

## Words on the wire

*A time for democracy*



**Alisha Anker**  
General Manager

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, patriotism is "the love for or devotion to one's country." Perhaps no other day of the year evokes such a sense of patriotism than Independence Day.

With flags rippling in the wind—red, white and blue bunting

adorning porches, and store fronts on display during the local parade, feeling a swell of pride for our country should not be lost on any of us. Arguably, another, perhaps deeper, form of patriotism is active engagement in public and civic life.

Involvement in your community promotes a richer life for everyone and ensures that local institutions thrive and remain vibrant and inviting places to live, work and play. Simple things like supporting a bake sale or attending a local community event signals to others that you care and support them, and that the community itself is worth sustaining.

Menard Electric Co-op recently engaged one of its most reverent community activities – the Annual Meeting of Members. This event is held, well, annually, in the spirit of one of our most important cooperative principles – Democratic Participation. If you are

reading this article, you are a member of the co-op with an opportunity to provide input by voting during our Annual Meeting. One of the best ways you can engage with Menard is by participating in the elections of Board members and revisions to the Co-op's Bylaws.

The Menard directors are folks just like you, from the community, who provide guidance to co-op leadership on a myriad of issues and make decisions which affect both the short-term and long-term viability of the organization. Perhaps you haven't voted in the past because you didn't think you were qualified to weigh in on a particular topic, or maybe you simply didn't have the time. But your voice does matter and we are interested in your opinion on the issues that affect our community.

Yet another way to fly your flag of democratic participation comes around again this year as our state association, with the assistance of a marketing research firm, will be conducting a consumer-member survey on our behalf. You may be randomly selected to participate in the project and provide your point of view about the Co-op, its services, reliability and value.

Surveys will be distributed via mail next month. You may complete and return the written form or navigate to the weblink provided in the survey materials to complete the survey online.



It's my philosophy that everyone has valuable experiences that stamp their impression of the co-op. It's these diverse perspectives which I believe can benefit the whole community. I look forward to sharing the results later this year and taking measures to improve our service to you.

I'll note of most importance that the survey research firm will not ask for credit card information or sell or share your private information. Your response is as anonymous as you choose to make it.

Remember, you could be bringing new information to light that hadn't been previously considered. I thank you in advance for participating and providing us with your reflection on the direction of the Co-op's future – an opportunity unique to our democratic process.

Democracy is not a spectator sport; it takes active civic engagement by citizens to thrive. So, this Independence Day, I hope you will embrace the local celebrations and actively participate in your community events and patriotic opportunities! Until my next time, wishes for a safe and happy July go out to all.

***"It's my philosophy that everyone has valuable experiences that stamp their impression of the Co-op. It's these diverse perspectives which I believe can benefit the whole community."***  
- Alisha Anker

Member  
Spotlight

## Going to the dogs



*Red Roof Boarding Kennels*



If you don't own a dog yourself, you surely know many people who do. The most recent survey by the American Pet Products Association says 89.7 million dogs are kept as pets in 60.2 million households in the U.S. Many of those households require overnight or extended pet boarding at least a few times a year for vacations, work trips or other reasons. Others utilize "day care" services that give dogs care during work day hours. Boarding facilities offer a range of services, and we want to tell you about two kennels that we serve.

### Red Roof Boarding Kennels

Jeff Fricke and Karen Schainker run Red Roof Boarding Kennels on the farm Jeff grew up on in Petersburg. Just beyond their home is an old cattle shed that was converted 10 years ago into the kennel; and yes, it has a red roof.

"We just love to be around dogs," says Karen. "This is a hobby job for us - and it takes both of us to run it." The couple takes turns caring for the animals; Jeff's farming job allows him to be flexible and Karen recently retired.

Red Roof features 14 indoor heated/cooled kennels that lead directly into private 10 ft. outdoor runs. "We let them go in and out as they please whenever the weather permits it. The dogs are kept safe and secure inside

their own runs," Karen says.

"They are each also taken to one of our three play yards a minimum of three times a day. If they are social, they'll go out with other dogs; but if not, they'll go out alone."

