

Member
Spotlight

Hot for Hemp

In the small town of Oakford, land-owners and Cooperative members Nancy and Kevin Thomas have partnered with fellow member Mark Beck to grow industrial hemp. Hemp derives from the plant species *Cannabis sativa*. Given the buzz surrounding the legalization of recreational marijuana in Illinois under the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act, we sat down with Mark to dispel the confusion and misconceptions between industrial hemp and its Cannabis cousin, marijuana.

“Industrial hemp” is defined statutorily as the *Cannabis sativa* plant and any part thereof having a delta-9 THC concentration of not more than 0.3%. THC stands for tetrahydrocannabinol -- the chemical component known to induce the euphoric “high” experienced by ingesting marijuana. “Marijuana” on the other hand is loosely defined as all parts of the same plant, excluding the mature stalks or derivatives thereof, and having no THC concentration limitation.

Production of hemp essentially ceased across the country in the 1950s due to market conditions and federal regulations. Since 2014, farmers have been restricted to growing hemp only if approved by discrete research programs. Mark has been an Ag/Farm Broker engaged in ag real estate ventures for well over a decade. He has traveled to many States and built relationships all over the country. This perspective allowed him to witness firsthand the positive impact hemp farming had on land prices in Colorado.

Fast forward to December 2018 when the federal Hemp Farming Act was incorporated into the U.S. Farm Bill, thereby green-lighting the production of hemp as an ordinary agricultural

commodity under States laws. With roots in Menard County, Mark started researching the feasibility of growing industrialized hemp here, however quickly found the crop to be hardly ordinary.

“This industry is like the Wild, Wild West,” says Mark. Very different from the production operations of corn and soybeans, the hemp farmer has a significantly higher risk portfolio. Crop insurance, for example, was fundamentally non-existent for hemp crops during the 2019 growing season. Environmental problems such as mold, worms and disease require unique methods to control. There are currently no pesticides labeled for use on hemp fields.

“Hemp has to essentially be grown organically. We can use peroxides against mold. We’ve learned natural predators need to be released to combat insects, something we didn’t do this year. Much of the weeding must be done by hand. In all, hemp is a highly labor-intensive crop that still must be rotated yearly,” he says.

“Hemp will be a major factor in helping small farmers continue the legacy built by earlier generations.”

In addition, you won’t find any futures market for hemp. Whereas a grains farmer may put risk capital toward a futures contract to gain financial leverage, all of the capital Mark and his partners put into this inaugural 50-acre crop was considered risk capital. “This is not for the faint of heart,” concludes Mark, “there is no substitute for experience.”

Mark’s knowledge of the ag and



hemp business partnered well with the Thomas’ farming experience. Hemp grows as a shrubby plant that can mature to heights of 6-8 feet tall. An acre can accommodate about 2,500 plants, however in rows much wider than corn or beans. Mark’s partners smartly modified a row crop cultivator to help control weeds between the rows. “Any investment toward reducing long hours is a smart investment,” believes Mark.

When asked what their most significant issues were with this first hemp crop, he readily answered “harvesting and drying.” To accomplish the harvest, each plant had to be cut manually by hand. No small task considering a hemp plant stalk is quite fibrous and very strong. The plants were then loaded and trucked from field to drying space like a caravan. “The key is getting the plants hung quickly in an environmentally-controlled space,” emphasized Mark. He leased a greenhouse site nearby as grain bins are not an ideal atmosphere for the tedious post-harvest work. For the following few weeks during drying and curing, the flowers of each plant were manually trimmed to present nicely to the buyer.

The flowers will be used to create CBD oil, a supplement that has become

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Sharing success

General Manager Alisha Anker presented the final donation made possible by the co-op's participation in CoBank's Sharing Success program, which matches donations made to our local community. Anker is shown presenting the \$2,000 donation to Theatre in the Park at New Salem's Board President Kristin Wheeler during the organization's fundraiser for their 2020 season kickoff.

Theatre in the Park is central Illinois' longest running outdoor community theatre, providing live family-oriented performances that serve more than 10,000 patrons, actors, musicians and ushers. It also provides hands-on training and education to college and high school students.

"Menard Electric is pleased to present this donation to Theatre in the Park as it



continually seeks to improve the quality of its performances for the community and for so many of our members who attend each summer. They will use

these funds to purchase equipment to upgrade the current lighting system for additional flexibility and to prepare for future expansions," said Anker.

