

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

We are thankful

We are thankful to be an electric cooperative owned by you, our members. Being a cooperative means we abide by the seven cooperative principles that our wise founders formed us under more than 80 years ago.

- 1) Voluntary and open membership
- 2) Democratic member control
- 3) Members' economic participation
- 4) Autonomy and independence
- 5) Education, training and information
- 6) Cooperation among cooperatives
- 7) Concern for community

But what does that mean? It means we work every day to improve the lives of our member-owners, not to pad the pockets of distant stockholders. It means we are governed by a Board of Directors elected by and from our membership, and run by employees who live right here in the communities we serve. It means we strive to provide our employees and our members the knowledge needed to use electricity wisely. And it means that we work together with other cooperatives because people coming together and working together to accomplish something great is what the cooperative spirit is all about.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

A recent example of our sixth principle, cooperation among cooperatives, came during Hurricane Irma when five of our linemen traveled to Georgia to help restore power to thousands of co-op members.

The men made it to Georgia before the hurricane landed and were in place to begin power restoration as soon as it was safe to do so.

Georgia of course is a little different than Illinois. The crew says they came



Serving during Hurricane Irma were Menard Electric Cooperative Area Serviceman Robb Hanner, Crew Leader Brandon Blair, Apprentice Lineman Levi Vogt, Lineman Nick Schachtsiek and Area Serviceman Matt Wassell.

across red dirt, armadillos, copperhead snakes and, according to Schachtsiek, some fantastic sweet tea. The linemen said they were shown good southern hospitality by the co-op employees and affected members.

"Anyone we had contact with thanked us, even people who we weren't directly helping," said Blair. "It was just nice to go down and be able to help out."

The linemen worked 18-hour days restoring power to thousands of members at Carroll EMC and Snapping Shoals EMC. Snapping Shoals has over 95,000 members, 50,000 of which were out of power at one time (Menard Electric serves just over 10,000 members for reference). "We'd repair a single-phase line that would bring on a thousand members in a subdivision," said Blair. "We don't do that here."

"It was a rewarding experience," said Vogt, who was repairing lines after major storm damage for the first time.

Our linemen were among 5,000 cooperative workers from 25 states, 123 from Illinois, who assisted in restoration efforts. Reports showed more than

535,000 members of co-ops without power in Georgia, 260,000 in Florida and 100,000 in South Carolina.

On our Facebook page post about the hurricane relief efforts, we received multiple "thank you" comments from Georgia co-op members. One posted, "A huge Thank You from this Snapping Shoals EMC customer. Your crews had to replace a pole and transformer to restore the power on our street. America at its finest with your linemen working so far from home."

Snapping Shoals EMC Manager of Operations Don Ritchey told the crews, "We could not have accomplished what we did without your assistance."

"Cooperatives help one another, it's just what we do," said Menard Electric General Manager Alisha Anker. "We were readily in a position to send a crew to help two other cooperatives in need, so we did. Menard has answered the call for help before and we'll do it again. We trust that if we are ever in need, help from other cooperatives will similarly head our way."

New load control and rate options for irrigation systems

Menard Electric Co-op serves over 1,200 irrigation systems that are a vital part of the agriculture production in our northern territory. The majority of these irrigators participate in our load control program, which benefits the entire cooperative.

“Load control is important as it allows us to save on Demand charges from our power supplier,” says Engineering Manager Brady Smith. Our power supplier, Prairie Power Inc. (PPI), alerts us when a power peak is likely to occur. This allows us the opportunity to control portions of our electric load to avoid paying additional transmission charges to PPI. This cost savings benefits all Menard Electric members.

Currently, during load control events, we shut off the irrigation systems using a radio signal sent to a switch that is installed and maintained on each irrigation unit by the co-op. We use a similar



System Engineer Dustin Crosier demonstrates how the software allows irrigators control from a tablet.



system for residential members utilizing our water heater load control program.

The existing radio switches do not offer two-way communications and are becoming harder to replace and maintain. “We started looking at options awhile back and found software vendors that had technology already in place that allowed irrigators to control their systems from their phone, tablet or computer,” says Smith. He and System Engineer Dustin Crosier worked with three vendors (AgSense, FieldNET and ReinCloud) to develop an interface specifically for the co-op’s needs.

