

**SAVE
THE DATE!**

Annual Meeting of Members

Wednesday, June 18 • Pleasant Plains High School

Next month's issue of Illinois Country Living will provide more details. Information is also available at www.menard.com/annualmeeting and on our Facebook page.



SCAN HERE

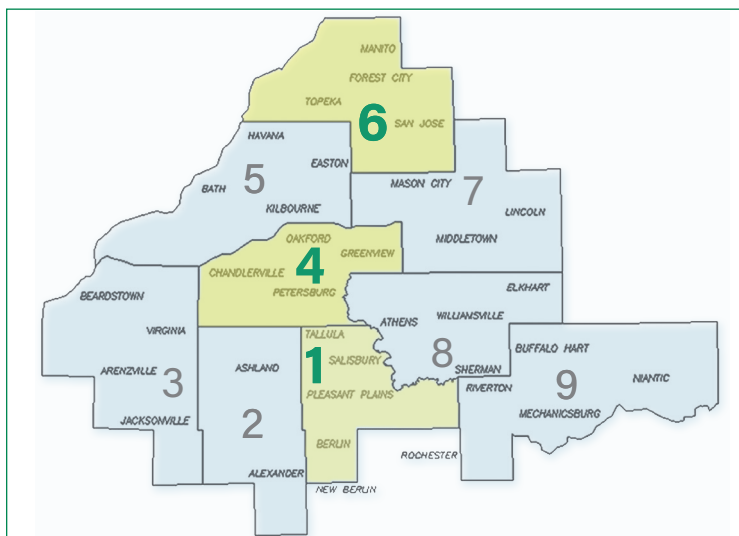
Director Election

Petitions due May 2 for election at Annual Meeting of Members

Our board of directors is made up of nine directors, each representing a director district and serving a three-year term. Three director districts are up for election at each Annual Meeting of Members. This year those districts are:

- **District 1:** Tallula, Salisbury, Pleasant Plains, Berlin areas. Incumbent Gary Holloway will seek reelection.
- **District 4:** Chandlerville, Oakford, Greenview, Petersburg areas. Incumbent Dennis Ryan will seek reelection.
- **District 6:** Manito, Forest City, Topeka, San Jose areas. Incumbent Steve Worner will seek reelection.

Members who reside in Districts 1, 4 and 6 may submit a petition for the director election by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 2025. The election will be held



at the Annual Meeting of Members Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at Pleasant Plains High School, Pleasant Plains, Ill.

To run for the position of director, you will need to pick up a petition

packet at our office at 14300 Illinois State Highway 97, Petersburg, Ill.

Questions about running for Director? Email info@menard.com or call 800-872-1203.

What Directors do:

- Are a member in good standing and do not have conflicting business interests. (They pay the same rates for service and follow the same policies as all other members.)
- Serve 3-year terms.
- Meet for regular board meetings primarily the fourth Tuesday of each month.
- Meet for special meetings and committee meetings.
- Establish policies.
- Employ a general manager who is responsible for day-to-day operations.
- Remain accessible to members within their district and represent all members.
- Spend time acquiring knowledge about the electric utility including finances, management and public issues. (It takes time to learn the system, and for that reason, our directors have made long-term commitments to serving the co-op.)
- More details about directors are listed in our bylaws, available at www.menard.com/bylaws.

