

ALONG THE LINES



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

AUGUST 2022

VOL.15, NO. 8

**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW DIRECTOR OF
ENGINEERING**

Meet Bob Brandon p.5

AFTER SCHOOL SAVINGS

Energy saving tips for your
teenage students p.4

**MEMBER GENERATION:
SOLAR**

If you are considering solar,
here is some info to help your
installation process. p.7

AUGUST CALENDAR

- Aug. 3rd: National Watermelon Day
- Aug. 4th: National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
- Aug. 6th: Farmworker Appreciation Day
- Aug. 7th: Purple Heart Day
- Aug. 10th: National S'Mores Day
- Aug. 17th: National Nonprofit Day
- Aug. 24th: National Waffle Day
- Aug. 26th: National Dog Day
- Aug. 27th: Staunton FFA Alumni Tractor Ride - *(see Member Trading Post)*

UPCOMING

Sept. 5th: Office Closed - Labor Day

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

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

WWW.MJMEC.COOP





PAPERLESS BILLS

We offer paperless bills! You can activate this option in SmartHub or by calling the billing department at 217-707-6156, Press Option 2.

MJM OUTAGE MAP

During the month of June, our outage map was heavily used due to the storm that tore through our whole territory and the state of Illinois. The map has been updated to display outages per Township now instead of Substation, however, you can still choose how you want to see the information displayed by changing the option: Township, Substation, or County.

<https://mjmec.coop/outage-center>

VERIFY YOUR CONTACT INFO

Annually, we ask that you review your contact information which can be found on the payment stub of your billing statement.

It can also be reviewed while logged into your account online or through the SmartHub app.

You may also call the billing department at 217-707-6156 and press option 2.



SMARTHUB



MEDICAL ALERT MEMBERS

HOW TO SET UP YOUR ACCOUNT FOR A MEDICAL ALERT STATUS

1. Call our office at 217-707-6156 and we can mail you the proper paperwork.
2. Please supply in writing, on letterhead from your attending physician, as to what the medical condition(s) is and why you need to be noted as a "medical alert member." (**This will need updated annually.**)

A MEDICAL ALERT DOES NOT MEAN:

1. A Member is exempt from being disconnected for non-payment;
2. Uninterruptible electric service is guaranteed; or
3. Service will be first in the restoration process during an outage situation.

A MEDICAL ALERT DOES MEAN:

This information is noted on the account and during outage situations MJM personnel will be alerted to your needs. Decisions made in the field do reflect this priority on an as needed basis. If possible, purchasing a generator for these types of situations is a great option.

SMARTHUB FEATURES

OUTAGES, BILLPAY, & MORE

The easiest way to pay your bill is in the SmartHub App, although you can pay through SmartHub web, as well. Pay with debit/credit or E-check. It's fast, it's easy and the payment applies to your account immediately.



See your daily electric use on SmartHub through the purple button on our website or through the SmartHub App. Why wait to see your bill and THEN make changes? See your daily use and make changes RIGHT AWAY to lower your next bill.

You can also report outages with the SmartHub app! To see all the features and how to set the app up: <https://mjmec.coop/smarthub-help>



**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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Marty Hinton for his help in our Engineering Department.

PHOTO CONTEST SUBJECT: FARM/HARVEST PRIZE: \$15 BILL CREDIT



Do you have a cool picture of your farm that you want to show off? Whether it is during a sunset, before a storm rolls in, or just of how nice your farm/fields look, we would love to share it with the rest of our members. In appreciation of the many farms we serve, MJM is holding a photo contest to feature during Harvest season. Photos can be submitted between **August 1st and September 30th**. Results and pictures will be in the **November issue** of our newsletter, Along the Lines. The winning photo will receive a **\$15 bill credit** and a feature spot in the newsletter.

To enter your photo, you can email:

info@mjmec.coop
with the subject line "Farm Photo 2022."



PLEASE RECYCLE



AFTER SCHOOL SAVINGS

Tips for teens to lower afternoon and evening energy use

Buses steadily starting and stopping along subdivision streets signal the start of the season's school day schedules.

As teens settle back into the school year, they're also getting used to their afterschool routines: fall sports, homework, or part time jobs. Regardless of when teenagers arrive home, there are steps they can take to minimize their electricity use.

OPEN CURTAINS FOR NATURAL LIGHT.

As teens get ready to do homework, they may instinctively turn on all the lights in the house. Yet energy can be saved by leaving lights off and opening blinds and curtains instead. The sun can often provide enough needed light naturally, saving electricity. This should only be done when it's cool; if it is still hot outside and the air conditioner is turned on, then curtains should remain closed to keep the outside heat from coming in. (More heat coming in means more work for the AC!)

TURN ON FANS INSTEAD OF CRANKING UP THE AIR CONDITIONER.

It may be instinct to just let the thermostat control the climate in the house. However, if the afternoon is cool enough, teens can turn off the air conditioner and open windows and let fans circulate air. A breeze flowing through the house can make it comfortable without the AC.

TURN GAMING SYSTEMS AND COMPUTERS OFF AND USE POWER SAVE MODES.

