

Extra features available on our online bill pay site

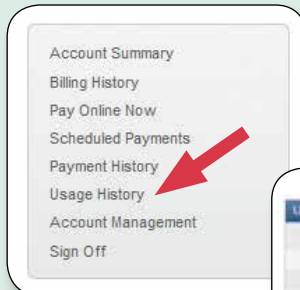
Did you know you can do more than just pay your current bill through our online Bill Pay site? For example, have you ever checked out the Usage History selection?

Visit www.menard.com or open the MyMEC App and select Pay Online. You'll need to log in or register, if necessary.

At the upper left you'll notice several options. One is Usage History. Select it and you will see a table of the Meter Reading Date, Days In Billing Cycle and kWh Usage (Kilowatt Hour) for the past 12 months. At the bottom of the screen, you can select a graph format of that same information.

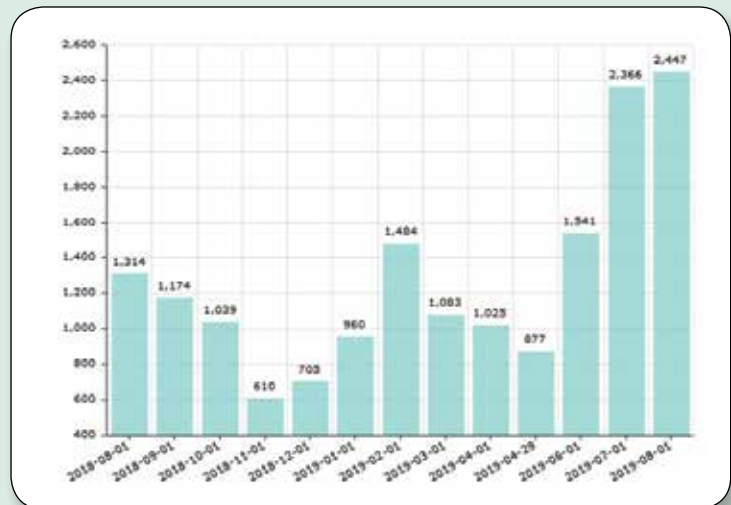
Those kWhs are the increments of electricity you needed to power your service. They are billed to you in your Electric Charge on your bill. You purchase electricity from us in kWh increments to power your home, irrigation or other service. (See the article Facility & Electric Charges on 20B.)

Viewing your usage history can help you to better understand how you use electricity; for example, you can see how your usage changes with the seasons. If you'd like to see more details about how you use energy call our office – we can review with you hourly data from your meter showing you what days, or even hours, you use the most kWhs.



METER READING DATE	DAYS IN BILLING CYCLE	kWH USAGE
01-Aug-2019	31	2447
01-Jul-2019	30	2386
01-Jun-2019	30	1541
29-Apr-2019	20	977
01-Apr-2019	31	1025
01-Mar-2019	28	1003
01-Feb-2019	21	1434
01-Jan-2019	21	960
01-Dec-2018	30	705
01-Nov-2018	31	610
01-Oct-2018	30	1036
01-Sep-2018	31	1174
01-Aug-2018	31	1334

View Usage History Graph



Smart device technology tips

Although not an exhaustive list and not written by security experts, Safe Electricity recommends these basic tips to make your smart devices, such as smart thermostats, doorlocks, Google or Amazon assistants (“Hello Alexa!”) and more, less hackable and more secure:

- NEVER click a link in an email claiming to be from a security- or smart-home related company, even if it looks official. Scammers and hackers get sign-in information and passwords this way, which they can use to hack your smart technology.
- Although tempting, don’t use the same passwords for all your devices.
- Absolutely change factory-set passwords provided by the manufacturer.
- Make your passwords complex and challenging.
- If you do receive an email from your smart device manufacturer, see if the email address the company used is the same as the one they have used to contact you in the past. These emails should be general in nature and should never ask for personal or log-in information.



Cybersecurity Tip

Create long passwords that only you will remember and change them every six months. Remember, a strong password is at least 12 characters long.

- Never give out log-in or password or other personal information in an email, over the phone, or for any other reason unless you are the one contacting the company directly via verified phone number or other trusted method of contact.
- Regularly update the device’s software so that it is protected by the latest security.
- Unless the hacker makes him/herself known, it can be hard to detect if a smart device has been hacked until the obvious happens.
- If it has been hacked, your gadget might be slower than usual, unresponsive or compulsively reboot.
- If you are tech savvy, keep watch on the IP addresses that access the devices.

Disclaimer: Tips are designed to increase awareness. For expert and in-depth technology advice, contact an IT professional or manufacturer. For information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Facility and electric charges

Every now and then we get questions from members regarding the meaning behind the facility charge and electric charge on their bill. Here’s a quick explanation.

