

ALONG THE LINES



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

DECEMBER 2022

VOL.15, NO. 12

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS PHOTO CONTEST

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MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

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FIGHTING THE WINTER CHILL

Tips and tricks to help you prep and save money. p.7

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- Dec. 1st: National Christmas Lights Day
- Dec. 4th: National Cookie Day
- Dec. 12th: Gingerbread Decorating Day
- Dec. 13th: National Cocoa Day
- Dec. 17th: National Ugly Sweater Day
- Dec. 18th: Hanukkah Begins
- Dec. 21st: First Day of Winter
- Dec. 26th: Kwanzaa & Boxing Day
- Dec. 26th: Office Closed - Christmas (2022 observed date)

UPCOMING

- Jan. 2nd: Office Closed - New Year's (2023 observed date)

Holidays observed:

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, day following Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.





OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

DEC. 23 - OPEN UNTIL 11:30A

DEC. 26 - CLOSED

DEC. 30 - OPEN UNTIL 11:30A

JAN. 2 - CLOSED

*We wish you and your family a very blessed holiday season!
~From the MJM Board of Directors, staff, and employees*



**2023 SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION DEADLINE
DECEMBER 31, 2022**

www.mjmec.coop/scholarships

Only one completed application is necessary to apply to both the MJM Scholarship Program and the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program, and students who apply are eligible to win scholarships from both programs.

DEADLINE IS THIS MONTH!



APPLY AT:

WWW.MJMEC.COOP/YOUTH-DAY-YOUTH-TOUR

DEADLINE IS JANUARY 13TH, 2023

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:
INFO@MJMEC.COOP OR 217-707-6028



**JUNE 16-23, 2023
WASHINGTON D.C.**

Students of MJM Electric Cooperative members and MJM employees are eligible to attend the **Youth Day in Springfield, IL and the Youth to Washington Tour!**

Up to ten students will be selected to attend **Youth Day in Springfield**. In addition, up to two students will be chosen to represent MJM by attending **Youth Tour**; an all-expense paid, week-long trip to Washington D.C., with other winners from across the nation.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see our government at work and tour national sites, monuments, and museums. To be eligible, the student(s) must currently be a high school sophomore or junior and be able to attend the trip to Washington D.C. in June, if selected.



**18300 Shipman Road (PO Box 80)
Carlinville, IL 62626**

Office: 1-217-707-6156
Pay by Phone: 1-855-313-6314

Office Hours:
Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

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How to report an outage:

Call 217-707-6156 or use your SmarHub app.

- When you report an outage, give your name and location number.
- Before calling, check your fuses or circuit breakers.
- Check with your neighbors. Call to report hazardous conditions.

Please do not report outages on Facebook/Social Media.

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PLEASE RECYCLE



PHOTO CONTEST CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DISPLAY 1ST PRIZE: \$15 BILL CREDIT



Calling all "Clark Griswolds!" MJM is having a Christmas Lights Display photo contest! Check every bulb twice, put all your 5000 strands up (careful on that ladder!), and get your family out on the front lawn to look at all the lights. Set up a display up that is sure to blind the neighbors & add to "Cousin Eddie's" holiday enjoyment. Remember to keep Aunt Bethany's cat away from all the wires! Who knows, maybe the astronauts will be able to see it from the space station? Or a regular, "non-Griswold" display, will work too.

To Enter:

Send your photo in of **this year's light display** to: **info@mjmec.coop (subject: Christmas Lights)**

Please include your **name** and **address** in the email message. Deadline is **December 30th**, and the winner will be announced in February's edition of Along the Lines and on our Social Media pages in January.



TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



SPACE HEATERS OTHER FACTS AND TIPS

When running a space heater, make sure it is used in a small space and only for a minimal amount of time. These 1500-watt energy hogs can really bump up your energy bill if used improperly for a long duration of time. For larger spaces, homeowners are much better off, from an efficiency standpoint, to run a properly sized HVAC system (sized BTUs correctly), and have their home insulated and sealed well. The more "energy" (heat) you can keep from escaping, the more comfortably warm your home will feel. Heat energy particles want to expand and stretch out in to the cold, and proper insulation and air sealing windows is a critical part in keeping the heat where you want it to be.

