

Members receive \$600,000 in capital credits

Watch for your check or bill credit if you had service in 1995 or 1996

Capital credits are a big part of what makes us, as an electric cooperative, different than other electric utilities.

You see, as an electric cooperative, we are a member-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our consumer-members.

Capital credits are earned by each of our members each year that we earn more revenue from our members than was needed to run the cooperative and provide service. That excess revenue, or margins, become capital credits allocated to the membership after an auditing firm completes an audit of our finances.

We maintain records of all the capital credits earned by each member. The capital credits stay with us for a time

before being returned to our members. They are an investment by our membership into our long-term operation and are what enables us to operate and pay for our day-to-day operations.

Each year, your board of directors looks at our overall financial health and determines what portion of credits to return to the membership. This year, they voted to return \$600,000, which pays out all credits earned by members through 1995 and into a portion of what was earned in 1996. We've returned over \$10.7 million in capital credits to our members to date!

If you were a member who received service from us in 1995 or 1996 you'll receive your capital credit refund this month. If your refund is less than \$75, you'll notice it as a bill credit. Inactive members and those with credits larger than \$75 will receive a check mailed to the address currently on file.

We've returned over \$10.7 million in capital credits to our members to date.

We want to be able to return capital credits to every member, so please give us your address when you move away.

For more information on capital credits, visit www.menard.com/capital-credits, email info@menard.com or call 800-872-1203.

See you at the Annual Meeting June 13

Most of us lead busy lives. We find ourselves multitasking and thanks to technology, we can accomplish many tasks electronically and remotely to be more efficient. While Menard Electric provides convenient electronic options for bill-paying and communication, there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members of our community come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

Our co-op family looks forward to visiting with you in person at our 82nd Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday, June 13 at PORTA High School in Petersburg.

The evening will offer a grilled pork chop dinner, ice cream, entertainment, fun activities for the whole family, director election, business meeting, and of course, prizes. Registration is 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Because we know your time is valuable and many activities can compete for your attention, we do offer a \$15 bill credit for each registered membership in attendance. Look for your Official Notice later this month for more details.



Words on the Wire

And the survey says....



Alisha Anker
General Manager

Menard Electric participated in a member satisfaction survey last fall that gathered feedback from more than 550 randomly-selected members. This month I wanted to say *Thank You!* to those members who took the time to respond to the survey, and to

share the results.

The survey, conducted by an independent research firm and coordinated by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, measured satisfaction with Menard Electric in core services and member care. It also sought feedback about new programs under consideration.

We have been conducting surveys every few years since the mid-1980s, so the process is not new. These surveys help us learn and grow and continue to strive to do better. Menard Electric's board of directors, employees and I are generally pleased with this year's overall results, but even more so, we appreciate the insights provided by the membership.

Over 25 percent of those surveyed took the time to provide written comments (both positive and constructive). I find these comments especially helpful in our efforts to apply needed improvements and meet member expectations. These comments will be addressed specifically in future issues of this newsletter; for now, I want to focus on the big picture provided by the survey results.

Members recognized our efforts to support renewable energy as our foremost improvement over the past few years. These efforts included revising policies applying to net metered alternative energy interconnections and Qualified Facility developments to

accommodate the ever-growing interest in distributed generation.

The cooperative's commitment to local communities was also recognized as a positive improvement since the last survey and reflects our pursuing and sharing programs that are available to our members through our cooperative business partners.

- ★ Knowledgeable & competent**91%**
- ★ Friendly & courteous.....**91%**
- ★ Ease of doing business**88%**

The survey results continue to confirm members are noticing Menard Electric's system maintenance efforts. At an overall performance high, 91 percent of members surveyed agreed with the statement *"Menard Electric provides reliable electric service,"* and 88 percent agreed that we *"restore power quickly after an outage."* These performance factors have increased sizably in the past five years.

Just this past year, co-op employees have worked hard to implement a new

outage management system that has already enabled our linemen to be notified of after-hours outages on average 15 minutes sooner than if the same outage call is received by phone call. When you are waiting for power to be restored, every minute counts and we are pleased to see quicker response times. The MyMEC mobile app is part of that program and I appreciate members' use of it to help us get power restored sooner!

