

Vegetation Management

Protecting our communities through safety and reliability



Raine Williams
Forester

Maintaining clear and safe power line corridors is essential to protecting the public and the electrical system that serves our communities. Trees and other vegetation growing too close to power lines can cause power outages, equipment damage, and in some cases, wildfires. These hazards also increase the risk of serious injury or electrocution to utility workers, property owners and the public.

Proactive vegetation management helps prevent these dangers before they occur. By keeping power lines clear, we improve system reliability, reduce emergency repairs, and ensure crews can

safely access equipment when maintenance or restoration is needed.

2026 Vegetation Management Program

In 2026, we will continue vegetation management work across more than **2,400 miles of power lines** throughout our service area. Each segment of line is maintained on an **8-year cycle**, using a combination of professional manual trimming and mechanical clearing to establish safe clearances and manage regrowth.

Minimum clearance standards include:

- **Single-phase lines:** 15 feet on each side of the line
- **Three-phase lines:** 25 feet from the center of the pole

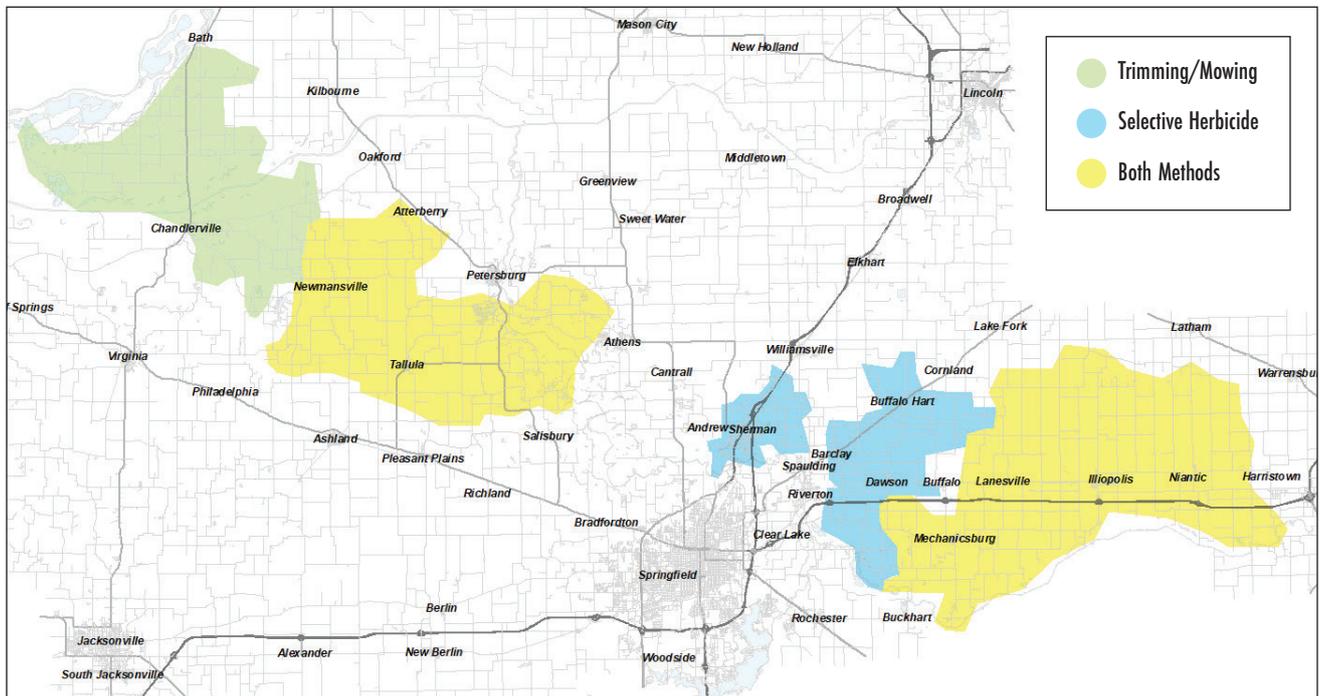
When vegetation cannot be safely trimmed to meet clearance

requirements, **tree removal may be necessary.** This may include hazard trees or vegetation growing beneath or near larger trees that could interfere with power lines in the future. These actions help ensure long-term reliability and reduce repeat maintenance needs.

