an outage map, keep updated on power restoration and more.

Download MyMEC by searching for Menard Outage in the Google Play or iOS App store on your mobile device. You'll need to input the account number (which can be found on a recent bill) or your meter number (located under the digital digits and above the barcode).





HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE



Be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.



ZONE IN ON SAFETY



Respect **roadside** work crews.



Don't drive distracted.
Reduce your speed.
Change lanes.

1 work zone crash occurs
every **5.4 minutes**



70 work zone crashes
result in **injuries**
each day



12 work zone crashes
result in at least
1 fatality each week



Never plug a generator into a **wall outlet** in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line could **electrocute** a utility worker or neighbor.



DON'T post signs
on **utility poles**.

Foreign objects can **tear** utility workers' **protective clothing**, which is the first line of protection from an **electric shock**.



Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!



Learn more at **Safe Electricity.org**



2019 Youth to Washington Tour Scholarship Program

See page 13 of this publication for more details on our college scholarship and Youth Tour opportunities. Applications and details are available at www.menard.com/scholarships or by calling 800-872-1203.

Christmas donations



This year, our office tree was surrounded by gifts given to Menard Electric Cooperative Member Angels. Members submitted angel wishes for their kids and our Christmas Committee employees purchased the wished-for items along with books, winter coats and other goodies.

Each year, our employee Christmas Committee raises funds throughout the year to spend on others in our area in the spirit of Christmas. This year, in addition to the Angels, they donated \$500 to four area food pantries in Cass, Logan, Mason and Menard Counties.

"I'm over the moon with appreciation to the co-op employees and members who helped to make this year's Christmas Committee donations a huge success. Shopping for our Angels, playing Santa to deliver Christmas wishes, and spreading Joy across the membership really warmed our hearts this holiday season," said Manager Alisha Anker.



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Board highlights

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

November 27, 2018

- Present were Directors Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney & Steven Worner; Engineering Manager Brady Smith; Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton; Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith. Directors Jay Frye & Jodine Tate absent.
- B. Smith: Presented System Loss Analysis Report.
- Anker: Reviewed agenda for Strategic Planning Meeting Dec. 4-5.
- Anker: Reviewed proposed 2019 Financial Budget. After discussion 2018 Prairie Power Deferred Revenue rate was changed.
- Anker: Reviewed CFC Line of Credit Agreements & terms; advised negotiating long-term debt agreement terms with CoBank.
- Board: Tabled request to renew IDNR License Agreement.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet & budget, safety, reliability, operations, irrigation, IT security & capital credits reports.
- Anker: Presented staff recommendation of new Operations Employee Expense Policy; reviewed fixed & variable expense reimbursements; discussed insurance requirements for solar interconnects.
- Anker: Gave October financial report. Year to date margins \$2,695,860 compared to \$2,803,199 last year. End of October equity 41.84%. Served 10,898 member accounts. Net utility plant \$49,212,169 compared to \$47,380,785 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC activities & draft of FEJA position paper.
- Martin: Reviewed Prairie Power Inc. October energy charge, President's report; discussed 2019 budget.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Next month's board meeting Dec 21; Strategic Planning Session Dec 4-5.

No Barriers Expedition for veterans

We are seeking veterans from within our co-op family to nominate for a No Barriers USA Expedition or Summit sponsored by CoBank.

America's rural communities are home to millions of men and women who have served in our armed forces, many of whom are living with a disability. CoBank, a cooperative bank serving industries across rural America, including Menard Electric Cooperative, has partnered with No Barriers USA to sponsor four, five-day expeditions to take place in Colorado in July and August as well as a Summit in California in June.

This CoBank No Barriers USA Expedition might be right for you if you are: a combat or training-wounded veteran from any branch of the U.S. armed forces; suffer from a service-related disability, whether visible or invisible (i.e., PTSD); have a VA disability rating; are interested in challenging limitations and overcoming obstacles; are a member of, or immediate family of a member of, Menard Electric Cooperative.

No Barriers USA is a nonprofit organization that empowers people of all walks of life to overcome obstacles, live a life of purpose, and give back to the world, through its ground-breaking curriculum.

Each expedition is designed to push participants mentally and physically in some of nature's most incredible wilderness to help them connect with fellow veterans and break through barriers in their life.

Interested? Contact us today!

We are pleased to be able to nominate veterans from among our membership for this lifechanging opportunity. Please contact General Manager Alisha Anker at Menard Electric Cooperative without delay at 800-872-1203 or aanker@menard.com for more information if you are interested in being nominated.

2019 Annual Meeting of Members
Thursday, June 13th



Menard Electric Cooperative 2019 Youth to Washington Scholarship Program

SCHOLARSHIPS:

- 🎓 One \$1,000 scholarship to a 4-year college or university
- 🎓 One \$500 scholarship to a 2-year community college
- 🎓 One \$500 scholarship to an accredited technical school
- 🎓 One winner selected from among scholarship winners for an all-expenses paid trip on the Youth to Washington Tour June 14-21, 2019.

Who Can Apply:

- 🎓 Applicant must be a high school senior or equivalent, graduating during 2019.
- 🎓 Applicant's parent/legal guardian must be a Menard Electric Cooperative member with their primary residence or business served by the cooperative.
- 🎓 Applicant must be available to attend the Youth to Washington Tour June 14-21, 2019.

Additional details are provided with the application form. Please download the application at Menard Electric Cooperative's website at www.menard.com/scholarships.



**Download application
at www.menard.com.**

Deadline for applications is March 1, 2019.