



**Alisha Anker**  
General Manager

## More services available to members after-hours

### Partnership with Cooperative Response Center, Inc.

We want to provide you with around-the-clock customer service. The best way we can do this is to use a contact center to handle calls when our office is closed or calls are too numerous for our phone lines to handle.

We are excited to announce that we have become a member of Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC) to provide you with additional customer service on your schedule. CRC is a nationwide, 24/7 contact center for electric cooperative utilities; they are used by many other Illinois electric co-ops and like us, they put service excellence in the forefront.

Call our regular phone numbers (800-872-1203, 217-632-7746) any time 24/7, and when our member services

personnel are unavailable, a CRC service representative will serve you.

- Just like always, you can report outages by phone any time, day or night.
- You can now make payments over the phone at your convenience 24 hours a day from your credit/debit card or e-check.
- You can report security light outages and other issues when it is convenient for you, and CRC will give us a message when our office opens so we can take care of it.
- On days when all the phone lines are busy during our office hours, CRC will pick up additional calls. It's like we gain dozens of extra employees, only when we need them most!

Most of our calls will go through CRC's Minnesota office, but when all their representatives are busy, calls could be routed through a Tennessee or Texas office. Three offices full of representatives means the chances of you calling in and receiving a busy signal just got even more remote!

*Please note:* When you call after hours from the phone number we have listed as your primary number, your account information will automatically appear to the CRC staff member, considerably shortening the response time. Keeping your contact information updated with us is important. Please check your bill in the top right corner to be sure the number is correct and mark any updates on the back of your bill stub.

LINEWORKERS KNOW HOW TO GET THE JOB DONE.

LET'S THANK THEM FOR POWERING OUR LIVES.



Lineworker Appreciation Day  
April 13, 2020

## Did you know?

### *Load control programs help the co-op*

Some of our members with electric water heaters and irrigation systems participate in our rate-incented load control programs. In exchange for reduced energy and demand charges, these members allow the co-op to remotely shut off power to their equipment for a limited time period during a load control event. Their participation in this program saves them money and the co-op too. Here's how:

We purchase our power from Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI). They send all the co-op's power requirements to substations via transmission power lines, some of which are owned by PPI and some by Ameren Illinois. The co-op takes possession of the power at the substations then distributes to our members via Menard Electric's distribution lines.

Each month we receive a power bill from PPI for the power purchased and transmission service provided. A portion of that bill includes the cost of transmission services Ameren Illinois provides to

Menard Electric, contractually through PPI. A savings opportunity is possible if these transmission costs can be lowered.

Ameren's bill for transmission service is structured like a demand charge. The determinants include the single hour of the month in which the Ameren system (across the entire state) used the most electricity. In the utility biz, systems call this their monthly peak hour. Another determinant of the Ameren bill is PPI's electricity use during that same single hour. Any load reductions which can be made during that hour reduces the amount of energy Ameren transmits that particular hour, therefore reducing the transmission charges from Ameren. PPI passes those savings onto its co-op members which contributed to the load reduction.

Predicting when the monthly peak hour will occur is more of an art than a science. PPI monitors weather conditions, actual hourly load conditions and load forecasts to provide us with highly

likely load control event recommendations. Our engineering team reviews that information and participates when the conditions for load reduction from Menard members align. Conditions may present multiple times in a month; weather and rainfall (or lack thereof) is key to our decision-making when it comes to calling for load control.

Think about it this way, if your entire monthly bill for electricity was based on what you used during one hour of the month, you would do everything you could to reduce your energy usage during that hour, right?

We want to say thank you to our members who participate in our load control programs, helping us to save on our power bills and pass those savings along to the cooperative membership.

Please contact us with any questions or to inquire if you are eligible to participate in our rate-incented load control programs.

## Help us help you:

### Keep pad-mounted transformers clear



Green or grey utility boxes, known as pad-mounted or padmount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your neighborhood.

These boxes step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes.

Limiting or restricting access to the box in your yard could delay restoration work during an outage and create a serious safety hazard. We need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the side that is padlocked), as well as four feet of clearance on the other three sides.

Please do not paint, enhance, block or otherwise obstruct padmount transformers.

Do not plant shrubs and trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment.

Always teach children that they should not sit on, open or play around the green boxes.



## Farmers: Look up while planting

▲ Take notice of our lines running along roads, field edges & at field entrances.

▲ Always maintain a 10-foot minimum distance (below, above & to each side) from our lines.

▲ Use a spotter to verify clearance.

▲ If your vehicle or machinery comes into contact with a power line, do not get out; stay where you are & call 911 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize power.

[safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)

## Director petitions due April 20

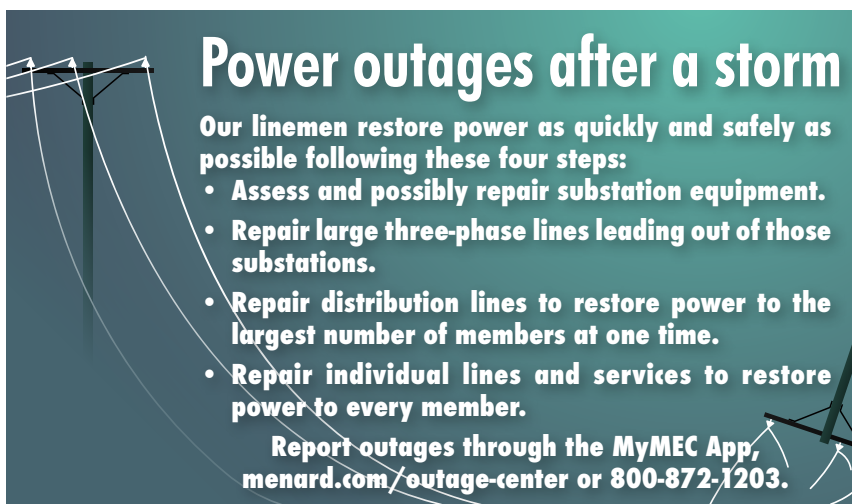
Are you interested in becoming a Menard Electric Cooperative Director?  
Are you a member in good standing with electrical service and your primary place of residence in Districts 3, 7 or 8?