Sometimes, multiple pets from the same household will room together in a kennel, and they've had up to 24 dogs at one time.

Karen says the busiest time of the year is summer and it's best to call ahead but said that they've been able to help out those who have forgotten to arrange care or who have family emergencies requiring travel. "Things come up, and we do our best to accommodate people," she says.

Dog owners have needed Red Roof for a variety of reasons, from simple overnight stays and extended vacations to sudden family emergencies. Once they boarded two dogs for several months for an owner who worked a contracted job in the area that required her to live in temporary housing. Since she found boarding in the area, the owner came out daily to spend time with her dogs.

Rates are \$15/day and that includes everything the dog will need; owners can bring their own food, treats, bedding and toys if they prefer. Copies of rabies, Bordetella and distemper

vaccinations are required, and flea/tick treatment is recommended.

Red Roof is located at 22260 Carter St. in Petersburg; it's not too far from Menard County Fairgrounds. Call 217-415-4040 or visit [www.redroofkennels.com](http://www.redroofkennels.com) for more information.

### Kinner Kennels Inc.

Amy DeRiemacker and her husband Drew knew they wanted to start a kennel even before Amy earned her degree in Ag Business and Animal Science. "I was pet sitting in college and enjoyed it, and I grew up on a farm, so I was used to the 24-hour job," she says. They live next door, and Amy runs things full time with their two young children alongside her. Drew is heavily involved early mornings, evenings and weekends.

The facility has two wings, each containing 18 indoor heated/cooled kennels that lead to private outdoor runs. The facility can have 36-55 dogs at any given time. Some dogs come a few times a week for day care to socialize while their owners are at work.

The facility has a half-acre lot that can be divided as needed into three sections. "We blend the safety of the runs with the risk of playtime," she says, noting that not all dogs like to socialize, and they can go out alone as needed.





Amy and her staff follow an online education system called Dog Gurus that she says enables them to identify behaviors in dogs early on to allow for safe off-leash play. They keep a dog to staff ratio of seven to one for additional safety; some of those staff are past workers at veterinary clinics, which Amy says allows them to note when an animal may be ill.

Rates are \$25/day for overnight; \$20/day for daycare. Additional services including nail dremel, baths, daily photos and more are available. Owners should bring food and belongings; the facility provides bedding, playtime toys and treats. Dogs must have rabies, Bordetella, and distemper vaccines and be treated for fleas/ticks and heartworm. Amy also recommends the canine influenza vaccine.

"There are several options for pet boarding, and there is a good fit for everyone; we may not be it, and we are honest about that if not. What we want



is for your dog to come here and have a great time," says Amy.

Kinner Kennels is located at 2315 Parkes Kinner Rd. in Pleasant Plains; it's not far off of Route 125, six miles west of Springfield. Planning ahead is crucial, and you'll want to call as soon

as you know you'll need care – when we visited in early May, they were already booked through Labor Day. Call 217-626-1000 or visit [www.kinnerkennels.com](http://www.kinnerkennels.com) to learn more and to fill out a form to request a tour.



## Co-op Corner

# An increased late fee, and ways to avoid it

At one time or another, I think that every one of us has paid a bill late; it happens, and sometimes can't be avoided. Unfortunately, paying your bill late comes with a late fee. Please note that Menard Electric Cooperative's late fee will increase on July 1, 2018. It will increase from 1.5 percent of the outstanding balance or \$1 minimum to 3 percent or \$3 minimum. This means a late fee on a \$150 bill will now be \$4.50. Or if you are just paying for an \$11 a month security light, the late fee will now be \$3 instead of the prior minimum late fee of \$1.

I have a few suggestions that could help you get your bill paid on time and avoid paying the late fee.

We can automatically draft the amount owed on your account on the 17th of every month. This payment

can be drafted out of a checking or savings account.

Don't worry, a bill will still be sent showing how much will be drafted. A form can be found online at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or you can fill out the back of your payment stub and send it in with your current payment.