There are differences in space heaters, but it mainly has to do with how quickly they heat up a space (fan vs coil). Most are consistently using 1500 watts, yes, even the ones labeled "efficient." It is a bit of a "buyer beware" kind of situation with space heaters, they are beneficial for small spaces but can really cost you if used in large spaces.

For more energy saving and safety tips please visit our webpage: <https://mjmec.coop/saving-energy-101>

CONGRATULATIONS! JESSE KILLAM

ON COMPLETING THE 4 YEAR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



MJM CEO Joe Heyen presenting Jesse Killam with his Certificate of Completion.

Jesse completed the United States Department of Labor's 4-year Lineworker Apprenticeship course through the AIEC. This course consists of classes, bookwork, and on the job training totaling over 9,000 hours to accomplish!





2022 MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

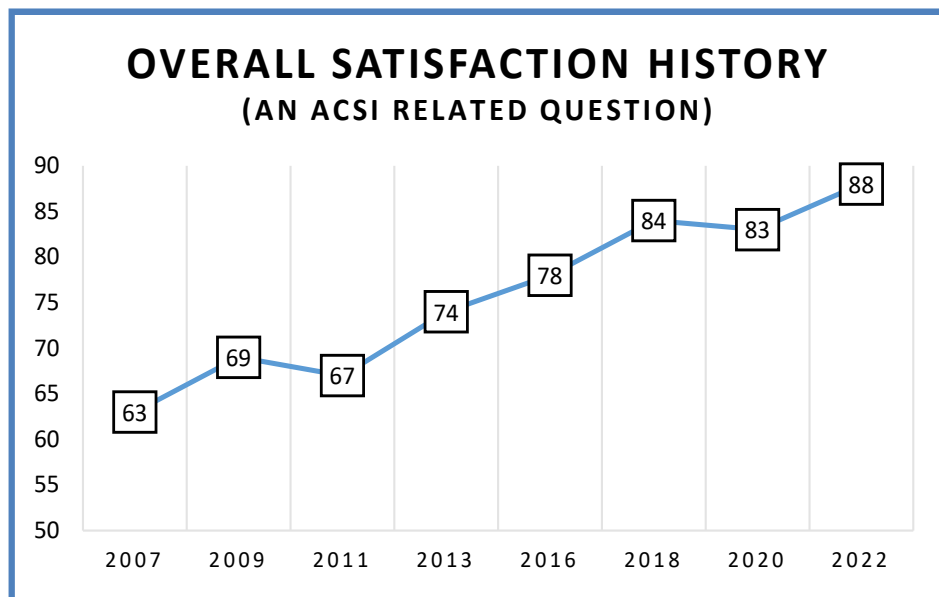
THANK YOU MJM MEMBERS FOR THE HIGH MARKS!

During the summer of 2022, MJM Electric Cooperative conducted a Residential Satisfaction & Attitudes Survey to determine satisfaction and loyalty, perceptions about co-op performance, attitudes regarding energy efficiency, co-op relationship issues, marketing and communication opportunities, Member demographics, and the co-op’s American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score. The survey was developed and conducted by Inside Information, Inc., as a member research project commissioned by MJM and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).

Out of the 3,000 surveys that were sent out to randomly selected residential co-op members, 503 responses were received, and 140 participants offered up comments. We appreciate everyone who responded! It’s very important to us to know areas we are excelling in and where improvement is still needed.

MJM received its highest ACSI rating with a grading of 84 compared to 71 in 2011. The ACSI score encompasses several different questions included in the survey. We also learned that since 2020, there has been a 9% increase of MJM members that consider themselves as a “member” (part owner) of MJM and not just a “customer”. When it comes to interacting with SmartHub, MJM’s payment and account information tool, usage has significantly increased by 28% since 2018 indicating that more members are using the mobile app/website interface than ever before. The *Along the Lines* monthly newsletter is also receiving more attention as results indicate a 10% increase of active readers as compared to 2020.