We can now use a web portal developed by the vendor to schedule load control to irrigation units during event periods as necessary. We’ll receive information about the control and feedback if any systems fail. The biggest advantage to the co-op is that we do not have to maintain the radio equipment in the field.

In addition, we are providing our irrigators with some flexibility. “Irrigators will receive notification about the control and will be able to override the control, at an added Demand cost for the month, if crop development is critical and they must run their pumps,” says Smith.

Farmers can also utilize the software to do many things, including controlling pivots, laterals, drip systems and pumps, getting weather and soil moisture

information, receiving alerts on stuck pivots, and more.

“We’ve beta-tested the software application systems with a limited number of irrigators over time and are excited to release the program now to all our irrigation accounts,” says Smith.

Menard Electric Director Steve Worner, chairman of the co-op’s Irrigation Committee, says, “Due to the aging load control system, Menard Electric needs to update the way we control irrigation systems during peak usage times. The Irrigation Committee felt the web-based system accomplished this and created a win-win for irrigators and the co-op.”

Worner has been involved in the beta-testing and in structuring the co-op’s new rate class, qualification policy, and a rebate program for the new systems. A rebate and a new rate, Rate 51, became available Nov. 1.

Restrictions apply and interested irrigators are encouraged to read the Irrigation Page under the Your Service heading on our website at www.menard.com. There you’ll find our irrigation rate sheet, details on the new rebate, links to approved vendors AgSense, FieldNET and ReinCloud, and much more. To sign up or gain more details, email System Engineer Dustin Crosier at dcrosier@menard.com.

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

ADVERTISING

Menard Electric Co-op members offering services/events that appeal to our membership may be able to advertise on page 11 of this magazine. Contact info@menard.com or call 800/872-1203 and ask for Michelle for details.

SAFETY

Kitchens

Unplug small appliances when not in use

EFFICIENCY

Motion Sensors

Install & never forget to turn off the porch or closet lights again

Board highlights

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

August 22, 2017

- Present: Directors Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; General Manager Alisha Anker, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton & Attorney Charles Smith. Jay Frye absent.
- Hinton: reviewed IRS Form 990 & Illinois Form 990-T.
- Anker: balance sheet, budget, rebate summary, outage summary & costs, work order status, safety report, irrigation report, security report.
- Board approved resolution for 2018 co-op 401k & retirement security plans.
- Board approved NRECA International Program 2018 contribution of \$1,000.
- Anker: Co-Bank Sharing Success Program & options for donations. Board approved donation for equestrian show ring lights at Mason County Fairgrounds.
- Board selected candidates for Co-Bank Board & CFC District 5 meeting elections.
- Anker: options from OMS (outage management system) vendors dataVoice System & Milsoft System; discussed price reductions negotiated from each. Board selected dataVoice.
- Anker: July financial report. Year to date margins \$1,926,550 compared to \$2,172,063 last year. End of July equity 39.65%. Served 10,880 member accounts. Net utility plant \$47,197,057 compared to \$45,125,329 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: AIEC executive summary.
- Martin & Anker: Prairie Power, Inc. & special meeting delegation.
- Anker & Goetsch: Policy/ByLaw Committee report. Policies reviewed last month approved; second bundle of policies provided for review & possible adoption next month.
- Anker: capital credit estate refunds report.
- Board convened into executive session & reconvened.

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
Sangamon County....	217/535-3120
Tazewell County.....	309/694-4391



\$2,000 Scholarships



9 College Scholarships

available through the *Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarship Program*.



Scholarships are available for children of electric cooperative members or employees attending four-year colleges and universities or two-year community colleges. **Deadline:** December 31, 2017

1 Line School Scholarship

available through the *LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship for Lincoln Land Community College*.



Available for children of co-op members, co-op employees or directors, those presently enrolled in the lineworker school, or who have served/are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard. **Deadline:** April 30, 2018

Apply at www.menard.com

No Internet? Call Michelle at the office at 800-872-1203.

