



# Years of Service

A collection of memories and images celebrating  
the history of MJM Electric Cooperative



ERIN MURPHY



## **75 YEARS OF SERVICE**

Compiled and designed by Erin Murphy

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## — Chapter 1 —

# An introduction to our past

**M**JM Electric Cooperative and other electric cooperatives across the nation were born out of the idea that rural citizens deserved the same quality of life as people from the city. In the 1930s, investor-owned utility companies were reluctant to provide electricity to farmers and other folks from rural areas. In cities and large towns, building one stretch of power lines might reap profits from dozens of customers, but building a stretch of power lines in the country all the way out to only one or two houses meant much less profit. Investor-owned companies would either refuse service for these areas or charge them huge fees and higher power costs than they did for city-dwellers. As a result, only 10 percent of rural American homes had electricity back then.

And yet, President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized how electricity could increase farm productivity and improve the lives of rural Americans. As part of his New Deal program to end the Great Depression, he established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) on May 11, 1935 to promote the spread of electricity to these areas.

Farmers banded together to form their own communally-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, but these groups usually lacked the resources to construct lines and purchase equipment. The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 allowed the REA to provide these cooperatives with money in the form of low-interest federal loans.

By 1938, there were already two fledgling cooperatives signing up members in Macoupin and Montgomery counties: Rural Electric Convenience of Divernon and Illinois Rural of Winchester. But in early 1939, it became apparent that



**President Franklin D. Roosevelt (center) signs the Rural Electrification Act with Representative John Rankin (left) and Senator William Norris (right).**





**This is a picture of the original Board of Trustees taken in September, 1939, a few months after the cooperative organized. Included on the first board were Mrs. L.H. Lively, M.B. Young, Mrs. R.L. Comer, John S. Kallal, Herman Dubbelde, Gilbert Kasten, W.H. Monke, L. William O'Malley, and Robert Schweickhardt. Dubbelde was the first MJM president.**

Winchester's diesel power plant was not going to be able to provide enough power to all of Macoupin County, leaving farmers in the southern part of the county unsure of their future.

Macoupin County farm advisor O.O. Mowery had been heavily involved in plans for the electrification of the area. After a meeting with neighboring farm advisors and the REA, it was decided that another cooperative needed to be established to meet the people's needs. MJM was first officially organized on April 5, 1939, and the first official meeting of the board of trustees was held on April 10 at 2 p.m., in Mowery's office in Carlinville. The name was suggested by Loren L. Love of Carlinville and stands for Macoupin, Jersey, Montgomery – the three counties initially served by the Cooperative.

Love, who served as the Cooperative's first treasurer, was instrumental in signing members up for service. Before the creation of MJM, he was paid \$3 a day to sign up members and obtain easements. His gasoline and vehicle expenses came out of that pay.

There were many other men and women like Loren Love who poured their time and energy into bringing electricity to the rural community of west central Illinois. The end result was well worth it. One member, a middle-aged woman in Macoupin County, actually cried when she turned on the light switch for the first time. Electricity meant she would no longer have to wash clothes by hand or bring in firewood for the stove.

When the Cooperative officially formed in 1939, it counted 940 members in



**This file photo shows MJM employees in front of the cooperative's first office building in 1942.**

Macoupin, 250 in Montgomery, and 410 in Jersey. The board of directors signed a contract with Iowa-Illinois Power Company to secure a source of electricity, and the Cooperative's first member had power turned on in 1940. The average member, in 1941, used an average of 79 kilowatt hours a month.

Your Cooperative now provides electricity to more than 9,000 accounts and services 2,101 miles of power lines through Macoupin, Jersey, Montgomery, Bond, Fayette, Green, and Madison counties. The average member uses about 1,200 kilowatt hours per month.

In 2002, MJM signed a power-purchasing agreement with Wabash Valley Power Association in Indianapolis. That same year, MJM became a member of Touchstone Energy, a support organization that counts more than 750 cooperatives across 46 states as members.

It is still less profitable to provide electricity for low-population areas than it is for cities, but we keep our costs as low as possible by being a not-for-profit organization. Just like in the 1930s, we do not aim to turn a large profit but to provide our member-owners with quality service. Your money isn't going into the pockets of wealthy investors; it pays for what it costs us to deliver electricity to you and keep our lines in working order, with a little bit set aside to help the community.