Member Spotlight: Hot for Hemp

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popular for its medical and therapeutic applications for people and pets. CBD stands for cannabidiol, a compound naturally found in hemp plants. While industrial hemp must have levels of THC below 0.3%, the process of creating CBD oils can reduce that concentration level close to zero.

The USDA closely regulates hemp farming and all interested stakeholders are awaiting regulation changes for 2020. Draft rulemaking was circulated in late October contemplating revisions to acceptable crop sampling methods and timing requirements for crop testing, what to do with non-compliant plants, and other restrictions. An interim rule will be established for this year's growing season which could be changed yet again next year. The uncertainty of regulations

makes growth in the industry difficult and for those already involved, planning for next year becomes difficult.

And yet Mark is optimistic about the future of hemp farming. He trusts, "Hemp will be a major factor in helping small farmers continue the legacy built by earlier generations." Pending the outcome of USDA regulations, he anticipates the creation of a joint venture between the seed companies, his farming operation, a harvester and extractor to increase tenfold the acreage he cultivated during 2019. Well aware of the risks, he sees the potential.

"I believe the future of farming hemp in Illinois will be for seed and fiber," says Mark. Livestock producers will hopefully soon be able to use hemp seed and byproducts for feed. Hemp seed is high

in much-needed fatty acids, proteins, fiber and minerals. "Hemp fiber on the other hand is one of the strongest natural fibers available and has a lot of potential for building materials," Mark says, conceding that consumer education and acceptance will be vital for the product's growth in that industry. Developers and buyers will need to trust the products produced. From an ecological and environmental perspective though, he says hemp makes sense, "I can grow in 120 days what takes a pine tree 30 years."

Where will the hemp market be in another 100 years? What products or byproducts will emerge? Whatever will be, surely Mark, and other local farmers, will be involved.

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12121212		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that I have authorized the coop to communicate with me in the above manner

Help us find these members

In 2019 our Board of Directors authorized a general retirement of capital credits earned in 1995 and a portion of 1996. Active members in 1995/1996 received a bill credit or check. Members who no longer receive

service from us were mailed a check. We used the last known address on our system, but were unable to locate those members listed below. This list can also be found on our website at menard.com/capital-credits (you can

find previous listings as well). If you know any of these members, or the executors of their estate, please have them email info@menard.com or call 800-872-1203.

360 Communication Co, Chicago
Ackerman, Karen, Virginia
Adams, Candice & Galen, Decatur
Amberger, Thomas & Lucille, Petersburg
Anders, Margie, New Berlin
Anderson, Doris, Springfield
Andrew, Coresta, Athens
Armbrust, Vicki Jo, Manito
Autrey, Myron & Barbara, Manito
Bartels, William & Marie, Springfield
Becker, Daryl, Ashland
Beckett, John, Pekin
Belatti, Patricia, Decatur
Bell, Kathryn, Topeka
Bender, Matt & Nicole, Peoria
Berkshire, James, Peoria
Betts, Vicki, Peoria Heights
Big M Tank & Trailer, Ashfield
Bigham, Bob, Sherman
Bird, JB Jr, Manito
Bitswell, Donald & Pamela, Petersburg
Boehl, Michael, Virginia
Boehler, James, Virginia
Bolen, Christian, San Jose
Bone, Brinda, Havana
Bouchard, Carl & Beverly, Watts, OK
Bowersock, R Joseph, Petersburg
Boyer, Katrina, Petersburg
Bratton, Barbara, Havana
Brenner, Russell & Kelly, Lake Mary, FL
Broeker, Jonathan, Auburn
Bryant, Marsha, Northbrook
Buckner, Eleanor, Springfield
Bunker, Joseph & Jennifer, Topeka
Burton, Russell, Petersburg
Calaway, Frank, Greenview
Camilie, Terrance & Carolyn, Springfield

Carle, Eugene SR, Topeka
Casten, Mary, Athens
Castleberry, Louise, Jacksonville
Catlin, Andrew & Christene, Athens
Chandler, Mark & Bonnie, Springfield
Chastain, Steve, Greenview
Chenoweth, Anna, Murrayville
Childers, Bruce, Manito
Church of the Nazarene, Pittsfield
CJ Supplemental Needs TR, Duluth, MN
Clemons, Terry & Linda, Riverton
Coffey, Jeffrey, Bluffs
Collier, Michael & Mary, Kankakee
Collins, Bonnie, Pleasant Plains
Conlin, Lawrence, Lincoln
Conn, Jesse & Arleen, Oakford
Conroy, WM & Kriste, Rockton
Cooley, Velma, Beechgrove, TN
Coonrod Country Tavern, Springfield
Cory, James, Springfield
Courtney, Dan, Riverton
Crandall, Julie, Petersburg
Cress, Bruce & Betty, Chatham
Curry, Charles, Springfield
Dabbs, Deobrah, Lincoln
Dean, WM, Springfield
Dejanovick, Michael & Pamela, Athens
Denison, Teena, Jacksonville
Dennison, Jeffrey & Heather, Virden
Dewitt, Sherry, Girard
Dey, Walter, Springfield
Dodson, Wm & Kathy, Riverton
Dallins, Pam, Kilbourne
Doman, Elmer & Stephanie, Topeka
Dooley, Matthew, Auburn
Downey, Richard & Virginia, Petoskey, MI
Downs Property Mgmt, Pekin