“A great deal of the 2022 Member Satisfaction Survey results are overwhelmingly the best scores MJM has ever received. We are pleased with the results, but also acknowledge that we need to stay focused on continually improving the co-op,” said CEO Joe Heyen. “We appreciate knowing the concerns of our members because we exist for you, the Consumer, and thrive for member satisfaction. We have worked very hard the past few years to increase our scores and plan to continue that path.”



About the Survey

The survey was developed and conducted by Inside Information, Inc., as a member research project commissioned by MJM and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Because the survey is of great importance to MJM, a \$250 bill credit incentive to complete the survey was awarded to one lucky MJM member.

If you need to report a service problem, please call the office and we will be glad to send a service person out to check for any issues that you may be experiencing.





MEMBER TRADING POST

DECEMBER 2022



FOR SALE: Four 100+ year old solid oak church pews, need refinished. \$125 each or all for \$400. 217-718-0709

FOR SALE:

Three P265-65R, 18in tires, good treads, asking \$145 for all. 2015 Husqvarna LGT 2654, 26HP Kohler, low hours. Asking \$1150. Call: 217-324-3869

FOR SALE: 2 Vaults, 2 Spaces, 1 Companion Marker.

Lot#36-B/Unit 1&2, Sect. 3. Garden of Christus, located at Roselawn Memory Gardens in Bethalto, IL 62010. Complete package would cost \$11,000 now. Asking \$9,000 (OBO). Call Darrel: 618-946-1093

FOR SALE: 1965 Case Tractor 430, 3-point hitch, power steering, diesel motor, looks good and runs well. \$3,800. Grader blade, 3-point hitch, 6 foot blade, heavy made. \$600. 618-372-8411

WANTING TO BUY: Holiday Blow Molds (Hard Plastic). Santa Claus, Snowmen, Pilgrims, Turkeys, Sleds, anything Holiday themed. Call Brad: 1-618-402-4420

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: energy.gov



Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



Snowbrush
Shovel
Windshield washer fluid
Cat litter for traction



Warm clothing
Blankets
Drinking water
Nonperishable foods



Properly inflated spare tire
Wheel wrench & tripod jack
Jumper cables
Fire extinguisher



Reflective triangles
Reflective vest
Brightly colored cloth
(to tie on side mirror)



First-aid kit
Flashlight and batteries
Compass
Car charger for cell phone

Safe
Electricity.org®

Source: NSC

Prepare your vehicle: Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit SafeElectricity.org.



FIVE WAYS TO FIGHT THE WINTER CHILL AND SAVE ENERGY

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. MJM is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1. Mind the thermostat. This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

2. Button up your home. The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for **24% to 40%** of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

3. Use window coverings wisely. Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

4. Consider your approach to appliance use. When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

BY **ABBY BERRY**

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.



photo by: Mark Gilliland



photo by: Matthew Henry

5. Think outside the box. If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up--beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.

Visit our website for additional energy-saving tips:
<https://mjmec.coop/saving-energy-101>





MJM Remembers Dennis Stewart

District 8 Board Director



In 2010, Dennis (Denny) Stewart, of Nokomis, became an MJM Board Director for District 8. After 12 years of service, MJM learned that he had passed away on October 22nd. Denny became an MJM Member in 1976 and enjoyed farming his whole life. In May of 2020, he was awarded the position of Vice President on MJM's Board of Directors and began serving on the Executive Committee. He was also the Chairman of the Member Services & Policies Committee. "Denny was a dedicated Board member and will be missed. He always asked great questions that inspired conversations at Board meetings," says CEO Joe Heyen. MJM's Board of Directors and staff offer their condolences to the Stewart family and wife Pam.