The following chapters of this book contain articles and photos that help tell the story of our past. MJM members and employees have shared some of their memories of our Cooperative over the years. These tales reflect not only how MJM has changed through the decades but also how MJM has changed our rural community.

## — Chapter 2 —

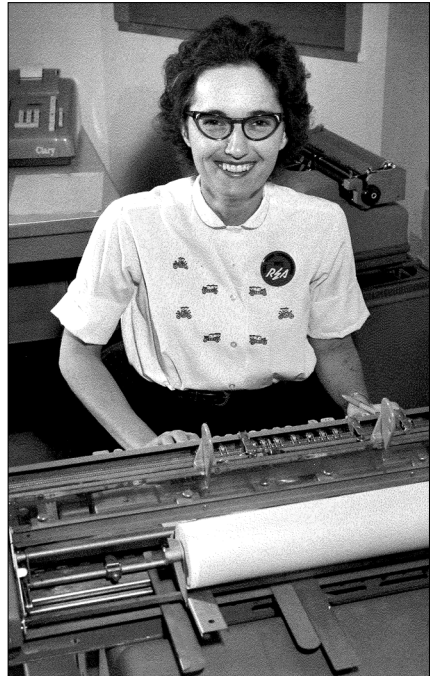
# Edna Stanfield

*By Erin Murphy*

*Originally published in MJM's "Along the Lines" newsletter, September 2013*

Having worked at MJM for 58 years, former employee Edna Stanfield certainly saw a lot of changes over time in the Co-operative and its community. But, perhaps the biggest change she witnessed was one that happened years before Edna began working there. Growing up on a farm near Carlinville, Edna experienced first-hand the difference that MJM made when it brought electricity to her community.

Edna estimates she was in first grade when MJM first brought power to her home in the early 1940s. Before then, rural citizens missed out on conveniences that had been available to other Americans for years. “I can remember going to the city, wishing we had that kind of lights,” said Edna. “All you had to do was flip a switch. You didn’t have to use oil lamps or carry a lantern if you went out after dark.”



**In this 1960 file photo, MJM employee Edna Stanfield demonstrates the operation of a billing machine.**

Edna's parents, Edward and Kate Pursey, had electricity when they briefly lived in Springfield, but they had to make do without it when they moved to their farm. When they heard that MJM would soon be offering electricity for rural residents, they wanted the service badly. "My grandfather lived with us. He didn't think we needed [electricity], but my parents said we had to have it," said Edna.

"Electricity was something that your city relatives had that you wished you had ... until one day it marched down the road," said Edna. She still remembers the thrill of seeing the Cooperative's trucks hauling poles down the road near her parents' farm. She watched as the crews dug holes in the ground for the power poles. Despite being sick with scarlet fever at the time, little Edna couldn't resist going outside in the winter cold to take a peak down the big, deep holes. "No coat or anything," she said. "[My mother] was very upset!"

Once MJM's service was set up for the Purseys, some of the first electrical conveniences they used were lights for their house and electric brooders to keep their baby pigs and chicks warm. Other new appliances included a refrigerator and a washing machine. "The refrigeration was most valuable. You didn't have to go to town to buy ice to cool things with," Edna said.

The family also received a toaster as a gift from her aunt. "She wanted to bring us something for our new electricity, so here she comes carrying us a toaster from Springfield," she said. She added with a laugh that her family enjoyed it so much that "everything got toasted for a while."

Little did Edna know that someday she'd be working for the same company that brought power to her family's farmstead. In 1952, two weeks after her high school graduation, Edna began working for MJM as a billing clerk, the first and only job she would ever have.

One of the reasons she remained at MJM for her entire career is she enjoyed helping the members. "You could help them day or night. Back in those days, we worked a lot of nights during storms," she said. She remembers how grateful the members were for MJM fixing the storm-related outages. "You'd get a lot of thank yous and a few plates of cookies."

Having worked at the Cooperative for nearly 60 years, Edna saw MJM and its territory grow and change over the decades. When she first started, MJM's membership was mostly small farms. Over time the number of farms decreased, replaced by the homes of people who live in the country but work in the city. The handful of farms that are left are much bigger than the farmsteads of the 1950s.

