

# ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

**DECEMBER 2023**  
VOL.16, NO. 12

**SMARTHUB**  
Customize your choice of notifications. p.4

**METER UPGRADE**  
New MJM meters are coming soon. p.5

**POWER POLE CLUTTER**  
Safety hazards from unauthorized materials. p.7

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

Dec. 1-25: Jerseyville Bright Nights  
Dec. 1-3: Christmas in Carlinville Event  
Dec. 2-3: Christmas in Staunton Event  
Dec. 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day  
Dec. 9: Litchfield Christmas Parade  
Dec. 16: Gillespie Holiday Sparkle Event  
Dec. 21: First Day of Winter  
Dec. 22: MJM Office Closed  
Dec. 25: MJM Office Closed  
Dec. 29: MJM Office Closed

## UPCOMING

Jan. 1: Office Closed - New Year's Day

### HOLIDAYS OBSERVED:

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



OFFICE: 217-707-6156  
FAX: 217-854-3918

18300 SHIPMAN ROAD (PO BOX 80)  
CARLINVILLE, IL 62626

WWW.MJMEC.COOP



# RELIABLE POWER FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



Ring in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the President/CEO of MJM, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at MJM is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering--and empowering--our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across the counties we serve. You may not realize it, but MJM doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Wabash Valley Power Alliance, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of 48% coal, 23% natural gas, 17% solar and wind, and 12% nuclear.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, MJM is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps MJM save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power



reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. Drone inspections of lines and vegetation have allowed us to reduce labor and equipment costs while bolstering reliability. Through the use of small drones, we can accurately monitor the health and growth of trees and identify potential problems. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Illinois and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, MJM will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve--for today and tomorrow.



# ALONG THE LINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative  
www.mjmec.coop

**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.

## HOW TO REPORT AN OUTAGE:

Call 217-707-6156 or use your **SmartHub** 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.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIRMAN:** W. Kay Schultz..... Godfrey  
**VICE CHAIRMAN:** Charles Huebener..... Brighton  
**SECRETARY:** Marcie Tonsor..... Jerseyville  
**TREASURER:** Robert Moore..... Medora  
 Robert Lehmann..... Girard  
 Tyler Heyen..... Raymond  
 Dwayne Milner..... Piasa  
 James R. Niemann..... Litchfield  
 Todd Stewart..... Nokomis

## STAFF

Joe Heyen.....President/CEO  
 Jeremy Pattillo.....Director of Finance and Accounting  
 Jennifer Peterson.....Executive Administrator  
 Matt Eisenmenger.....Director of Operations  
 Bob Brandon.....Director of Engineering

## EDITOR

Eric Cooper.....Communications &  
 Member Services Coordinator

MJM Along the Lines (USPS 854-620) is published monthly for \$4.75 per year, per member by MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, Illinois 62626. Second-class postage paid at Carlinville, IL. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to MJM Along the Lines, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Smarthub Notifications**  
Set up the notifications you want, skip the ones you don't.
- 5 New MJM Meters**  
New features and details.
- 6 Operation Round Up Deadline**  
Encourage your local 501c3 organizations to apply by January 2nd.
- 7 Power Pole Clutter**  
The dangers of unauthorized pole attachments.



# Happy Holidays from MJM!

*2023 Holiday Schedule*

**MJM's office will be closed:**  
**DEC. 22ND & 25TH**  
**DEC. 29TH & JAN. 1ST**

*Happy Holidays!*

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**June 6th, 2024**  
**MJM's 2024 Annual Meeting**  
**in Carlinville, IL**

# SMARTHUB NOTIFICATIONS



Sign up for a number of different notifications using our SmartHub app. Pick and choose the ones that you want to receive! Planned outages, regular outages, billing changes, payment due, payment confirmations, auto pay, and many more you can choose from.

Log into your SmartHub account and navigate to the notification screen to manage your notifications. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call us during regular business hours at 217-707-6156 and press option #2. You can also find helpful videos on our website: [mjmec.coop/smarthub-help](https://mjmec.coop/smarthub-help)



**Billing Notifications** – Bill Available, Credit Card Expiration, Delinquent Notices, Declined Auto Pay, Payment Confirmation, Payment Posted, Payment Reminders, Scheduled Payment Notifications.