Drone, Thomas & Linda, Pakucuh, KY
Ealey, Charles & Tina, Mechanicsburg
Easley, Brenda, Forsyth
Eaton, Wanda, Sherman
Edwards, A Michael, Riverton
Emerson, Larry, Springfield
Ericson, Paul, Petersburg
Erps, Howard, Petersburg
Fagan, James, Petersburg
Farney, Douglas, Peoria
Fedie, Scott & Angie, Pleasant Plains
Filyaw, Clarence & Earline, Green Valley
Findley, Keith & Julie, Hindsboro
Finnegan, Steven, Jacksonville
Finster, Linda, Manito
Foster, Jolene, Springfield
Fowler, Scott & Kim, Sherman
Freese, Rodney, Cantrall
Frey, Robert, Alexander
Fuller, Michael, Mayfield, KY
Gardner, John, Lincoln
Gentry, Curtis, Springfield
Gettings, Michelle, Athens
Gibbs, Carl & Lisa, Pekin
Gillespie, Robert & Debra, Springfield
Gilliland, Troy, Athens
Glasgow, Eugene & Ella, Sidell
Gordon, Francis, Lincoln
Graham, Erin, Petersburg
Greer, Larry, Ashland
Griffin, Becky, Havana
Gross, Bill, Danvers
Gurnsey, Hazel Belle, Springfield
Hall, John & Crystal, Manito
Hall, Timothy, Havana
Halverson, Kevin & Carline, Pekin
Hamby, D J, Lake Forest, CA

Hamm, Gary, Havana
Hansen, Alan & Elizabeth, Riverton, UT
Hanson, Gail, Athens
Hardesty, James & Carla Sue, Hartsburg
Harms, Ron, Springfield
Harr, Tammy, Manito
Harrison, Ted, Quincy
Harvey, Terry & Linda, Petersburg
Hayes, Richard, Mason City
Haynes, Richard, Beardstown
Haynes, Terry, Topeka
Head, Christina, Forest City
Heder, Michael & Patricia, Morris, MN
Hedrick, Lyle, Sherman
Heidreder, Teresa, New Holland
Henry, Jeffrey, Forest City
Hermesmyer, Carl & Linda, Springfield
Himmel, Anthony, Topeka
Hofferkamp, Wilma, Springfield
Hollinshead, Earl & Angie, Springfield
Homer, Gladys, South Jacksonville
Hopkins, Lawrence & Terry, Springfield
Horn, Charles Sr & Mary, Springfield
Horner, Shannon, Topeka
Houston, Bradley, Olney
Howard, Ruth, Topeka
Hudspeth, Harvey, Springfield
Hunt, Linda, Decatur
Hurley, Joseph, Springfield
Indermark, Sheila, Cantrall
Jackson, Sandra, Pekin
Janssen, Michael, Middletown
Jenkins, Nina, Havana
Jewell, Joyce, Jacksonville
Jockisch, Steven, Virginia
Johnson, Dewight, Princeton
Johnson, Michael, Springfield

