

ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

OCTOBER 2023
VOL.16, NO. 10

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OCTOBER CALENDAR

National Co-op Month

National Cybersecurity Month

Oct. 6-8: Touchstone Energy
BalloonFest in Shelbyville

Oct. 8-14: Fire Prevention Week

Oct. 16-20: School Bus Safety Week

Oct. 16-20: Careers in Energy Week

Oct. 31: Halloween



UPCOMING

Nov. 10: Office Closed - Veterans Day

Nov. 23-24: Office Closed

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED:

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



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WWW.MJMEC.COOP



ELECTRIC CO-OPS GROW FOR THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

October is National Co-op Month, and MJM is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op. Electric co-ops, including MJM, exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we constantly strive to meet your needs.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles--and being community-focused is essential to everything we do. The Operation Round Up program continues to be of great success and service to our local non-for-profit organizations within the MJM service territory.

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies, sending help during large outage events, and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events, county CEO programs, or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

Co-ops Grow for You: At MJM, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!



Photos (top to bottom): Operation Round Up in Staunton, storm assistance at Spoon River Electric Cooperative, Cooperative Lobby Day, Jersey County CEO Program, AIEC 2023 Youth Day.



ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative
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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.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Safety measures to prevent potential electrical fires.

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This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the October issue of this publication. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions and/or civil sanctions.

Eric Cooper, Editor

FEDERAL GRANTS NEWS & INFO



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO,
JOE HEYEN

MJM is actively pursuing federal grants for green energy projects, grid resilience projects, and upgrading technologies and cybersecurity projects. There has been a great deal of grant funding announced by the Federal government in 2023, many of the grants are specifically designed for rural electric cooperatives. The United States Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy have many different funding opportunities because of the Inflation Reduction Act legislation. At MJM, we are actively pursuing these funding opportunities and making sure we are carefully selecting projects that will make the greatest impact across our service territory and membership.

From microgrid projects that would help counter rising energy costs, to storm hardening and upgrading the current energy grid's technology components, we are looking to make a very positive impact on our local grid. Many other rural electric cooperatives in the United States are also looking to upgrade, which in the cooperative world means "cooperation amongst cooperatives." MJM is partnering with other Illinois Cooperatives, our state organization the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, our power provider cooperative Wabash Valley Power Alliance, and even the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association on applying for the plethora of funding available. With these specific grants, they are looking for projects that will have the widest-spread impact on Greenhouse Gas reductions and green energy production. By partnering with other cooperatives, the area of positive impact becomes greater and therefore the project(s) will be more appealing to the federal organizations to approve for funding.

The larger funding opportunities for rural electric cooperatives are projected to continue into the next several years to come. MJM will continue to pursue these opportunities and utilize the funds to continue to make our local system resilient and reliable for our membership.

2024 SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCEMENT

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).

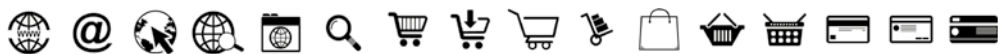
For more information about the IEC Memorial Scholarships, please contact: MJM Communications & Member Service Coordinator, Eric Cooper at 217-707-6156.

Application Links:

<https://mjmec.coop/scholarships>

PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

OCTOBER IS CYBERSECURITY MONTH



BY MJM IT ADMINISTRATOR, **CHRIS FRANZEN**

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identify, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at MJM, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how MJM is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. Implement multi-factor authentication (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.
2. Update your software. This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. Think before you click. Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look



too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4. Create strong passwords, using long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

KEEPING THE ELECTRIC GRID AND YOUR DATA SECURE

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For MJM, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure. For example, we participate in "GridX," where co-ops around the country come together to simulate realistic cyber issues and practice responding to the latest types of issues we might have to manage.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



SPOOKY ENERGY SAVINGS

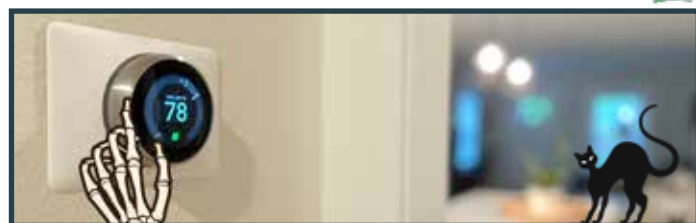
BY MJM COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR, ERIC COOPER

This spooky season, we're sharing a few energy-saving tricks so you can treat yourself to lower energy bills. Here are four simple ways to summon the spirit of energy efficiency.

Conjure instant savings with a smart thermostat. One of the easiest ways to save energy is through thermostat control, since home heating and cooling account for a large portion of monthly energy use. Smart thermostats can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly. You can control a smart thermostat from anywhere (through your smart phone), which allows you to prevent unnecessary energy consumption while you're away. Sorcery!