**Service** – Planned Power Outages, Power Outage, Power Outage Restored



**Miscellaneous** – Auto Pay, Login Credentials Change, Personal Info Change

To set up the specific notifications that you want, simply log in to SmartHub and go to: **"Settings > Manage Notifications."**

- **PAY BILLS ONLINE**
- **TRACK YOUR DAILY USAGE**
- **REPORT OUTAGES**
- **GET NOTIFICATIONS**



# 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS REMINDER!

High School Seniors, the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program awards \$2,000 scholarships annually to deserving students in the "electric cooperative family" entering college to assist them with their educational costs. MJM also awards two \$1,000 scholarships, chosen by a review committee at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives from these applications:

**10** scholarships are awarded to high school students who are the child of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.  
**(Deadline to apply Dec. 31, 2023).**

**5** scholarships are reserved for high school students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the child of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees, or directors.  
**(Deadline to apply Dec. 31, 2023).**

**1** scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a high school student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.  
**(Deadline to apply Dec. 31, 2023).**

**1** scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, is awarded to a student to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL.  
**(Deadline to apply Apr. 30, 2024).**

For more information about the IEC Memorial Scholarships, please contact: MJM Communications & Member Service Coordinator, Eric Cooper at 217-707-6156.

Application Links:  
<https://mjmec.coop/scholarships>



# STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES



by The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Downed power lines can look relatively harmless, but don't be fooled. They likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. These tips can help you stay safe around downed lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.
- The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high-voltage zone to a low-voltage one—and it could do that through your body.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even normally non-conductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and electrocute you.
- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.
- Do not drive over downed lines.
- If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.

• If you must leave your vehicle because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.

## MJM METER UPGRADE

MJM is in the process of upgrading and replacing meters. Over the course of the next two years, MJM Lineworkers will be switching out the old service meter for the new AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) meters.

The new meters will feature more advanced data which will improve our SmartHub app, outage/blink information, and therefore will improve the overall quality of service. MJM is dedicated to providing reliable service for our electric cooperative members (you!); improvements to our service area grid resilience, and making upgrades to keep up with the ever-changing technology advancements play a major role in that mission.

### Will there be additional costs?

No, members will not see additional costs with the installation and operation of the new meters. In fact, fewer needed trips by the lineworkers to MJM member locations will help keep costs down.

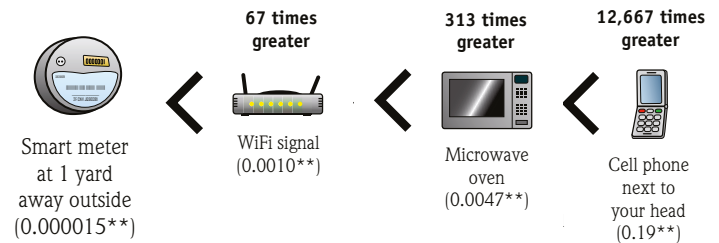
### Advanced Data

"Meter Data Management" (MDM) will give a more in-depth look at daily usage. One example is, the current meters can read an hour interval of usage, and the new AMI meters can read 15-minute intervals. Larger volumes of metering data will result in better usage monitoring and pinpointing efficiency improvement opportunities for MJM members.

### RF Safety

Meter signals sent produce less than a cell phone text message and are more than 1.3 million times below the FCC standard.

\*\* Milliwatts per square meter (Data Source: FCC)



# HOLIDAY DÉCOR TIPS FOR AN ENERGY-WISE HOME

by MJM Communications & Member Services  
Coordinator, Eric Cooper



Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkling lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking--and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at big box stores like Lowe's or Wal-Mart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot, give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can

install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30--and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season.