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Johnson, Kerry, Virginia
Jones, Anne Marie, Manito
Kavadas, Spiro, Athens
Kester, Mark & Julie, Pekin
Ketcham, Georgia, Peoria
Kimbrell, Monica, Havana
Kruski, Walter, Athens
Land, Douglas, Green Valley
Landry, Bradley & Anita, Havana
Langan, Robert & Carmen, New Holland
Laura, Dubois, Athens
Ledgerwood, Roy, Topeka
Leeper, Charles, Rapid City, SD
Leezer, David & Patsy, Athens
Leininger, Kent & Beth, Sanford, FL
Leithoff, Robert, Havana
Lerch, Perry, Kilbourne
Liesman, Kelley, Athens
Lionberger, John, Lees Summit, MO
Lisenbee, Shane, Beardstown
List, Sheila, Petersburg
Livingston, Randy, Havana
Lloyd, James, Ozawkie, KS
Lobello, Kathy, Manito
Lockhart, Margaret, Jacksonville
Logsdon, Keith, Canton, MO
Long, Karen, Mount Auburn
Lopez, Domingo, San Jose
Loveall, Laverne, New Holland
Lovell, Chester, Pawnee
Lovins, Marshall, Pekin
Lucht, Albert, Petersburg
Lumpkin, Michael, Topeka
Lyons, Nicky, Bluff Springs
Lyons, Ricky, Mount Sterling
Maddonna, David & Carolyn, Springfield
Maddox, Amy, Chandlerville
Manker, Frederick, New Berlin
Manning, David, Sherman
Martin, Robert, Chandlerville
McAndrew, Loretta, Forest City
McBride, Timothy, Springfield
McCafferty, Bradley, Chandlerville
McCarty, Ronald, Niantic
McCullough, Gerald, Havana
McGinnis, Scott & Dawn, Beardstown
McGuire, David & Donna, Petersburg
McKinney, Michael, Manito
McLaren, Mark & Trudy, Delavan

Mendenhall, Ashleigh, Rochester
Merold, Ronald, Mount Pulaski
Merritt, Lonnie, Forest City
Messervy, Rex, Sherman
Miles, Bradley, Forest City
Miller, Paul & Frances, Topeka
Miller, William III & Brenda, Havana
Moore, Michael, Petersburg
Moore, Steven, Greenville
Morris, Chris, Manito
Murray, John & Marcella, Springfield
Myren, Dennis & Rita, Foosland
Nance, Mary, Taylorville
National Mobile Television, Tukwila, WA
Naughton, Nancy, Springfield
Needham, John, Petersburg
Nelson, Paula, Manito
Nickelson, Tabitha, Springfield
Noltensmeier, Scott, Chandlerville
Norsworthy, William & Beverly, Creve Coeur
Olsen, Richard & Rebecca, Springfield
Orman, Harry & Clara, Mackinaw
Osborn, Donnie, Topeka
Parr, Michael & Maria, Brownsburg, IN
Patterson, Robert & Renee, Litchfield
Payne, Reggie & Tracy, Lincoln
Perea, Pacifico, Edgefield, SC
Peters, Randy & Peggy, Petersburg
Phillips, Randy & Amanda, Peoria
Pickett, Frances, Elkhart
Pickrell, Jacqueline, Athens
Pier, Brett, Athens
Pirone, Arthur, Ironia, NJ
Pote, Evelyn & Steven, Mason City
Pratt, Diana & Julie, Petersburg
Pratt, Laura, Havana
Presswood, Robert & Stephanie, New Holland
Preston, Arthur, Petersburg
Priest, Grahame, Sherman
Propst, Warren, Petersburg
Pugh, Angela, Jacksonville
Puyear, James, Athens
R D Offutt Co, Lamoure, ND
Radar, Donna, Buffalo
Rathbone, Teresa, Athens
Reed, Curtis, Lewistown
Renaud, David & Elizabeth, Lecanto, FL
Rhodes, Nancy, Springfield
Richards, Deanna, Havana

Richards, Edwin & Margaret, Sherman
Richardson, Lori, Manito
Ring, Jerry & Tammy, South Jacksonville
Rishe, Bryan & Peggy, Charlotte, NC
Ritchie, Marty & Stacie, Manito
Ritzheimer, Robert & Jean Ann, Tunas, MO
Robertson, Paul & Jill, Montello, WI
Robinson, Michael & Susan, Murrayville
Rokash, James, Decatur
Roth, Yvonne, Springfield
Royal MFG Homes, Springfield
Saigal, Kanta, Fort Wayne, IN
Salanda, Douglas, Bonita Springs, FL
Sathoff, Charles, Oakford
Savant, April, Petersburg
Schaefer, Jim, Pekin
Scheidegger, Michelle, New Holland
Schleyhahn, Viney & Glenda, Pleasant Plains
Scott, Joel, Athens
See, Clayton, Topeka
Seton, Forrest & Melva, Wheaton
Setzer, Travis, Oakford
Sharp, Bridgette, Sherman
Shaver, Robert, Springfield
Sheley, Dennis & Carol, Elkhart
Shelton, Gladys, New Holland
Silver Creek Cattle Co, Springfield
Sims, Larry & Cheryl, Pleasant Plains
Sims, Pauline, Springfield
Smith, Bonny, Easton
Smith, Christine, Petersburg
Smith, Edgar & Keri, Petersburg
Smith, Jeffrey & Linda, Pocahontas
Smith, Patricia, Sherman
Smith, Ralph & Elizabeth, Lehigh Acres, FL
Smith, Roger & Velda, Lincoln
Snodgrass, Herb & Sheila, Auburn
Snyder, Mary, Athens
Sosa, Ernest JR, Topeka
Speaks, Barbara, Petersburg
Spencer, Wilmer, Lewistown
Spicer, Christie, San Jose
Spradlin, Nadine, Williamsville
Stacy, Jerrie, Petersburg
Stark, Rose, Springfield
Statzer, Richard & Carol, Springfield
Stephens, Stephen & Paula, Kilbourne
Stevens, Jacqueline & Walker, Springfield
Stevens, Drew, Petersburg