With its current computerized billing system and automated metering, the MJM office is also very different than it was when she started. "I had an

ink pen and a quart of ink; that's what they gave me. Everything was done by hand," she remembered. "No computers, no nothing." Back when she first started, members of MJM had to use their math skills to calculate their own bills. Members read their own meters, then used a rate card to figure out how much they owed. Edna's job was to check their work when the payments came in and record them in MJM's records. For the most part, the members did a good job paying the right amount. "The first time we did a field read, I think we found two that were off just a little bit," said Edna, "so they were pretty accurate."

Over time, billing methods changed at the office. "We threw away the pens and went to an old fashioned posting system like they used in banks, machines that were real clanky, and then from that we went to a form of computerization," said Edna. "It's come a long way."

Edna is retired from the Cooperative now, but it took two tries for her retirement to stay permanent. She first retired on a Friday in 1999, but then management asked if she could come back as a part-time employee on the following Tuesday. She continued to work at MJM until her second and final retirement on New Year's Eve 2010.

Losing Edna as an employee was quite a change for MJM, and the Cooperative is still grateful for her 58 years of helpful and loyal service.

— Chapter 3 —

# Howard Heinz

*By John Hoback*

*Originally published in the Carlinville Shoppers Guide, November 5, 1966  
Reprinted with permission*

**M**JM Electric Cooperative, since its organization April 5, 1939, has been a tremendous asset to Carlinville and the broad area it serves – and this will continue to be true in the years ahead.

This was the view expressed today [November 5, 1966] by Carlinville's mayor, Howard Heinz, in remarks prepared for delivery before the Cooperative's annual meeting today in Carlinville High School.

The mayor, who with his brothers, Harold and William, long has operated the Heinz Furniture Store in Carlinville, knows what he's talking about.

"I'm a member of MJM," he said.

"I well remember when this organization was started. Our family was quite active in the appliance business then. I remember we loaded a truck with an electric range, refrigerator, an early air conditioner and all sorts of small appliances and bulbs and drove through the countryside calling on our farm friends.

"This was about the time the electricity was first turned on in 1940. I can tell you we created a great deal of interest. The results were terrific.

"We'd pull up to a farm home and describe our merchandise. The farmer or his wife would look at us



**Former Carlinville mayor Howard Heinz recalled how MJM had brought more business to the merchants of Macoupin, Jersey and Montgomery Counties.** *Photo appears courtesy of Carlinville City Hall.*

a little suspiciously. ‘Will that darn thing really work?’ they’d ask of an appliance. We’d demonstrate, and by golly it would. We’d explain that we were in business in Carlinville and would appreciate the opportunity of serving them at any time.”

Mayor Heinz pointed out that some of these people are still Heinz Furniture Store customers today... as are some of their children.

The coming of MJM Electric Cooperative, he said, opened a vast new territory filled with good customers that never before had been in the market for many electrical appliances.

“This,” the mayor said in his prepared remarks, “meant for more business for Carlinville merchants, and merchants of other communities in those parts of Macoupin, Jersey and Montgomery Counties served by MJM. It has contributed materially to the prosperity, the continuing prosperity, of all residents of the area.”

But Mayor Heinz emphasized that the Cooperative’s work is far from finished.

“MJM was established during a time of great need,” he said. “The Cooperative has been a part of our area’s growth. Now that times are better, the need for the Cooperative continues. There is plenty of room for both the commercial power companies and the electric cooperatives. I predict that they will live together and work together for countless years in the future.”

Mayor Heinz said that he and other Carlinville leaders and merchants always welcome Cooperative members to their community. He said MJM members are universally regarded as fine and valued customers, as fine and valued citizens of the area.

“And certainly we in Carlinville regard MJM Electric as one of our important business assets – a ‘good citizen’ in every sense of the word.”



— Chapter 4 —

# Cathern Matthews

*By Erin Murphy*

*Originally published in MJM's "Along the Lines" newsletter, July 2013*

These days it's hard to imagine life without electricity, but in the 1930s our local farmers had to live without this convenience every day. Longtime MJM Electric Cooperative member Cathern Matthews, 90, remembers what it was like when MJM first brought power to our rural community.