2026 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, Saidora, Lanesville and Mechanicsburg.

In addition, herbicide will be applied selectively to the brush as necessary in areas previously trimmed served by the substations in Petersburg, Sherman, Barclay, Lanesville and Mechanicsburg.



SPRING STORMS

Because of publication deadlines, we are preparing this newsletter just after winter storms hit our area at the end of January. We hope that when you read this issue, temperatures are warm and spring feels like it is on the way! But even if March is coming in like a lion instead of a lamb, we know

that spring weather is not far off, and with all that sunshine and warmer temperatures also come potential for severe storms — and storm-related power outages. Here are a few things regarding outages we want to remind members of at this time of year.

General tips

- ⚡ When thunder roars, go indoors! Seek shelter during thunderstorms.
- ⚡ Have an emergency kit ready that contains essentials such as batteries, power banks, flashlights, nonperishable foods, water, sanitation supplies and a first-aid kit. Visit www.ready.gov for more resources.
- ⚡ Never cook indoors with a charcoal grill; carbon monoxide can build up in the home and be deadly.
- ⚡ Follow food safety guidelines for refrigerated/frozen foods after an outage (www.foodsafety.gov has tips.)
- ⚡ Never touch electrical appliances, cords, wires or electric yard tools while you are wet or standing in water.
- ⚡ Do not step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering outlets, cords, or is in contact with appliances.
- ⚡ During a storm-related outage, consider unplugging all unnecessary appliances and electrical equipment. Leave a light on so you will know when power is restored; then turn appliances back on one at a time.
- ⚡ If you have had damage at your location and are unsure if your outage is due to your equipment, a quick glance at your meter could give you a clue. If you do not see any digital numbers, the meter is not receiving power from us, and you need to report the outage.

Outage reporting and updates

- ⚡ Download the MyMEC App to report and stay updated on outages. Make sure you have enabled notifications on the app.
- ⚡ You can also report outages at menard.com/outage-center or by calling 800-872-1203 or 217-632-7746.
- ⚡ We want to get your information to our crews as quickly as possible and for that reason ask that you do not report outages via email or Facebook.
- ⚡ We provide updates for large and extended outages on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MenardElectricCoop.

Downed lines

- ⚡ Stay away from all downed power lines and call us to report.
- ⚡ Be aware of any lines that could be hidden by storm debris.
- ⚡ Remember: Lines could be energized and dangerous even if the surrounding area does not have power.

Generators

- ⚡ Generators must have a transfer switch, or appliances connected directly, to avoid electricity backfeeding onto power lines.
- ⚡ Place in a dry, open, well-ventilated area away from the home or attached garages.
- ⚡ Read and follow all manufacturer instructions and perform maintenance between uses.
- ⚡ If you have a whole house backup generator, please fill out the form at our webpage www.menard.com/generators.



Mutual aid for storm recovery

Central Illinois experienced subzero temps but avoided the ice and much of the heavy snow during winter storm Fern that covered the south in ice on Jan. 25, 2026. A crew of six linemen from Menard Electric headed out early the next morning to help restore power to thousands of affected members served by cooperatives in Kentucky.

Nearly two weeks later another six-man crew left for Mississippi to relieve crews still working to restore power from the storm. The crews braved brutally cold temps, high wind gusts, difficult terrain and treacherous road conditions.

Cooperatives helping Cooperatives is a founding principle, and Menard Electric is

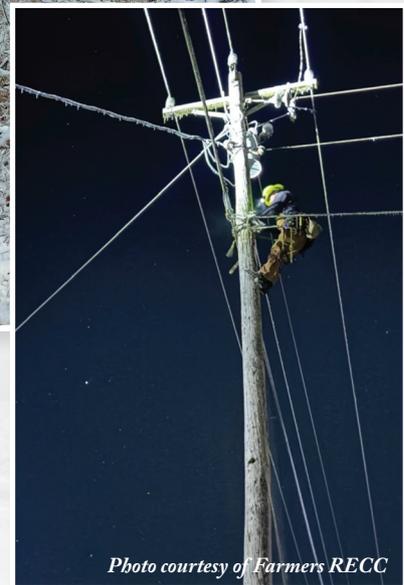


Photo courtesy of Farmers RECC

thankful to have linemen willing to help restore power to Kentucky and Mississippi co-op members. And we are thankful to know that if our co-op were to need assistance, we too could call on other co-ops to come to our aid.