*Next Deadline:*  
*January 2, 2024*

**Section 501(c)(3), 501(c), and 509(a)(1) non-for-profits organizations within the MJM service territory are encouraged to apply for an Operation Round Up (ORU) grant.**

*Please send all applications, additional forms, and paperwork to **Operation Round Up, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL, 62626**. Once the application and information is completed and submitted to MJM, the information will then be considered by the Grant Review Board for approval of funds.*

<https://mjmec.coop/operation-round>



# Power Pole Clutter

Flyers, satellite dishes, posters, basketball hoops, decorative lights, even hunting stands. You name it, someone has tried to staple, nail or tie it to a power pole. Here's a quick look at the dangers and pitfalls associated with unauthorized pole attachments.

## Illegal

Many state and local laws and the National Electrical Safety Code prohibit any unauthorized items on poles. Utilities can face fines if these attachments aren't removed.



## Pole Damage

Even small holes can allow moisture and insects past the pole sealant, which can shorten the life of the pole or weaken it and cause it to fall in a storm.



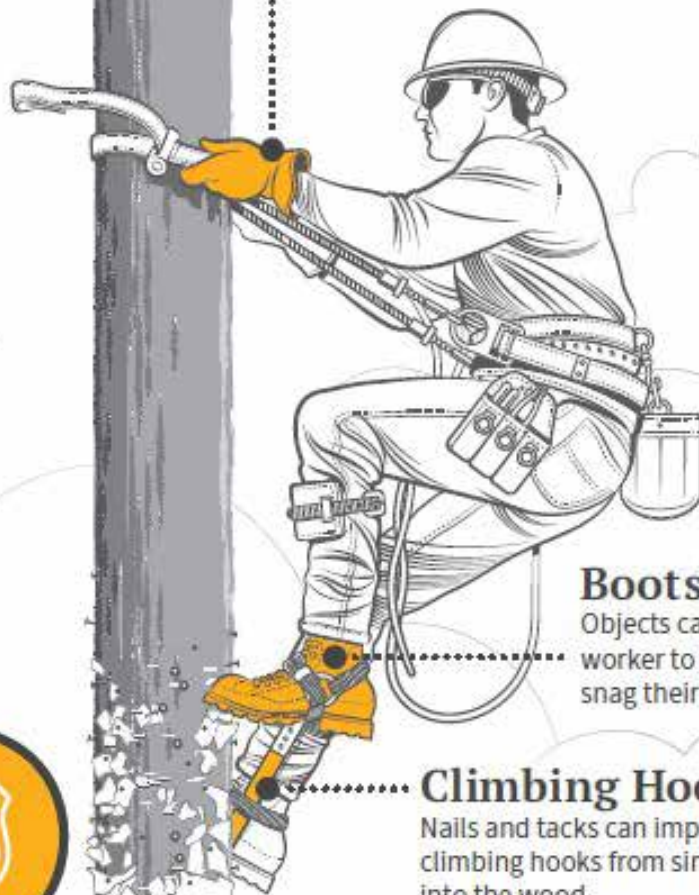
## Hinders Repairs

Posters and flyers can hide identifying markers on poles and slow repair work.



## Gloves

Staples, tacks and nails can puncture a lineworker's insulated rubber gloves and expose them to electric shock.



## Boots

Objects can cause a worker to fall if they snag their boots.

## Climbing Hooks

Nails and tacks can impede climbing hooks from sinking into the wood.



## Dangerous

A person who gets too close to energized lines while attaching an object can be electrocuted.



## Distraction

Some materials posted on poles, like mirrors or holiday decorations, can be a distraction to drivers.



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM MJM ELECTRIC

## MEMBER TRADING POST

**FOR SALE:** 32ft Hay Elevator. \$1000 Located 10 min outside of Grafton Illinois. Used this year just decided to purchase a smaller one for inside the barn. Motor is removed and stored inside each year. Don't know the year or brand. Serious inquiries only. 618-979-1066

**FOR SALE:** Spaces available in the Garden Mausoleum of Valor for Veterans in Mayfield Cemetery, Carlinville, IL  
Call: 217-851-1041

**FOR SALE:** Flare bed wagon, metal sides with hoist. \$200  
Call: 217-436-2368

**FOR SALE:** Firewood seasoned & Split, 6' Pickup Bed \$100, can deliver for a bit more.  
Call Leroy 618-972-4658

*Your Ad Here:  
See details below on  
how to get your Ad  
placed in the Along The  
Lines Newsletter!*