"That's what everybody talked about, getting power," Cathern said. "Everybody was happy when it came on."

Cathern's family, the Alberts, were one of the first families to get electricity from MJM in 1940. The Alberts lived on a farm south of Piasa, growing corn, beans and other crops. In anticipation of getting electricity for the first time, her mother, Mabel, had bought a second-hand refrigerator. Previously, she had "never even had an icebox before," said Cathern. "She had to put things in a bucket and hang it down a well if she wanted to keep anything cool. The day they turned the power on, she was ready."

Unfortunately, Cathern wouldn't be able to enjoy the farm's new electric service. That year, she had gotten married and moved out of her family's home at the age of 17. Although she briefly lived in a home with electricity, her father soon rented a farm for her that didn't have power. Cathern didn't have power again



**Cathern Matthews accepted a Distinguished Member Award at the 2013 Annual Meeting.**



until she and her husband bought a home in Piasa in 1948.

When she lived without electricity, doing the laundry was one of the biggest nuisances for Cathern. Scrubbing the clothes by hand on a washboard was difficult. “I had blisters on my knuckles when I first started until I learned how to wash without getting them. And I had to hang clothes outside when the weather was freezing.” Ironing was done with flat irons: large, heavy pieces of metal with a handle on them. They had to be heated over the burners of her stove.

One day, her father bought her a gas-powered washing machine, but even that had its disadvantages. “You had to pump that thing to start it, and sometimes you’d just pump down on that and that thing would practically jerk your teeth out!” said Cathern.

In the evenings, light had to come from a coal oil lamp or a gas lamp. “The gas lamps were bright, but you had to be careful with them. Because of the fire, you had to look out for the wind, and you had to watch the kids.”

Cathern also used to have a coal oil stove. “You had to make coal oil in a glass bowl and turn it upside down so that the coal oil could get to the burners. You had to be careful with that stuff,” said Cathern, also adding that the process “was tedious. Everything you had [that was powered by coal oil or gas], it was tedious, and you had to watch it,” said Cathern. When she could finally switch over to electric-powered appliances, she felt much safer and loved not having to “mess with that stinkin’ coal oil anymore!”

Cathern notes MJM has changed over the years, especially with recent improvements that the Cooperative has made, such as the new Automated Meter Reading system.

“I really like MJM reading the meter and telling me how much I owe. You don’t have to go out in the rain,” she said. She also noted that before MJM started its tree-trimming program, “every time there was a storm, the tree limbs cut our power off,” but now the service is more reliable.

Much to her surprise, Cathern was honored at the Cooperative’s 2013 Annual Meeting for being a source of encouragement to MJM for many years. Every month Cathern mails a personal note with her bill expressing her appreciation for having electricity, along with her good wishes and prayers for the MJM employees. She signs the letters with: “God loves you, and so do I.” At the meeting, MJM’s President/CEO Chris Spears introduced her to the attending members and presented her with a Distinguished Member Award certificate.

Cathern estimates that she’s been writing notes to MJM since the 1970s. “I always write a letter every month because I sure enjoy electricity,” she said. “What would we do without it?”

— Chapter 5 —

# Paul Woolsey



In this 1981 file photo, Paul Woolsey (left) is presented with an Safety Award Certificate by Thomas H. Moore, executive vice president and general manager of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).  
*Photo source: AIEC.*

*By Erin Murphy*

*Originally published in MJM's "Along the Lines" newsletter, January 2013*

When asked how MJM had improved our local area, Paul Woolsey (former Lineman and Operations Superintendent) had this to say: “MJM has benefited the community by raising the standard of living for the communities surrounding these small towns. [...] It changed the whole lifestyle of people.”

Paul knows this firsthand, as he was one of the many people whose life was changed by MJM.

During his childhood, he lived without electricity for years. Although MJM had power lines close to his family’s farm, “we couldn’t get the wiring to wire the house,” said Paul, because of the nation was in the grips of World War II. Copper and other metals were required for the war effort and were rationed at the time.

Paul was seven when the Woolseys could finally wire their home for electric service. His favorite new feature of the electrified home was the lights. Electric lighting meant that he no longer had to do his schoolwork by the light of a kerosene lamp. The addition of electricity also brought forth a new radio, a new refrigerator, and an electric stove to replace their coal-powered stove. A new electric water pump meant the Woolsey children no longer had to pump water for the family and livestock by hand.

