

## Words on the wire

Stay informed with MyMEC



**Alisha Anker**  
General Manager

It's hard to believe we are turning another year over in the history books. As 2018 ushers in and as I begin to approach my first full year here at Menard Electric Cooperative, I can't contain my excitement in announcing one of the long-awaited member engagement

projects finally coming to fruition. You may have seen the teasers and are wondering, 'What is this MyMEC all about?' Here's the spill...

MyMEC is a tool you can use to stay informed and connected with us during those very frustrating times when you have a service interruption. We call it an Outage Management System (OMS), and it is our solution to eliminating busy signals you may get when reporting an outage by phone. As the name implies, MyMEC is your very own personal portal into the co-op's electrical operations, allowing you to engage with us through a mobile app or our website.

MyMEC will be accessible soon through a mobile application available for free in the iTunes App store for iOS

and in Google Play for Android and from a page on our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com).

Using MyMEC, you can report an electric outage or related electric trouble at your service location(s). You'll be able to view a detailed co-op system map to get a full sense of the confirmed and predicted outages happening right then.

And, perhaps best of all, from MyMEC you'll get facts about the outage as our Area Servicemen and Lineworkers in the field report their findings, include estimated restoration times when possible and perhaps even add some interesting pictures of system damage.

Members who opt-in can also receive push notification alerts about planned and confirmed outages at their location(s), allowing you to know if your power is out even when you're away from home.

So, whether you're on-the-go or strapped to your laptop or personal computer, MyMEC will be available 24/7 to report trouble with your electric



service without a busy signal and minus any on-hold features.

It's important to note here that Menard Electric will continue to take outage and trouble calls by phone for those members who do not wish to use the new mobile app or webPortal version of

the MyMEC reporting system.

Our dedicated employees are eager to use the new Outage Management System, which brings together all the tools we've built and used throughout the years. MyMEC integrates with our customer information system to associate your location with outage events, our geographic information system to present you dynamic mapped images, our circuit models that use electric connectivity to drive the outage prediction engine, and our automatic meter reading system.

We are finalizing all the details now and plan to release the application next month. Stay tuned for more news, education and helpful tips for setting up your MyMEC to get the most from this new and exciting platform.



**Mark your new calendar now to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday evening, June 14, 2018.**



# \$10,000 to light up the equestrian show ring in Mason County

A \$10,000 donation to the Mason County 4-H and Junior Agricultural Show Association was made possible through CoBank's Sharing Success program, which offers to match a donation made by Menard Electric Cooperative up to \$5,000 for a charitable organization chosen by our board of directors each year. Menard Electric is a member of CoBank, a cooperative lending facility ([www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com)).

The donated funds will be used to add lighting to the Mason County Fairgrounds equestrian show ring, which will allow for shows to be held in the evenings for its exhibitors, aged 8-18. The fairgrounds have been open more than 70 years and attract hundreds of members from the local community annually.

Some of our operations and engineering employees have pledged to



*Board President Jay Frye and General Manager Alisha Anker (both far left) were on hand to present a check for \$10,000 to representatives of the Mason County 4-H and Junior Agricultural Show Association.*

volunteer their own time to helping the fairgrounds plan and install the lighting project, and MEC will donate use of our equipment. The

entire project is just one example of MEC and our employees living out our co-op founding principle of Commitment to Community.

## Simplify with Automatic Payment

Do the words *Get Organized* or *Simplify* appear on your list of New Year's Resolutions this year? Make one step toward your goal by signing up for automatic payment.

You'll mark one item permanently off your to-do list. And best of all, you'll never have to worry about the mail delivering your check late or forgetting to make a credit card payment on the phone or online by the due date.

Here's how it works: Your net due amount will be automatically deducted

from your checking or savings account on the 17th of each month. You'll still receive a bill statement in the mail each month so you'll know exactly how much you need to deduct from your account. You can also enroll in our budget billing plan to make your payments the same each month.

To enroll in automatic payment, fill out the form on the back of your remittance statement the next time you mail in your payment, or download a form from our website.

About Us

**30** employees work hard to provide service to

**10,800+** services

over **2,590+** miles of line in

**8** counties - an average of **4** members per mile of line.

## Reasons bills may rise in the winter

Does your electric usage increase in the winter? Here are a few reasons to consider:

- **Heating:** Remember, even if you have an LP/ gas/wood fueled furnace, electricity is needed to run the blower and fan.
- **Water:** Taking longer hot showers and warm baths sure feels great on cold days.
- **Holidays:** Christmas lights, additional baking and cooking, as well

as those party guests who use water/lights/electronics chargers can all add up.

- **Early sunsets:** Shorter days and longer nights mean lights are on longer both indoors and out; you might be home more often, curled in a blanket to watch a movie or by the electric fireplace.
- **Outdoor Heaters:** Engine block, water tank and garage/shed space heaters might be necessary in the cold weather.



## Co-op Corner

### Thermostat settings

One blistery winter evening several years ago, I suddenly realized our home felt too warm. A quick check of the thermostat setting revealed the temp was on the rise, and the setting had been bumped up to a tropical 85 degrees.