Get rid of goosebumps by eliminating ghostly drafts. The winter chill is just around the corner, so now is the time to seal air leaks around your home. Apply caulk and weatherstripping around drafty windows and doors to make your home more comfortable and lower energy use. Illuminate your lair with energy efficient lighting. LED bulbs use 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. Make the switch to reduce energy used for lighting. Remember to use LEDs when it's time to decorate for the upcoming holiday season. LED light strings offer an average of 88% energy savings compared to traditional incandescent light strings.

Stir up savings with "countertop cauldrons." Cooler weather summons our favorite soup recipes. Small countertop appliances like slow cookers use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop. Grab your "book of spells" (or recipes) and start stirring up savings in the kitchen. When we look around our homes, there are many opportunities to save energy. So this spooky season, investigate your space and unlock a different kind of magic – the kind that brings real energy savings.



OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

WATCH ALL THE COLORFUL BALLOONS TAKE TO THE AIR! The Lake Shelbyville skies become a backdrop for colorful hot air balloons. Friday evening they take off around at 5:00 p.m. (weather permitting). Saturday and Sunday mornings the balloons take flight at dawn. Saturday night hosts the annual Balloon Glow with food, music, and fun.

<https://www.facebook.com/balloonslakeshelbyville/>



MJM RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC HEAT DISCOUNT

If you have recently added electric heating as the **primary heating system** for your home, you may be eligible for a discounted electric rate.

The electric heat discount is applied November through March at \$0.04063 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) **for energy usage between 1,000 kWh and 3,500 kWh** for a maximum discount of \$101.58 per month (2,500 kWh X \$0.04063). Regular rates will still apply for the 0 kWh -1000 kWh range and any usage past the 3500 kWh maximum.

Your main source of heat must be electric to receive the discount. (Examples: Electric Furnace, Geothermal heat pump, Air source heat pump, Baseboard)

If your account needs to be updated to this rate type, please call the office at **217-707-6156** or email info@mjmec.coop.

Preventing Home Electrical Fires



Fire departments respond to an average of **46,700** home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

Over a recent 4-year period...



30%

happened in cold weather months (Nov. – Feb.)

Fires caused

an estimated average of:



390 Deaths
1,070 Injuries

1



Wiring and related equipment were involved in the **greatest number of home electrical fires.**

Lighting, a lamp or a bulb was involved in the **second largest number of fires.**



WARNING SIGNS of electrical issues:

Damaged cords and flickering lights

Discolored outlets and switch plates

Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses

Hire a licensed contractor to ensure that your home's wiring is **installed to code** and functioning properly. Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org

Source: NFPA's Electrical Fires Report, 2022

NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

OCTOBER 8 -14

When assessing your home, the first step is to hire a qualified electrician to check all wiring to ensure it is up to code and that the electrical system can handle the demands of your electronics, appliances, lights and other electrical needs. Beyond that, watch for possible issues as they arise. Symptoms of issues include flickering lights, discolored outlets and switch plates, damaged cords, frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

Check these electrically related items in your home:

- 1. Electrical outlets:** Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates. If you have young children, install tamper-resistant outlets if your home does not have them. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- 2. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs):** Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room, workshop, basement, garage and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the Test and Reset buttons monthly to ensure that they are working properly.
- 3. Cords:** Check cords to ensure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under rugs, tightly wrapped around an object or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- 4. Extension cords:** These are not intended to be permanent solutions, so use them temporarily. If you find that you need more electrical outlets, consult your electrician.
- 5. Light bulbs:** Verify that your light bulbs are the intended wattage for the lamp or fixture they are in.
- 6. Appliances/electronics:** If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or gives you an electrical shock, it is time to discard it and replace it with a new version. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations.
- 7. Circuit breakers/fuses:** Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuits they protect.
- 8. Electrical wiring:** If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Also, check for loose wires and lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
- 9. Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs):** AFCIs, which monitor the flow of electricity throughout your home, should be properly installed. If an AFCI detects any abnormality, it shuts the system off to prevent a fire. Upon inspection, an electrician can assess whether your home is properly protected.
- 10. Service capacity:** If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. Contact a qualified electrician.



MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Split Seasoned Fire Wood, 6ft pickup loads - \$100 or call for delivery price: Call Leroy @ 618-972-4658

FOR SALE: 2023 Kabota MX6000 with cab & air. 34hr. Loader with bucket & grapple attachment. factory warranty transfer. Call: 618-535-1369

FOR SALE: Kubota L3130, 4X4, Hydrostat, 72in belly mower, balloon tires, runs great. \$14,500. Call: 618-980-9705

FOR SALE: Washburn dread-nought acoustic guitar, full size, with hard shell case, great sound, good condition \$300. Call: 217-320-1011

FOR SALE: Singer sewing treadle machine. serial # G0290731 with Singer box of buttonhole attachments. Call: 618-836-7545

FOR RENT: Indoor storage for car, boat or camper. Call: 618-334-4298