His father, who previously milked 30 head of cattle twice a day by hand, was able to buy a milking machine to do the task for him. To a dairy operation, the addition of electricity was especially important because of milk refrigeration. Previously, the milk was cooled by a water tank left in the shade. If the milk wasn't collected from the tank soon enough, it would spoil, wasting a day's worth of work. With electricity, the Woolseys could keep their milk refrigerated.

Paul joined the staff of MJM as a lineman in 1957. As tough as it is to do the work of a lineman now, back then it was even tougher. Holes for the power poles had to be dug by hand instead of a digger truck. Linemen had to climb the poles instead of being safely lifted by a bucket truck arm.

Through it all, the linemen were a family. In a job that could sometimes be dangerous, especially during storms, they looked out for each other. Paul found enjoyment in the work, even in strenuous conditions. "There were times in ice storms at night if the moon was shining, they could turn the lights off and work by the moonlight. And it was very easy to see, and it was actually beautiful. It sounds maybe a little bit silly, but it was. You could see everything in the moonlight, with it shining off of the ice," said Paul.

Eventually Paul took on the job of Operations Superintendent, supervising the linemen. As a supervisor, Paul's number one priority was safety. He enjoyed the position, and during this time he saw many changes in the Cooperative such as new substations added, new power lines, and a new load control program to help reduce electric demand. These changes helped improve electric service for our rural area, just as MJM has strived to do from the very beginning.

"Electrification of the rural areas of the United States put the way of living and the economic benefits of the country so much farther ahead of the other countries surrounding us," said Paul. "I'm proud to have been a part of it."

— Chapter 6 —

# Nancy Joiner

*By Erin Murphy*

*Original version published in MJM's "Along the Lines" newsletter, December 2013*

In January 2014, the MJM office said goodbye to someone who has been a part of its history for more than half its existence. After 43 years with the Cooperative, MJM's office clerk Nancy Joiner retired, and she has shared her memories of working at MJM throughout the decades.

In 1970, Nancy and her husband's farm was struggling because of a crop disease known as blight, so Nancy had begun to look for employment. Fortunately for Nancy (and MJM), the Cooperative was looking for a new employee with exactly her background in clerical work.

"I always felt that it was a blessing that I was brought to MJM, where I was somewhat familiar with what they needed," said Nancy. "It all just fell into place."

When Nancy started out, part of her work involved keeping track of the inventory from MJM's appliance store. The cooperative used to sell appliances to members at a discount, offering the services of MJM's linemen to install these devices. At the time Nancy joined, the Cooperative was just beginning to phase out the appliance store, and she bought the last washer and dryer ever sold there. This represents a time of change in the electric business. When electric cooperatives were new,



**Nancy Joiner, 1990s file photo**

cooperatives across the nation encouraged their members to use as much electricity as possible so that each member was getting their money's worth from the power plants. However, as time passed and rural Americans used more and more electric-powered gadgets, it became more important for Cooperatives to encourage their members to use less electricity instead. If members use more energy than what power plants can deliver, then new power plants have to be built, at great cost to the cooperative and its members.

Throughout her career, Nancy has taken on a variety of tasks and moved to different departments a few times. She began working with inventories, then was assigned to dispatch the linemen during outages, then moved to organizing membership information. But, the majority of Nancy's work has always been clerical, in which she can use her lovely handwriting to its full potential. At a time when cursive writing is starting to become a lost art, Nancy has received many compliments from MJM members about her penmanship.

Handwriting was a major part of Nancy's job at MJM, whose office was not computerized for many years. At one point, Nancy explained, MJM was being outpaced by other utilities in adopting new technology. However, the office is now much more automated and computerized than it used to be. The Cooperative has computerized records, an automated meter reading system, online bill payments, and the ability to accept credit and debit cards. Nancy also noted that the office has kept modern by hiring people who have experience with technology and can bring that knowledge in with them. With the implementation of these features, particularly the automated meter reading system, MJM doesn't just meet the technological level of other utilities – it surpasses them!