Vegetation management

Improving safety and reliability

Safety

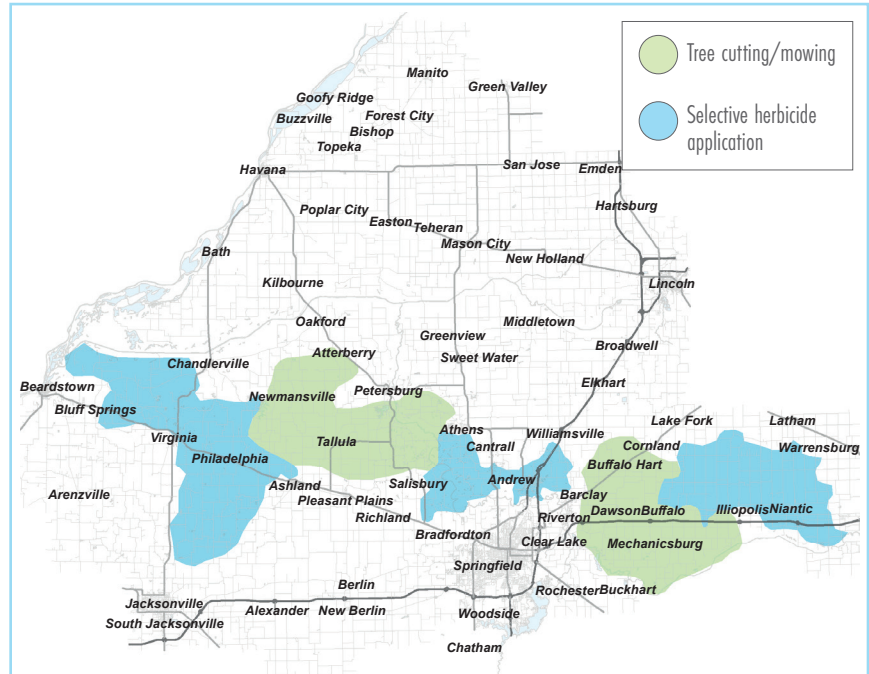
Power lines must be kept clean and free of vegetation, particularly trees, to ensure the safety and reliability of electrical infrastructure. Overgrown vegetation can pose significant hazards, as branches or foliage may come into contact with power lines, leading to electrical shorts, outages or even fires. Additionally, such contact can create dangerous situations for individuals working nearby or for those who may inadvertently come into contact with the lines, increasing the risk of electrocution or serious injury.

Moreover, maintaining a clear zone around power lines is essential for the efficient operation of the electrical grid. Vegetation can obstruct access for maintenance crews, complicating necessary repairs and inspections. By ensuring that power lines are free from encroaching trees and other plants, utility companies can enhance the overall safety of the community, minimize service interruptions, and reduce the likelihood of costly damage to both the infrastructure and surrounding properties.

Vegetation Management

To ensure the safety and reliability of our services, we diligently manage vegetation along our extensive network of over 2,600 miles of power lines. Our objective is to clear each section every five to six years, which necessitates both manual and mechanical trimming to maintain adequate clearance and prevent regrowth. Specifically, we aim to clear a minimum of 15 feet on either side of our single-phase lines and at least 25 feet from the center of the pole for three-phase lines.

In instances where trees cannot be adequately trimmed to meet clearance requirements, we take the necessary steps to remove those trees, as well as smaller trees and brush located beneath or in close proximity to larger



trees. This proactive approach not only facilitates access but also mitigates potential future issues that could arise from overgrown vegetation.

Our crews are instructed to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the American National Standards Institute, which are designed to promote the long-term health of trees while ensuring safety for both our employees and the community. It is important to note that property owners bear the responsibility for the maintenance of trees and vegetation adjacent to their service lines, which connect the main power line to their homes. For safety reasons, we encourage property owners to contact us to arrange for a temporary disconnection of their service line, allowing qualified tree services to perform necessary work safely.

2025 Schedule

We will collaborate with Spoon River Electric Cooperative and engage contracted crews to manage the cutting and mowing of vegetation along

the circuits extending from our substations located in Petersburg, Barclay and Mechanicsburg. The specific areas designated for this work are marked in green on the accompanying map.

In addition, herbicide will be applied selectively to the brush as necessary in the areas indicated in blue, which are served by the substations in Virginia, Petersburg, New Berlin, Oakford, Poplar City, Salisbury, Sherman, Barclay, Mechanicsburg and Lanesville. This approach represents the most cost-effective strategy for right-of-way maintenance, enabling us to prolong our trimming cycle and minimize the volume of brush that will require clearing following regrowth.

—Raine Williams

Raine recently joined the co-op as our Forester/Engineering Technician. To contact him, email rwilliams@menard.com or call 800-872-1203.



