

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

75th Anniversary

Door to door electricity salesmen

\$2.50 is pocket change today. You may be able to find that much under your car's seats. But in 1936, it was a larger amount. And giving it to a neighbor on your doorstep who told you it would bring electricity to your home was a risk.

Dozens of volunteers went door to door in 1936 talking to their neighbors about a new cooperative and how it could change their lives. Some residents were thrilled and quickly signed up, anxious for the help electricity could provide them. For others, the concept of a co-op was too unsure, or they were afraid to have electricity in their homes.

"They feared it might set fire to their homes. We had farmers who mentioned the possibility of a pole or tree falling across a line and electrocuting their livestock," said Homer Brown of New Holland, a board member for 17 years. "For these and other reasons that seemed entirely valid to them, they wouldn't invest \$2.50 in our cooperative."

But volunteers believed so strongly in the co-op and in the relief that electricity would bring their neighbors that they did not give up. Even after the first lines were energized and the war had come and gone, they were still



signing up new members for the co-op.

After the war they began using a teaser system to persuade the more reluctant residents. It consisted of a portable transformer on a trailer with an extension line pinned to the ground and various safety measures put into place. It ran a line into a home to give the residents an idea of how electrically powered lights, washing machines, irons, radios and more would benefit them. It worked well at selling the benefits of electricity, especially to farm wives.

But once they had electricity, some members were still unsure how to take advantage of it. They paid their minimum charge of \$3.25 a month but were only using a few light bulbs and maybe a water pump and weren't taking full advantage of what that price could buy them. Menard Electric began educating members on appli-

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Facility Charge and Security Light Increase

A lot goes into providing you with power so that it is available to you every time you flip the switch. Menard Electric Cooperative must have a complex system permanently in place to deliver to each member the power that they need when they need it.

Residential and small commercial members should note that the cost of your electricity is divided on your bill each month into two main segments - the facility cost and the electric charge. The electric charge is the cost per kilowatt hour for the actual amount of electricity that you used.

The facility cost is the fixed cost of providing you with the option of using that electricity. The facility charge pays for a portion of the poles, wires, transformers, meters and more that are needed to provide you with power. These fixed costs remain the same no matter how much electricity you use.

Recently we asked the Engineering Department at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives to perform a cost of service study of our cooperative. They analyzed all of our costs and how our rates were working to recover those expenses. The findings of the study concluded that we were only recouping about 75 percent of our fixed costs for providing you with electricity. Our current residential

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ances and devices that could make their lives easier. The Rural Electric Association (REA) conducted fairs to show off appliances and held demonstrations to showcase all of the conveniences electrical appliances offered for farmers and their wives. It didn't take long before appliances were being delivered to every home.

George Lewis of the REA attended a ceremony for the first line set at Menard Electric. He called electricity the world's most efficient and faithful hired man. He said, "Do not be satisfied that you have electricity, but see that you are good neighbors and do all in your power to help the others in your county to have this new servant."

Everyone in our service area received electricity thanks to those volunteers in the beginning whom believed so strongly and pounded on countless doors. And now, 75 years later, we hardly need anyone to sell us on the advantages of electricity or teach us how to utilize it in our homes.

Just think of all the ways electricity has benefitted your family today. It's hard to remember how much we rely on something that we can't see. And sometimes, like during a particularly hot summer, it's hard to believe we used so much of it. After all, electricity is one of the few things you pay for after you use it, unlike your cell phone, Internet, gas and groceries for example.

Apprenticeships finished

Dalton Whitley and Jason Beggs have completed their four-year apprenticeships and become Journeyman Linemen with Menard Electric Cooperative. From left are General Manager Lynn Frasco, Whitley, Beggs and General Foreman Bob Burris.



Dalton began with the co-op in 2007 as summer help while attending college and majoring in political science. He changed course and began training to become a lineman, com-

pleting his four years of apprenticeship here at Menard.

Jason joined Menard Electric in 2010 as a second-year apprentice. He previously worked for CWLP as an apprentice lineman.

Trivia?

WIN \$75!

Every few months we'll have a trivia question concerning our history (you'll have read the answer in past issues). Please mail us your answer by the 28th. We'll put all the correct answers in a drawing each month and one lucky winner will receive a \$75 credit on their next month's bill.

What was the date (month, day and year) that the first meeting was held concerning the formation of Menard Electric?

Answer

Make One Change



We encourage you to make one small, no-cost change each month to save energy. To find out how all the little changes add up visit www.togetherwesave.coop.

Fireplace Efficiency

Keep your fireplace damper closed unless you build a fire. An open damper allows as much warm air to escape as a fully open window. If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

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rates facility charge of \$24 is below the amount determined in the cost of service study.

At the Menard Electric Cooperative September 27 board meeting your Board of Directors carefully analyzed the co-op's current financial margins, the cost of service study, and our facility charges. They voted to increase the facility charges for all residential and small commercial rate classes. Most of you reading this article are on a residential rate. The increase in the facilities charge for residential rates will be \$5 a month. A listing of all rate classes and the increases for each are at right.