Although many improvements have been made to the office regarding technology, Nancy emphasized how important it is to keep old-fashioned hard copy records. MJM has been fortunate to have someone in its office who is passionate about this work; Nancy has worked hard to keep the Cooperative's records up-to-date, accurate and organized.

"I've always thought of it as a career, not a job. And I've enjoyed coming to work all the time," she said. While she is happy about retiring, Nancy said she knows she will miss coming into the office each day. "It's been a very, very good place to work." MJM will miss having Nancy at the office as well and wishes her all the best in her retirement.

## — Chapter 7 —

# Pete Evans & John Halder



Pete Evans, (left) and John Halder have seen a number of changes during their time at MJM, including many improvements within the past seven years.

*By Erin Murphy*

*Originally published in MJM's "Along the Lines" newsletter, November 2013*

Since 1985, line foremen Pete Evans and John Halder have worked for MJM Electric Cooperative, joining the Cooperative as linemen within two weeks of each other. Over that time, MJM and its community have changed in many ways, especially over the past seven years, and Pete and John have been witness to all these changes.

Lineworkers are mostly known for the arduous task of fixing power outages, but there are other tasks assigned to them throughout the year, such as maintenance, pole change-outs, extending distribution lines, and installing new services. Often, the nature of a lineman's job changes depending on what economic situation the area is experiencing or what improvements need to be made in the system. For example, MJM experienced an increase in the 1990s

of people moving into the Cooperative's territory. "In the '90s, all we did was build new services," said Pete. "The economy was booming, and interest rates were low. Money was easier to get, so people were building homes, left and right, everywhere."

"That jump happened mainly after 1993's flood," added John. "People started moving out of the flood plains and relocating, and the government was giving them cheap loans."

They also noted that while MJM started out with its members mostly being farmers, over time the membership has grown to include people who live in the country but don't necessarily work on the farm.

Both recall the ice storms of 2006 and 2007, and the restoration efforts that lasted for days. "That was the coup de grace," said John. Afterwards, plans were made to implement an aggressive right of way clearance program throughout the entire MJM system, which includes more than 2,100 miles of line. Contractor crews have cleared approximately 1,600 miles of line since then, and this has helped to greatly improve reliability. In 2012, MJM had the lowest average outage hours per member in 15 years and the lowest amount of overtime in 20 years.

The way that outages are handled is also different. In the past, whenever a member called to report an outage, those calls were taken by MJM office workers at their homes, with employees rotating who was on call. The MJM office had only two phone lines open for calls. "You'd get a big storm, and everybody would try to call in at once," said Pete. With two lines and hundreds of callers, many people couldn't get through to report their outage.

MJM has improved by leaps and bounds in this area. Outage calls after hours are handled by the Cooperative Response Center, which can take hundreds of calls at a time, thus ensuring that MJM is aware of every outage. MJM has also implemented its new Automated Meter Reading system. Four times a day, the system checks to see if anyone is experiencing an outage. If there is an issue, MJM can send its linemen out to fix it. Pete noted, however, that MJM members should still call in if they are experiencing an outage to ensure that the outage is fixed as quickly as possible. The system check is run only four times per day, and if a member waits for one of these system checks to report the outage, he or she could be waiting up to eight hours. Still, the two linemen note that there have been instances that MJM has had people restored before they even knew they were out.

There are also different tools and techniques that the linemen are using now that they weren't when Pete and John first started. One such technique is rubber gloving, which MJM began using in the early 2000s. With this technique,

## *75 Years of Service*

linemen use their special gloves to fix a line while it is still “hot,” meaning that there is still an electric current running through it. It should be stressed that only trained linemen should perform rubber gloving, as it can be dangerous. The rubber gloves they use are rated for 20,000 volts. Without this technique, in some situations, the linemen may have to cut power to homes that were not experiencing the outage in order to fix certain lines. The Cooperative is also using fuses more often on its power lines. By adding fuses to a line, an outage in one neighborhood is prevented from spreading to another.

There has also been an increased focus on safety for the linemen. Every month, the linemen attend a safety meeting presented by a representative from the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. The linemen also attend 30-minute safety meetings every Friday.

While the linemen have certainly benefited from these changes over the years, the biggest beneficiaries of these changes are the MJM members. “It’s all for the member,” said Pete. “Everything’s to try to make [our service as affordable] as you can make it but still be reliable.”