Board highlights

For meeting dates, agendas and full minutes visit menard.com or contact the office.

Dec. 19, 2025

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.

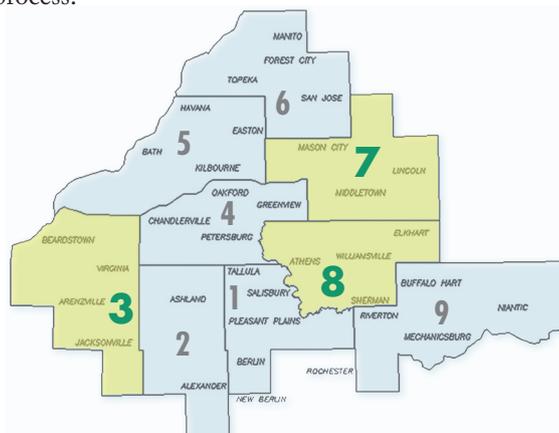
- All Directors present; also General Manager, Attorney and Director of Accounting & Finance.
- Approved rescheduling of Feb mtg to 2/26/26.
- Approved revised rate codes and riders. [Editor's note: details of rates published in January issue & available at www.menard.com/2026-rate-increase.]
- Approved restatement of Executive Compensation 457(b) Plan due to enactment of Secure 2.0 Act by U.S. Congress.
- Approved Load Modifying Resource Service Agreement with Prairie Power, Inc.
- Reviewed November monthly & YTD financial trends. Operating margins \$2,885,802 compared to \$3,035,794 last year; equity at 42.85%; 12-mo TIER 2.75 & DSC 2.02.
- Reviewed operations report: 60 incidents; longest duration of outage 291 min affected 1 member due to downed line in bad weather; largest # affected by single outage 78 due to fuse failure.
- Approved 2026 block heater reimbursement.
- Approved increase to possible one-time contributions to retiree HRA account.
- Designated Director Jodine Tate as NRTC voting delegate. Designated Director Jay Frye primary & General Manager Alisha Anker secondary delegates to ICWCG & RSI annual meetings.
- Next mtg 1/23/26.

Yearly Director Election

Our Board of Directors is made up of nine Directors, each representing a Director District and serving a three-year term. Each year three Director Districts are up for election at the Annual Meeting of Members.

Looking ahead to the 2026 Annual Meeting, Directors in Districts 3, 7 and 8 will be elected. If you reside in any of these districts and are interested in running for Director, please contact the office or see details about qualifications and the election process on our website at www.menard.com/board-directors.

Watch for next month's issue of this publication, our website and Facebook page for this year's Annual Meeting date and the details of the election process.





Pay your bill the easy way

Automatic Bill Payment Authorization

Send us this form to have your bill automatically deducted from a bank account or credit card each month. The amount deducted from your account will be the total amount due on your bill. You will still receive a bill statement to know how much to deduct each month. Deductions are taken each month on the date you select.

This form must be received by the 28th of the month for your next month's bill to be drafted. Include it with your next payment or mail separately to PO Box 200, Petersburg, IL 62675

Name: _____ SS# last four digits _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ MEC Account # _____

Date payment will occur each month (choose one) ___ 10th ___ 17th ___ 24th

Bank Account Draft

Bank Name: _____

Bank Routing # _____ Account # _____
___ Checking acct. *You must include a voided check with this form.* ___ Savings acct.

Credit Card Draft

___ VISA ___ MASTERCARD ___ DISCOVER Card# last four digits _____
A member services representative will call you for the additional card number details.

I authorize Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) to draw monthly bank/credit card drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying MEC in writing. Both MEC and the bank may terminate this agreement with 10 days written notice. I understand that MEC reserves the right to limit participation in this program to members who are in good standing; that the full amount of my bill will be drafted on the date selected or next business day; and that if funds are not available in my account there will a charge posted to my account and it will be subject to the return payment policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____