Another way to avoid late fees is to register to pay online at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) and schedule your payment in advance, before or on the due date. You can schedule the payment on a payday, and it will not be forgotten about. You can also print a copy of your bill from our website once you have registered your account.

Maybe Budget Billing is your way to pay, especially during high usage months. The monthly budget amount will be based on the previous 12 months

actual electric usage. The Budget Billing cycle starts in July and ends with the June "settlement/true-up" billing. Each month, your bill will reflect the difference in your budget amount compared to your actual usage. The difference is then due during the settlement/true-up month, or any credit balance greater than \$5 will be refunded. Just give us a call, and we can get the paperwork sent to you to sign up.

Finally, instead of putting a bill aside until later in the month, go ahead and get it paid in case it gets lost under a pile of other papers. Be sure to allow plenty of time for us to receive the payment by the 28th. Set up monthly payment reminders in your calendar. If you pay on time each month, there should be no need to worry about late fees.

# Board highlights

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

**April 24, 2018**

- Present were Directors Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan & Roy Seaney, Auditor Kevin Kelso, Manager Alisha Anker, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton & Attorney Charles Smith. Jodine Tate & Steven Worner absent.
- Kelso: Reviewed 2017 Audit; presented 2 Year Engagement Letter at rate of \$11,900.00 per year. Board reviewed Peer Review Committee Report; voted to enter into Engagement Letter.
- Directors: Discussed terms & provisions of Conflict of Interest Policy & Disclosure Form; executed Certification & Disclosure for 2018.
- Anker: Discussed member wishing to obtain petition to be candidate for Director. McMillan recused himself. Discussed Bylaws Article IV, Section 4.02. Smith to advise member of eligibility.
- Anker: Reviewed part 1 of 3 of NRECA 2018 National Directors Survey results.
- Anker: Reviewed reports of balance sheet, budget, rebates, surge protection, safety, outage & irrigations (3 new services requested); under security report advised PPI working on virtualizing 2 servers.
- Anker: Discussed 4 possible strategic planning facilitators; will discuss more next meeting.
- Anker: Discussed Sharing Success Program applications for 2018.
- Anker: Discussed CFC Integrity Fund; Board voted to contribute \$500 for territory integrity purposes only.
- Anker: Gave March financial report. Year to date margins \$47,981 compared to \$118,743 last year. End of March equity 39.22%. Served 10,878 member accounts. Net utility plant \$47,999,241 compared to \$46,120,964 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRCFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened. Confirmed & ratified all action taken in executive session.



## SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Mon-Friday through  
September 28**

**OFFICE CLOSED  
JULY 4**

**for Independence Day**



## Irrigation

*An important part of our co-op*

*since the* **1960s**

*when it revolutionized farming.*

**1200+ systems**

**3 counties -  
Cass, Mason & Tazewell.**

## Summer electric bills

**Small ways you can change your habits to save this month**

Summer came early this year, and air conditioners roared to life before Memorial Day. You'll soon be receiving your bill for your usage in the month of June; members often increase their electric usage as they try to stay cool in the summer. Here are some simple ways you can save a little energy as we get through the hot sticky days ahead.

- Use ceiling fans on medium, blowing down to create a "wind chill" effect and increase your comfort. Remember, fans cool you, not rooms – shut them off when you leave.
- Close shades during the day to keep out the sun's heat.
- Try cycling your pool pump instead of running it continuously.
- Run the vent fan when bathing and up to 30 minutes after finishing.
- Hang clothes to avoid using the dryer.
- Only use the anti-sweat feature on your fridge if necessary.

## 2018 ANNUAL MEETING HELD JUNE 14

This newsletter went to print before our Annual Meeting on June 14, so we'll have coverage of the meeting in the August issue. To see photos and news about the meeting now, visit our website at [www.menard.com](http://www.menard.com) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MenardElectric](https://www.facebook.com/MenardElectric).





# Benefitting Future Generations

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives make energy choices that benefit not only this generation, but future generations, making sure we all have the power we need to grow and flourish, right here in our hometown.

**Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.**  
**Your source of power. And information.**