# Images from the past

Selected from MJM's photo archives, the following images help bring MJM's past to life.



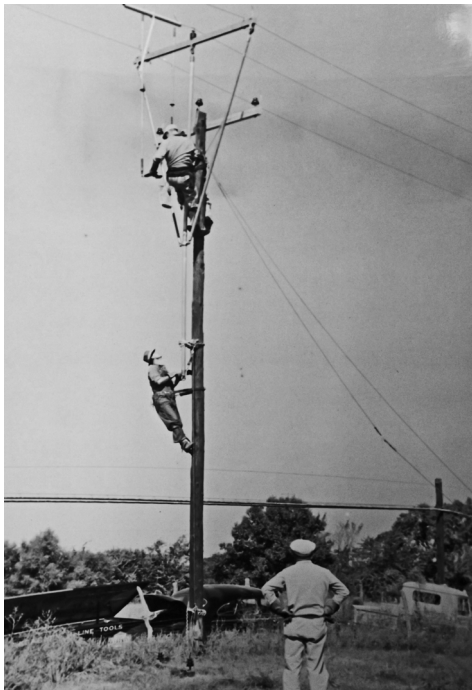
This was taken in April 1942 in front of MJM's old headquarters in Carlinville, only a few years after the cooperative started. Former MJM manager A.C. Barnes is on the far right.



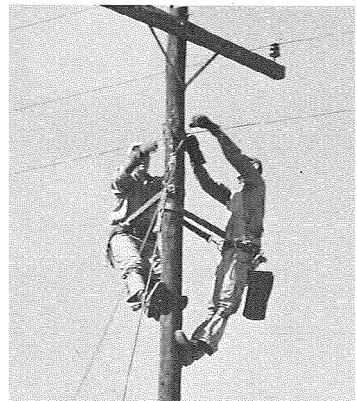
MJM members William Moore and his wife (pictured) of Fidelity won an REA War Food Production in the '40s for outstanding use of electrical equipment to save labor. Before MJM brought power to our rural community just a few years prior, Mrs. Moore probably would have been slowly sewing to a dim kerosene lamp. Here, she demonstrates how her electric items help her.



**Bringing electricity to America's farms was especially important during World War II, when we depended on farmers for food production more than ever. MJM member Arthur Grassel, who raised sheep on his 240-acre farm near Litchfield, won an EA War Food Production Award for "outstanding use of electricity to maintain food production." Electric lights and brooders reduced Grassel's losses at lambing time. In 1943, he raised 73 lambs from 50 ewes."**



**These days, linemen can be lifted to the top of a pole by a bucket truck to make repairs, but back in the 1940s, linemen had to climb the poles themselves.**





If you hate doing the laundry now, just imagine having to do it on a farm in the 1930s. This pictograph (© NRECA) from 1939 shows how hard this chore was until cooperatives such as MJM brought electricity to rural America.

# WHAT ONE KILOWATT HOUR MEANS TO THE FARM



PICTORIAL STATISTICS, INC

This pictograph (© NRECA) illustrates the many ways that electricity saved labor for farmers. Some electric cooperative supporters referred to electricity as a “wired hand,” the equivalent of a “hired hand” that farmers employ to help on the farm.



For decades, Willie Wirehand has been the mascot for electric cooperatives. He is the embodiment of the fighting cooperative spirit and the symbol of dependable, local, consumer-owned electricity all over the world. (In Latin America, for example, he is known as “Electro Pepe.”)



Willie came to life in 1950, created by the late Andrew “Drew” McLay, a freelance artist working for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), in collaboration with then-RE Magazine editor William Roberts. Since then, Willie has appeared on scores of promotional items.