(You can view a District map at [menard.com/board-directors](http://menard.com/board-directors) or call us.)

Stop in the office for more details and to pick up a petition. Petitions must be signed by no less than 10 members and must be received in our office by April 20, 2020. Elections will be held at our Annual Meeting of Members Thursday, June 4, 2020.

Incumbents are District 3: Jodine Tate of Virginia; District 7: Mike Patrick of New Holland; District 8: Warren Goetsch of Williamsville.

Detailed information regarding the duties of a Director can be found in our bylaws at [menard.com/bylaws](http://menard.com/bylaws) or call to request a copy.



## Power outages after a storm

Our linemen restore power as quickly and safely as possible following these four steps:

- Assess and possibly repair substation equipment.
- Repair large three-phase lines leading out of those substations.
- Repair distribution lines to restore power to the largest number of members at one time.
- Repair individual lines and services to restore power to every member.

Report outages through the MyMEC App, [menard.com/outage-center](http://menard.com/outage-center) or 800-872-1203.

## 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below.  
Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: [call811.com](http://call811.com)

### 1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



[illinois1call.com](http://illinois1call.com)

### 2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



### 3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



### 4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



### 5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.



## Board highlights

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

**January 28, 2020**

- Present were Directors Warren Goetsch, Gary Holloway, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner, Engineering Manager Brady Smith, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith. President D. Jay Frye absent. Vice-President Goetsch conducted Mtg.
- Smith: Discussed proposed Prairie Power Member Fiber Use Agreement. Motion carried to approve.
- Anker: Reviewed 2019 accomplishments.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet, budget, member services dept report, operations & reliability report, status of irrigation service construction, Connect newsletter.
- Anker: Gave December financial report. Year to date margins were \$2,375,133 compared to \$2,019,692 last year. End of January equity 40.37%. Served 10,926 member accounts. Net utility plant \$51,332,397 compared to \$49,291,780 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- McMillan appointed delegate & Goetsch alternate to NRTC Ann Mtg. Worner appointed delegate & Ryan alternate to CFC Ann Mtg.
- Anker & Ryan: Gave safety report & reviewed concealed carry ban policy.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Martin: Reported on Finance Committee mtg. Motion carried to approve Resolution for general capital credit retirement of \$700,000 & estate retirements of \$160,000; equity will be 39.66% after retirements. Discussed unclaimed retired capital credits, deferred to Policy/Bylaw Committee.
- Anker: Discussed CFC rate study & advised AIEC will complete an independent study on rates.
- Anker: Reviewed need for proposed rate schedule for station power service; will proceed to develop.
- Martin: Advised Finance Committee reviewing employee benefits.
- Board: Entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Next Board Meeting 2/27/2020.

## Annual Meeting

**Thursday, June 4 at PORTA High School in Petersburg**

Visit with friends and neighbors, receive an attendance gift, have dinner, vote for directors, learn about us, and maybe win a prize — we hope you'll agree that sounds like a pretty good Thursday evening!  
**We hope to see you there!**



## Bratwurst Soup

*Tim Schafer, Field Engineer*

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds Bratwurst (sliced to preference)
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons oregano
- 2 tablespoons basil
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 15 ounces black beans
- 15 ounces pinto beans
- 15 ounces kidney beans
- 16 ounces salsa
- 26 ounces tomato sauce
- 1 tomato, diced
- 14 ounces chicken stock
- 4 tablespoons chili seasoning
- 12 ounces shaped pasta

Heat olive oil in a Dutch oven, brown Bratwurst slices, add onions, green peppers, oregano, basil, garlic and black pepper. When this mixture becomes fragrant, add chicken broth and salsa. Add jar full of water and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Add pasta, boil and stir for about five minutes. ENJOY!!

Tim says, "This is a very hearty, flavorful soup that will be a big hit any time of year. I like to use my homemade bratwurst, salsa and any vegetables and herbs I grow at home. Every batch is slightly different due to annual differences in growing conditions."

**Celebrate**



# Earth DAY

## GO PAPERLESS!

We have the perfect way you can take part in Earth Day on April 22! You can go paperless and receive your bills electronically.

In addition to helping the environment, you'll reduce extra paper clutter in your home and receive an email when your bill is ready.

It is easy to sign up! Log on to your account through the MyMEC App or from [menard.com](http://menard.com). Choose "Account Management," Select the "Paperless Options" tab, and check the "Email" and "Paperless Bill" boxes.

Don't worry, if you ever change your mind you can request paper bills again – but we are guessing you will appreciate the lack of clutter and the good feeling you get from supporting the environment this Earth Day by going paperless!

**Sign up in April for  
a chance to win a  
\$25 gift card!**