Some people habitually leave devices on all day, even when not in use. Yet the standby modes for computers and gaming systems can use a surprising amount of electricity. Teens can save energy (and money) by turning off these devices. If they must be on, selecting a power save mode can minimize their energy use.

RECHARGE DEVICES OVERNIGHT SO THEY ARE READY TO GO THE NEXT DAY.

Mobile phones, iPads and other devices with rechargeable batteries can be charged overnight so they are ready the next morning on a full charge. This is the most efficient use of the energy grid.

By taking simple steps, teens can benefit the environment and even save money by lowering their energy use. Contact your local electric co-op's energy advisor for advice on steps you can take to improve your home's energy efficiency.

Source: Wabash Valley Power Alliance



MJM WELCOMES: BOB BRANDON DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING



On July 5th, Bob Brandon joined the MJM team as our Director of Engineering. Bob comes to us from City Water, Light & Power, City of Springfield, where he was the Superintendent of Electric Operations. Bob will work closely with our System Engineer, and they will both be handling staking as well as construction and maintenance work orders. Bob has over 28 years' experience in the electrical industry with the majority of that at CWLP. He has worked in substations, transformer repair, dispatch, and Operations supervision.

When Bob isn't working, he enjoys spending time with his family; his wife Kris, and their sons Kyle (29), Jacob (26), Ian (22). His hobbies include "trying to do something hard/difficult every day," Cycling, Golfing, Hiking, Fishing, Hunting, and Bob is an Audio Book enthusiast (History and Theology).

We are excited to welcome and have Bob on the MJM team!

THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

BY THE NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

- Electric co-ops are community-focused organizations that deliver safe, reliable, and affordable energy to their consumer-members.
- Our electric co-op is unique because we belong to the communities we serve. The co-op is led by its members, which gives us a unique understanding of the needs of our local communities. In fact, many of our leaders and employees live right here in the community and are members of the co-op--just like you!
- Because we answer to local members (that's you!) rather than far-away shareholders, we're more nimble and able to respond quickly to the changing needs of our community. We even share any excess revenue with our members because we're not-for-profit.
- Even though we're locally owned and operated, we cooperate with other electric cooperatives across the country to develop new technologies, invest in equipment and infrastructure that benefits multiple co-ops in a region, and assist with major outages. This type of collaboration allows us to address complex challenges while remaining true to our local roots.
- Our electric co-op was built by the community, belongs to the community, and continues to be led by the community--that's the cooperative difference!





MEMBER GENERATION: SOLAR

WHERE TO START & HOW WE CAN HELP

Here at MJM, we have a little over 180 members now that have installed Solar. The appeal of solar generation's green energy coupled with the rebates issued from the US government, have created a buzz and in turn, high demand for solar installations. Some of the troubleshooting issues we have witnessed during our first 180+ interactions with solar installations can easily be avoided, and we hope to help our members better understand what to do when considering an installation of your own.

It is important to understand the rate structure associated with solar generation. One thing to consider is that if you currently have the Electric Heat Discount that MJM offers to members whose homes are all electric (furnace, water heater, oven, etc.), once member generation occurs, you will no longer be eligible for that discount. (See Policy 36, "Provisions" D. Website URL below.)

Before beginning the installation process, we ask that our members get in contact with our MJM Member Generation Representative. There have been a few cases when a system has been fully installed before MJM has been contacted (*against Policy 34, Section IV, C*) and issues with meeting our safety requirements and regulations had to be fixed prior to interconnection. These issues can cause extra costs and delay the timeline of the solar installation process. As more members install solar, there may also be required upgrades to the system, such as an additional service line, that are needed to handle multiple arrays in a single area. These can also cause extra costs and unnecessary frustration to our members, if not checked on prior to installation. These policies and measures are in place for your safety, your facility's safety, and the safety of our Lineworkers.



Basic checklist/process:

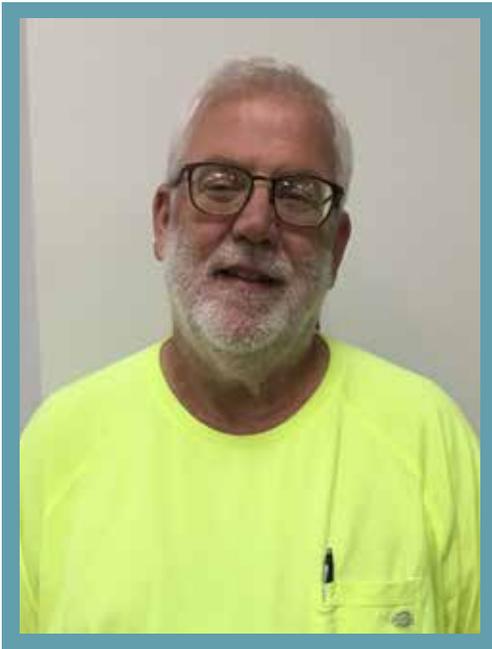
- Signed Application Submission for approval of the project: **Policy 34, Attachment A**
- Submit Equipment **Specs**: panels, inverters, and battery (if applicable)
- Submit **One-Line Diagram** (shows system connection and requires approval from MJM)
- Signed Interconnection Agreement: **Policy 34, Attachment B**
- **- Construction/Installation can begin -**
- Paid Interconnection Fee: \$600
- \$1,000,000 Liability Insurance Policy with MJM listed as "Certificate Holder" or "Additional Insured"
- After all documents/requirements are met and the system is fully installed, request an MJM safety inspection.
- Interconnection/Certificate of Completion from MJM