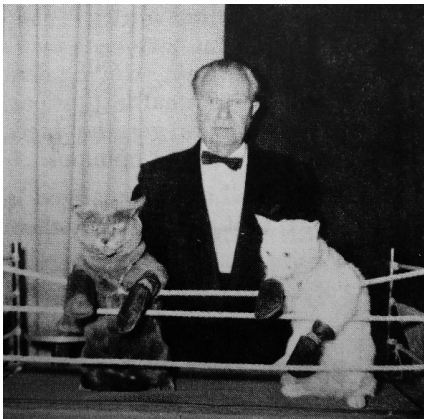
Willie’s role continued to evolve over the decades. For example, when the 1970s ushered in an energy crisis, he donned a sweater and hopped on a bicycle, caulked windows, and weather stripped doors in new ads pushing energy conservation and efficiency tips. But no matter his persona, Willie Wirehand has been a recognizable and dedicated friend to millions of electric cooperative consumers,



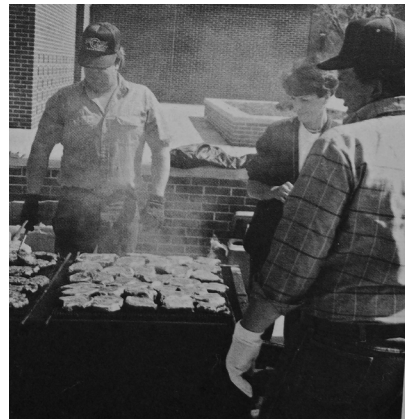
In this photo from the 1990s era from left to right are Bob Heyen, Bob Birk, Bill Braasch, Jerry Mercer, Kevin Nafziger, Dale Gansz, John Halder, John Schmid, and Pete Evans.



**The Annual Meeting is an important event for electric cooperatives. It's a chance for members to vote for directors to represent them, let their voices be heard, and have food and fun with their fellow members. In this photo, members have gathered in the Carlinville High School gym for the 1966 Annual Meeting.**



**MJM has provided a variety of entertainment at its Annual Meeting over the years. At our 1961 Annual Meeting, "The Boxing Cats" performed their act.**



**For the 1991 Annual Meeting, the Macoupin County Beef Producers, assisted by the Carlinville High School cafeteria staff, prepared a ribeye steak lunch for members.**



From 1962-1965, MJM held a beauty pageant at its Annual Meeting. The winners would go on to compete with girls from other electric cooperatives in a statewide pageant. Nancy Hamman of Gillespie won the titles of Miss MJM 1964 and Miss Illinois Electric Cooperative 1965. In this photo from left to right are second runner up Sharon Kay Klenke (Miss Southwestern), winner Nancy Hammann (Miss MJM), and first runner up Margaret Ann Pollard (Miss Wayne White).

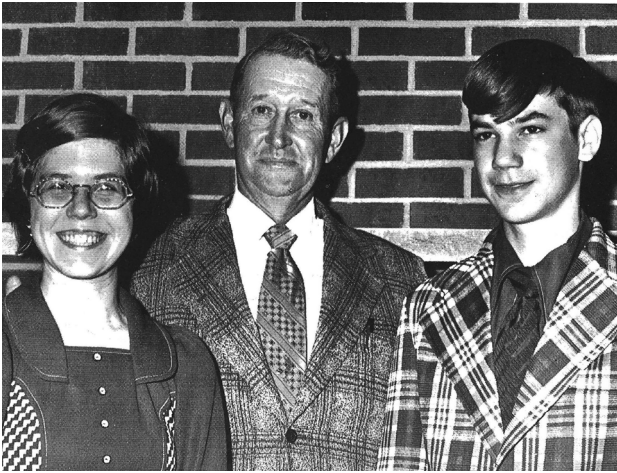


The Waterloo German Band entertained MJM members during the meal at the 1981 Annual Meeting.



## *75 Years of Service*

**Each year, MJM sponsors a Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. trip for outstanding local students. This trip is a chance for the Cooperative to teach rural youth about their government, to teach them about cooperatives, and to encourage them to let their voices be heard by the government. MJM also sponsors a trip to Springfield to teach students about their local government.**



Former MJM board president Henry Egelhoff congratulated the winners of the 1974 Youth Tour trip. From left to right are Annette Behme (Carlinsville), Henry Egelhoff, and Wayne Schafer (Brighton). Schafer would later become the mayor of Brighton.



The finalists in the 1983 Youth to Washington contest were, from left: Kendra Neisler (Witt), Pamela Searles (Fieldon), Joanne Cerny (Witt), Donna Releford (Hettick), and Amy Cox (Palmyra). Releford and Cerny were the winners of the trip.