The increase will be effective January 1, 2012. You'll notice the increase on your February 7th bill.

In addition to the facility charge increase, the cost of service study performed indicated to us that we are not charging adequately for security lights.

If you have a security light maintained by the cooperative, the cost will increase \$1 per month to \$8 for our standard 100W light.

We'd like to say that the facility charge and security light increases will take care of us for quite some time. But unfortunately Menard Electric is facing a rate increase of our own, from our power supplier Prairie Power Inc. (PPI). Future articles will discuss why our rates from PPI have been increasing, and the estimated cost of energy in the next few years.

The Board of Directors is now determining what Menard Electric will need to do in order to meet this increase in the cost of energy while still "breaking even." Remember, as a cooperative we exist not to make a profit that goes to shareholders, but to supply electric energy to our members and any margins we do make are turned back to our members in the

form of capital credits.

Raising the facility charge is the first step to keeping us financially sound. As of now, the board anticipates an electric charge rate increase for the fall of 2012. We'll keep you informed in upcoming issues.

Facility charge by rate class

Rate (can be found on your bill)	Current Charge	New Charge
10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 40	\$24	\$29
20, 21	\$55	\$65
30, 31	\$80	\$95
52	\$35	\$50
60, 61, 62	\$30	\$35
70	\$100	\$125
Security light	\$7.00	\$8.00
100Watt HPS		

Monthly Safety Tip

Install GFCIs

An easy way to keep your family safe is to install GFCI outlets in bathrooms, kitchens, garages and outdoor spaces to protect against shocks in wet locations. They could save your life!



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1-800-872-1203
217-632-7746
www.menard.com

Office Closings

Friday, Nov. 11 for Veterans Day
Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24 & 25 for Thanksgiving

Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at www.menard.com or contact our office.

Present were Manager Lynn Frasco, Attorney Charles Smith and Directors Gary Martin, Jerry Brooks, Michael Carls, Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Steven Worner. Donald McMillan was absent.

Brian Adams, Manager of Engineering for AIEC, reviewed 2011 Cost of Service Study.

Frasco advised co-op had received two new copiers.

Staff was still working on decision regarding who future software vendor would be. Additional informa-

tion requested from vendors. Frasco hoped decision would be made by next meeting.

Reviewed July Loss Control Report. URG Service Extension Agreement-Luker-Carter Development approved.

Direct Carls reported on Prairie Power, Inc. He discussed Strategic Planning Session held by the Prairie Power Board.

Manager Frasco reviewed the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Director Goetsch reported on the recent meeting of the ByLaw and

Policy Committee.

Approved extension of the line of credit at CoBank.

Year to date margins were \$362,725 compared to \$996,354 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of July was 33.66% and the number of members served was 10,525 compared to 10,511 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of July was \$36,037,698 compared to \$35,187,786 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

College Scholarships Available

2012 Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship Program

Six scholarships of \$1,250 are available for high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member.

Four scholarships are reserved for students attending a two- or four-year accredited college or university in the United States (includes vocational and technical schools).

Two scholarships are for students

enrolling full-time at an Illinois community college.

See your high school guidance counselor, download information and an application from our website at www.menard.com or call the office.

Deadline is December 31.

LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship

One \$1,250 scholarship is available for the lineworker's school conducted

by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College.

Applicants can be the son or daughter of a co-op member, relatives of a co-op employee, or someone who has served, or is serving, in the armed forces or National Guard.

For more information and an application visit www.menard.com or call the office.

Deadline is April 30.

Need help paying your electric bill?

If you qualify, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) would provide a one-time lump sum payment directly to us on your behalf. The payment is based upon the number of people in your household and their combined 30-day gross monthly income. Family of one - \$1,361; two - \$1,839; three - \$2,316. Call your local office for additional amounts and information.

The process can take 30 days once you have completed an application. The LIHEAP program can also help with natural gas, propane, wood and heating oil payments.

If you think you are eligible please contact an agent in your area.

Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)

www.capcil.org
 Logan County-1800 5th Street, Lincoln, IL 62656; 217-732-2159
 Mason County-301 S. Dale St, Havana, IL 62644; 309-543-2594
 Menard County-1118 North Fourth St, Petersburg, IL 62675; 217-632-3878

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp.

1122 E. Marietta St., Decatur, IL 62521; 217-428-0155 ext. 219; www.dmcoc.org

MCS Community Services (Cass & Morgan County)

345 W. State St., Jacksonville, IL 62650; 217-243-9404;
www.morgancounty.il.com/MCS-Community-Services

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources

2833 South Grand Ave. East, Suite C100, Springfield, IL;
 217-535-3120; www.co.sangamon.il.us/departments/resource

Tazwood Community Service, Inc. (Tazewell County)

2005 S. Main St., Morton, IL 61550-1540; 309-266-9941