Stone, Ervin & Janice, Kilbourne
Strader, Delma, Petersburg
Strange, Michael & Vickie, Athens
Stroupe, David, Springfield
Stults, Michael, Petersburg
Suter, Carl & Susan, Dawson
Swan, Richard & Jona, Lincoln
Sweet, David & Carolyn, Franklin
Taylor, Angela, Mason City
Taylor, Everett & Opal, Topeka
Tezak, Loretta, Petersburg
Thames, Daniel & Cheryl, Mackinaw
Thomas, Dorothy, Oakford
Thompson, Todd, Delavan
Tremain, Michael, Havana
Turner, Curtis, Topeka
Turpin, Robert, Taylorville
Urbain, Wanda, Petersburg
Vanetten, Cecil & Freeda, Kilbourne
Verardi, Susan, Springfield
Wagenblast, Ronald & Patricia, Kevil, KY
Walker, Robin, Petersburg
Ward, Dawn, Athens
Warden, Anna, Virginia
Warren, Joseph, Springfield
Wasik, Victor & Vicki, Mount Pulaski
Wasson, Leo, Topeka
Watkins, Paul, Virginia
Weitzel, Beverly, Springfield
Wells, Michael, Springfield
Westfall, Dale, Springfield
Wheatley, Harry & Betty, Topeka
White, James & Kimberly, Springfield
Wilcut, James, Springfield
Williamson, Angela, Springfield
Wilms, Candy, Springfield
Wilson, Bernard, Peoria
Wilson, Marie, Pekin
Witherell, Robert, Havana
Wood, Maxine, Petersburg
Wood, Susan, Ashland
Wood, Mark, Springfield
Woodruff, Kenneth & Shelly, Springfield
Wordeman, Janice, Easton
Wright, Sam, Divernon
Wulf, John, Virginia
Wurschmidt, Ted, Peoria
Young, John, Springfield
Zenisky, Francis & Emily, Petersburg

Board highlights

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

October 22, 2022

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan & Jodine Tate, Operations Manager Dalton Whitley, Director of Member Services Trish Michels, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton, Engineering Manager Brady Smith, Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith. Directors Steven Worner & Gary Holloway absent.
- Staff: Presented 2020 budgets.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet, budget, member services report & cut-offs/write-offs, security report, internal critical vulnerability breakdown, safety report, employee educational courses & property loss trend analysis.
- Anker: Gave September financial report. Year to date margins were \$2,811,866 compared to \$2,445,015 last year. End of September equity 42.59%. Served 10,937 member accounts. Net utility plant \$50,710,219 compared to \$49,172,284 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRFC & CoBank.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Board adopted resolution adding \$20,000 for total \$160,000 for retirement of capital credits to estates in 2019.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened.
- Next Board Meeting 11/26/19.

Menard Electric Cooperative 2020 Youth to Washington Scholarship Program

SCHOLARSHIPS:

- 🎓 One \$1,000 scholarship to a 4-year college or university
- 🎓 One \$500 scholarship to a 2-year community college
- 🎓 One \$500 scholarship to an accredited technical school
- 🎓 One winner selected from among scholarship winners for an all-expenses paid trip on the Youth to Washington Tour June 19-25, 2020.

Who Can Apply:

- 🎓 Applicant must be a high school senior or equivalent, graduating during 2020.
- 🎓 Applicant's parent/legal guardian must be a Menard Electric Cooperative member with their primary residence or business served by the cooperative.
- 🎓 Applicant must be available to attend the Youth to Washington Tour June 19-25, 2020.

Additional details are provided with the application form. Online application available at Menard Electric Cooperative's website at www.menard.com/scholarships.



Apply at menard.com/scholarships.

Deadline for applications is March 1, 2020.