You buy electricity from us in kilowatt hour (kWh) increments to power your home/service. The kWhs you use are billed as the Electric Charge – this charge varies according to how much electricity you used. Compare this to operating your vehicle - you purchase gallons of gasoline to power the vehicle when you need it – the more you drive, the more gas you buy.

All members pay a Facility Charge to share in the costs of operating our electrical system to enable us to provide you power when you need it. Compare this to the other things you need to keep your vehicle ready to drive, such as auto loan, insurance, taxes, license, oil changes, tire rotations and other maintenance. Some of the items that ensure your electric service is there when you need it include bucket trucks, meters, wires, computer systems/software, storm repairs, 24/7 service, system improvements, safety equipment, employees and more.



Respect substations and transformers

You may see our substations and transformers every day and never give them a thought. While most people are aware that those large fenced-in substations, gray cylinders and green boxes are part of the system of poles and wires that bring electricity to their homes, we thought we'd give you a few more details on what they do and how to stay safe around them.

Substations primarily contain transformers, but also house switches, protective devices and control equipment. Large substations will also contain circuit breakers used to interrupt short circuits or overloads that may occur.

As their name implies, those transformers within a substation transform voltage from high to low (or vice versa depending on their location on the distribution path).

Smaller transformers are also utilized in your neighborhood, on your street, or perhaps you can even spot one out of

your front window. You've seen those gray barrel-type units at the top of utility poles or large green boxes on the ground every few houses in a subdivision. These units transform voltage to a lower level for your use.

Both transformers and substations can carry high voltages of electricity and should always be respected. Follow these safety tips to keep you and your family safe:

- NEVER go near a substation.
- As you teach your children from a young age about the dangers of electricity, include information to NEVER go near a substation or climb its fence to retrieve a ball or pet. Let children know they should always stay away and tell a parent or adult, who should call us to report the incident.

- Children should also never play on or near those large green pad mounted transformers. And parents should be certain boxes are secure from curious exploration.
- Sometimes, transformers will malfunction, and they'll let the world know it with a bang. Lightning strikes or damaged equipment/wiring could even allow them to catch fire (yes protective circuits on the units are very fast, but not as fast as a lightning bolt). If a transformer near your home catches on fire, DO NOT try to put out the fire yourself (water and electricity don't mix). Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.
- If you see an issue with or notice something unusual about a substation, transformer or power line, contact us. Never try to address a problem yourself.

Source: SafeElectricity.org



LIHEAP

We urge you to contact your local office as soon as possible if you believe you may qualify for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Qualifications are based on income and household size.

Cass County.....	217-243-9404	Sangamon County	217-535-3120
Logan, Mason & Menard Counties.....	217-732-2159	Tazewell County	309-694-4391
Macon County	217-428-2193		

Board highlights

For full minutes visit www.menard.com or contact the office.
July 23, 2019

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Holloway, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith.
- Kevin Kelso & George Lynch, representing Jackson Thornton, presented overview of 2018 Financial Audit draft; Audit provided an Unmodified Opinion. Board accepted Audit & authorized staff to provide final copy to lenders once available.
- Hinton presented a review of RUS Field Audit & recommendations.
- Passed resolution removing retired Director Roy Seaney as authorized signatory on

- accounts at Alliance Community Bank.
- IBEW Local 51 Collective Bargaining Agreement approved after recommendation from Labor Committee & Board discussion.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet & budget; member services report with past due notices, generated cut-off tickets, write-offs & breakdown of annual meeting expenses; IT security report; operations & reliability report; Connect newsletter; capital credit estate report.
- Anker reviewed CoBank Sharing Success program applications & Board selected recipients.
- Anker: Gave June financial report. Year to date margins \$1,144,238 compared to \$1,522,093 last year. End of June equity

- 40.77%. Served 10,933 accounts. Net utility plant \$49,921,937 compared to \$48,607,774 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- Anker: Reviewed safety report; year-to-date three incidents with no lost time.
- Anker: Discussed weekend load control; meeting of irrigation committee called to review.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report; discussed International Program raffle.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Next Board Mtg 8/27/19.



Beware of energy vampires that suck electricity even when items appear to be off!

Chargers

Chargers for phone and devices use small amounts of energy even when unconnected to a device. Unplug when not in use.

Televisions

Instant-on features mean you never wait for the television to warm up, but it stays at nearly full power all the time, even when turned off. Disable the instant-on feature.

Gaming consoles

Gaming consoles can use as much energy as a refrigerator, even if not in use, primarily because of automatic updating features. Turn consoles off completely and disable automatic updates.

Source: NRECA





October is National Co-op Month!

This is the time of year when cooperatives across the U.S. celebrate who we are and the members we serve. Menard Electric Cooperative was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of those we serve. We are more than your energy provider. We support this community and power economic development and prosperity for the people. Your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.

Brought to you by your Touchstone Energy cooperative.