Member Spotlight

Verde Florals and Events — Spreading joy with flowers

"This is a business that spreads joy," says Verde Florals owner Dana Weatherby. "I get the reward of seeing the bride's face when I hand her the bouquet. And, it is a joy for me to grow the flowers and prepare the bouquets. The person purchasing the flowers finds joy in having them in their home or event or in giving them away. And, in that case, the person receiving the flowers finds joy."

Growing up, Dana was surrounded by flowers grown by her mother. "She spent a lot of time on her gardens, and they were gorgeous," she says. Dana always enjoyed her own garden, and when her niece got married, she provided flowers for the reception. That's when the idea for Verde Florals was sparked; the next spring, Dana grew more flowers with the intention of selling them.

She knew the business had to be able to work around her family's farming operation, and she's found a way to do just that, ending her season when harvest begins. Dana started with farmer's markets but quickly evolved to provide subscription bouquet services and supply some events. Through the last few years, her garden has continued to grow.

The empty lot next to her home that used to serve as a play lot/baseball field now holds 1/3 of an acre of flowers.

Planning starts after the harvest season ends. Seeds are started in the garage and moved outdoors later. The work doesn't end there, of course, as watering and weeding continue all season. "Keeping ahead of the weeding really gets difficult come July; the temperatures increase, and we've hopefully had rain, and the weeds and flowers really get going," she says. In addition, the flowers have to be cut on schedule to keep producing.

Her garden looks a little different than you'd find at home. Like flowers are planted together; all the tulips are in a block, all the dahlias, etc. Placement is determined by factors such as sunlight and water needs, the height of grown flowers, etc. "Sometimes I'll need to plant a variety that traditionally stays shorter near a taller variety so that it will grow a little taller to reach the sun, making it better for cuttings," she says.

"I grow garden bouquets that are comprised of a variety of flowers throughout the season. You may find

some of the flowers I grow at a local florist, but many others you won't," she says.

Although the majority of her flowers are annuals, Dana recently planted 300 peonies for spring bouquets. "I'm looking down the road with those; peonies take about three years to really get established. Then they'll last a long time. It will be a wonderful spring flower," she says.

Dana makes arrangements for weddings and corporate events, baby showers, retirements and more; the Petals, Pours & Poses events each summer at West of Wise are popular. However, a lot of her flowers are reserved for her weekly subscription customers. Each week, subscribers receive a wrapped bouquet of fresh flowers. "People like having fresh flowers in their homes all summer, and these are different each week," she says. The bouquets are picked up at West of Wise in Petersburg or District 23 in Springfield.



Verde Florals and Events is located in Sangamon County. Check out their Facebook and Instagram pages for photos and to learn about local events and offerings.



Verdefloralevents



Verde Florals and Events



Verde.floralevents@gmail.com



Board highlights

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

Jan. 23, 2025

- All directors present in person or by phone. General Manager Alisha Anker & Director of Accounting & Finance Julie Atwater present.
- Atwater presented 2024 Inventory Adjustment positive at \$12,830.87; discussed improvements made to management & accounting of inventory; then left mtg.
- Reviewed progress of Strategic Plan goals.
- Presented year-end net metering bank.
- Anker reviewed Dec. monthly & YTD financial trends. Operating margins \$1,917,330 compared to \$1,278,388 last year; equity at 41.02%, 12-mo TIER 3.07 & DSC 2.20. Presented Loan Maturity Schedule.
- Reviewed Dec. operations report w/40 incidents, longest duration of single outage 300 min. due to downed pole affecting 1 member, largest # affected by single outage 128 due to transmission.
- Approved resolution for special retirement of capital credits during 2025 to accommodate member estates.
- Next Mtg 2/25/25.

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 by email and online.

In addition to helping the environment, you'll reduce extra paper clutter in your home and receive your bill by email as soon as it is processed.



It is easy to sign up!

Log on to your account through the MyMEC App or from www.menard.com

Call 8-1-1 Before You Dig!



1-800-872-1203
info@menard.com

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PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675

 www.menard.com
 facebook.com/MenardElectricCoop

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POWERING YOUR LIFE

It's good to know your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is always there. For generations we've powered the growth of our neighborhoods, businesses, and everything in between. Today our commitment is stronger than ever to provide affordable and reliable energy on which you can depend.

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