What happened? My oldest son, dressed only in a cape and shorts, gave me my answer as he showed how he could just barely reach the thermostat button by standing on his tip-toes. “I was cold so I pressed the button a lot,” he said.

My incidence was extreme, but it’s a good reminder that changing the thermostat shouldn’t be the first choice when feeling chilled. Some households have thermostat “wars” where one person is always raising the temp and another lowering it. Pressing that button is easy to do, but it can lead to a temp that gradually creeps up all winter long.

Energy experts say that for each degree you raise the thermostat in the winter, you’ll spend 1-3 percent more in energy costs. They recommend setting the thermostat at 68

degrees or lower in winter. Of course, your home, family and lifestyle are unique – what is comfortable for one family may not be right for another. If you want to try a lower setting, try moving it just one degree each night before bed so your body will acclimate slowly to the change.

Setting the thermostat once and then forgetting about it is a good plan, whether you leave it at one temp or program it to change automatically. Just make sure that everyone in the house knows not to change it when they feel a chill! (Although he said it slowed him down, my young super hero reluctantly added socks and sweats to his costume and hasn’t touched the thermostat again.)

Some people set a programmable thermostat to save energy. If you have a gas heating system, the Department of Energy says you could save 10 percent on energy costs if you lower the temp 7-10 degrees for at least 8 hours at a time-like when you are at work and overnight. If you have a heat pump

*By Michelle McNeal, Communications*



system, you might want to check with your HVAC contractor before trying this – in order to quickly raise the temp, some systems use a backup heating strip system that is more inefficient and could negate any savings you’d earn.

If you make a change and want to see if it affected your usage, you can view your daily or hourly usage patterns through our online bill pay portal at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com). Or you can give me a call at the office at 800-872-1203.



# Board highlights

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

**October 24, 2017**

- Present were Directors Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith.
- Co-op Staff: Presented budgets for general office, member services, insurance, engineering, operations, accounting, manager and board.
- Anker: Presented balance sheet, budget, rebate, outage, safety, work orders, security & irrigation reports.
- Anker: OMS timeline for integration; Board chose OMS app design.
- Anker: Discussed Sharing Success Program, co-op received funds from CoBank for Mason County Fairgrounds.
- Anker: Gave September financial report. Year to date margins \$2,475,480 compared to \$2,508,251 last year. End of September equity 40.56%. Served 10,885 member accounts. Net utility plant \$47,289,873 compared to \$45,535,502 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRCFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: AIEC activities & executive summary.
- Martin: Presented Prairie Power by-law change regarding Director & Alternate Director compensation.
- Anker: Capital credit estate refunds report.
- Goetsch: Reviewed multiple policies for approval. Net Metering Policy & Interconnection of Qualifying Facilities under PURPA Policy tabled; all others approved.
- Board entered executive session; reconvened. Actions in session were confirmed & ratified.

## New Year's Resolution: Save energy all year long!

Take a look at these five no-cost, easy-to-do changes you can make this year to save money all year long.

- **Check the furnace filter every month; replace as needed.** This will prolong the life of your furnace and make it run more efficiently. Put it on your calendar or in your phone's to-do list for the first of each month!
- **Unplug chargers when not in use.** Electronic device chargers use energy even when the device isn't plugged in.
- **Wash dishes efficiently.** Only run the dishwasher when it is full, turn off heat-dry and only select the options you need.
- **Compare all costs before buying.** An appliance, electronic or even light bulb that is on sale might end up costing you more once you consider the costs of operating it.
- **Do laundry better.** Wash full loads in cold water when possible, only select the options you need, don't over-dry clothes and consider air-drying when possible.



## LIHEAP

We urge you to contact your local office as soon as possible if you believe you may qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Qualifications are based on income and household size.

Cass County..... 217/243-9404  
Logan County ..... 217/732-2159  
Macon County ..... 217/428-2193  
Mason County ..... 309/543-6988  
Menard County ..... 217/732-2159  
Morgan County ..... 217/243-9404  
Sangamon County. 217/535-3120  
Tazewell County ..... 309/694-4391

## Rate increase reminder

The second part of the facility charge and security light rate increase implemented by the Board of Directors in 2016 will take effect on your March 7 bills.

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



Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives

Ice from winter storms can cause power outages and make for dangerous outdoor working conditions. Rest assured our linemen are working as quickly as conditions allow to restore your power safely. Check our Facebook page for outage updates.

## Be Prepared for Winter Weather

Our crews are as ready as they can be to handle what Mother Nature has in store for us this winter and we want you to be ready too—see these tips and visit [www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather) for more.

**Stay warm** – Have extra blankets on hand. Use safe, properly ventilated alternate heating sources; don't use gasoline, propane or natural gas burning devices indoors.

**Stay fed** – Have several days' supply of food that doesn't need cooked, as well as 5 gallons of water per person.

**Stay safe** – Remember to keep a first aid kit, battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra supplies of items needed for elderly, infant, disabled and pet family members. If you leave your home after a severe storm be alert for downed power lines.