We work hard for the membership every single day. We have a great team in place, and I am pleased our members think so too. This was apparent in the survey results where co-op employees received high marks. Ninety-one percent of respondents concur the employees are *"knowledgeable and competent"* in their expertise and dealings with our members.

Our overall member satisfaction ratings have always been good, and it was nice to see those numbers continue to increase. Menard Electric achieved an overall American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) score of 85, which is above the Touchstone and national cooperative averages of 77 and further above the Ameren average of 76.

New with this year's survey was a CAPStone (Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score) comparison judging Menard Electric against other cooperatives across the country. CAPStone surveyed over 20,000-plus cooperative members nationwide, asking which

Service

- ★ PROVIDING RELIABLE ELECTRIC SERVICE **91%**
- ★ RESTORING POWER QUICKLY AFTER AN OUTAGE **88%**

characteristics of the cooperative's service were most important. Three service variables were consistently rated most important — that the co-op is: trustworthy, well-managed, and truly cares for its members. The CAPStone model uses specific questions to create a "Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score," which allows cooperatives to compare performance.

We routinely look at financial ratios and system metrics to study how we compare to other electric cooperatives in Illinois and across the country in our peer group. Menard Electric's first CAPStone score of 88 proved to be a strong score among participating cooperatives. We work to give our members the best possible experience when they deal with the cooperative. Their trust in our management and the care we provide is very important to us. It is heartwarming to see member satisfaction in the characteristics embodied by these key CAPStone areas.

As I mentioned before, we'll discuss the specific comments in later issues. For now, thank you again for your continued support of Menard Electric Cooperative! We are pleased that our efforts to continually provide improved member service have been noticed by members, and we will continue to work to serve you better!



Cooperative Culture

- ★ Trustworthiness of co-op.....87%
- ★ Overall management84%
- ★ Commitment to communities83%



Board highlights

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

February 26, 2019

- Present were Directors D. Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; Manager Alisha Anker & Attorney Charles Smith. Director Donald McMillan absent.
- L.E. Myers Co 2019 Electric System Construction Contract approved & adopted. Wright Tree Service 1 yr. Power Line Right of Way Clearance & Vegetation Management Contract approved & adopted.
- Anker: Reviewed operating statement, balance sheet & budget. Discussed member services, Federated safety & loss, reliability, operations, irrigation, IT security, rebates capital credits & member newsletter reports. Board tabled review of mission statement.
- Anker: Gave January financial report. Year to date margins (\$94,615) compared to (\$37,800) last year. End of Jan. equity 40.43%. Served 10,909 accounts. Net utility plant \$49,216,871 compared to \$47,874,712 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, NRUCFC & CoBank.
- Appointed Directors Patrick & McMillan as Delegate & Alternate Delegate, respectively, for CFC Annual Meeting.
- Frye: Introduced Eric Hobbie, President & CEO of Prairie Power, Inc. to discuss a strategic initiative during executive session.
- Goetsch: Gave AIEC report & discussed 2019 ACRE.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. report.
- Patrick: Gave Annual Meeting Committee report. Discussed Operation RoundUp & Board agreed with recommendation not to create program at this time.
- Board entered into executive session; reconvened; confirmed & ratified all action.
- Next Board Meeting March 26, 2019.

Safety starts with you

Check for these four potential electrical hazards in your home

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, a great opportunity to check for these four potential safety hazards.

Check ground fault circuit interrupters

GFCI outlets are designed to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets; they are found in wet areas like kitchens, bathrooms and outdoors.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done.

Look for loose or damaged outlets/switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration, or any loose connections can offer early warnings of shock or fire hazards – if you see them it may be time to contact an electrician.

Examine surge protectors

Surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working, but many do not. If your electrical system takes

a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Examine extension cords

Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use only.

If it gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized. If it shows signs of fraying, cracking or heat-damage, it should be replaced. Cords used in outdoor or damp locations should be rated for exterior use.



MEET for generations

82nd Annual Meeting of Members
Thursday, June 13, 2019
PORTA High School in Petersburg
Registration 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Dinner
Entertainment
Bucket Truck Rides
Ballons & Face Painting
Homemade Ice Cream
Director Election
Business Meeting
Gifts & Prizes

See more details in your
Official Notice mailed
later this month.