All required documents are available on our website under the MEMBER INFORMATION tab:
<https://mjmec.coop/member-owned-generation-wind-solar-etc>

The screenshot shows the MJM Electric Cooperative website. The top navigation bar includes links for Quick Pay, SMARTHUB (BILL PAY), OUTAGE CENTER, and CONTACT US. Below this is a search bar. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, About Us, Billing, Outage Center, News & Events, Community, Find Ways to Save, Member Information, Service Requirements, and Vegetation Management. The Member Information dropdown menu is open, showing options for Member-Owned Generation (For Wind, Solar, Etc.), Outdoor Lighting, and What Are Capital Credits?. Below the navigation bar, the text reads: "MEMBER OWNED GENERATION (FOR WIND, SOLAR, ETC.)" and "MJM Electric Cooperative allows Members to install a wind, solar, or other type of generator to our electrical grid."

SPECIAL THANKS TO: MARTY HINTON

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



MJM would like to give a big thanks to Marty Hinton from Springfield, IL, who has been assisting our Engineering Department this summer. He has been an incredible resource during a time of transitioning in our engineering department.

Marty retired in 2018 from Rural Electric Convenience Co-op in Auburn, where he worked from 1995 to 2018. During his time at RECC, he started in member services (high bills, sub metering). Marty then transitioned to operations in 2000, where he did staking, purchasing, plant accounting and solar install inspections.

Other experience includes Active Air Force from 1985 -1994, where Marty worked on aircraft support equipment, (generators, hydraulic test stands, HVAC equipment that powered aircraft while on ground). P & E Engineering Carlisle, IA 2018-current (part time); field staking and staking sheets for municipalities that have overhead to underground conversion projects.

When he is not working, Marty and his wife, Donna, enjoy spending time in their RV and enjoy cooking on their Blackstone. Donna and Marty have 4 children, 9 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren, and their cat, Cocoa Kitty.

We appreciate Marty lending his experience and insight to MJM this summer, and Donna for lending us her retired husband.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Weatherizing your home helps you save money by saving energy, and it can also improve the comfort of your home. Home weatherization includes sealing air leaks and adding insulation.

Air leaks are among the greatest sources of energy loss in a home. One of the quickest energy and money-saving tasks you can do is caulk, seal, and weatherstrip all seams, cracks, and openings to the outside. By sealing uncontrolled air leaks, you can save 10%–20% on your heating and cooling bills. Prioritize weatherization projects to quickly improve the efficiency and comfort of your home.

To identify air leaks, check around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, lighting and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets. Look for gaps, improperly applied caulk and weatherstripping, and doors and windows that don't close tightly. On a windy day, carefully hold a lit incense stick or a smoke pen next to your windows, doors, electrical boxes, plumbing fixtures, electrical outlets, ceiling fixtures, attic hatches, and other places where air may leak. If the smoke stream travels horizontally, you have located an air leak.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: 1966 Case 430 tractor, the stack and steering column need repaired or replaced. Asking \$1200. Make offer. Call 618-946-1891

FOR SALE: 2015 Montana 4 Seasons 5th Wheel 37' with 4 slides. 1-Owner. Asking \$35,000. NorthStar pull behind sprayer with Honda motor - \$300. Call: 618-207-7615 (Gary)

FOR SALE: New Hollard 855 Baler with auto wrap, oiler, and alarm: \$6500 (OBO). Haybuster 1206, no-till drill \$11,000 (OBO). Call: 618-535-2722

FOR SALE: 43 Full boxes of Viabrick. \$30/ea (box covers 6sq. ft.) Brick is approx. 3/4" thick x 1 3/4' W x 9 1/4" long. New, still in box 48"x 42" Shower Pan Base with chrome center drain. 6" threshold (color: pearl) \$350. Call: 217-532-3726

NEEDS: Old Barn take down & removed, will accept best offer, insurance required. Call 618-334-4298

FOR SALE: Gammill Longarm Quilting Machine. \$8000. Wonderful machine with regular maintenance. Loads of extras. Call 618-786-3875 or 618-420-3295

WANTED: 1960 Ford 671 Select-o-speed tractor. It was sold used in the early 1970s by C&W Equipment. Tractor was painted Blue.

ALSO WANTED: 1960 Ford Hay baler, series 250. Will consider ready to use or for parts. Call: 618-972-5287

FREE EVENT:

Staunton FFA Alumni Tractor Ride: AUGUST 27th
Veteran's Memorial Park in Livingston, IL. 7am (sign up), 8am (tractor ride begins)
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
For info, Call: 618-610-3832