



MJM
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ALONG THE LINES

Vol. 13, No. 8

August 2020

www.mjmec.coop

MOVING FORWARD



WHILE LOOKING BACK

It was once said, "Don't ever forget where you came from, but always remember where you are going." As MJM celebrates its first month in the new headquarters, this statement couldn't ring truer. Although it was a bittersweet moment to close the doors at the 264 N. First St. location, we are continuing to march forward in 2020 with the perfect 20/20 vision for the future at 18300 Shipman Road.

While cleaning out shelves and drawers for the big move, there were years and years' worth of newsletters that had been sent out to the Membership back in 1942 to the newsletters you received last month. This gives us the sense of completion of an old chapter and the start of writing a new one. Although many could say, "It's out with the old and in with the new", we would like to think of these treasures as tokens that represent MJM and how it came to be as a not-for-profit organization.

Even though there are thousands of articles to go through, we would like to showcase just a few in August's newsletter. Take a moment and travel back in time with us on pages 5-8 as we revive a few articles that were highlighted many years ago.

We will continue to move forward and keep up with the changing times. However, we will always celebrate the past and note that it is never left behind. 🌈

MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc.

 A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

18300 Shipman Road, Carlinville, IL 62626

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

 Office Hours
 Mon-Fri 7:30a.m.-4:30p.m.

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- Vice Chairman*
Dennis Stewart.....Nokomis
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 Finance and Accounting
Jennifer Peterson.....Executive
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- Brooke Gross**.....Communications
 and Member Services Coordinator

Holidays observed

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

How to report an outage

Call 217-707-6156. Collect calls will be accepted to report outages. 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.

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Member Trading Post

FOR SALE: 63.7 acres, all woods for deer, turkey, and wild-life hunters. A creek runs through the property with a lot of walnut trees. Close to Coffeen, IL, on Chapman Trail. Please call Dave Touchette at 618-973-2819.

FOR SALE: 500 gallon propane tank. If interested, call 407-947-4337.

FOR SALE: Furnished cabin on 15 Rocky Ford Park in Coffeen. 960 square feet living space. Two


bedrooms and 1.5 bath with central air. 12 ft by 30 ft deck overlooking lake. Selling by owner. Asking \$22,500. Please call 618-877-0054 or 618-444-2546.

FOR SALE: Fifteen acres, timber property with creek. All utility access. Great for hunting, RV home-site or investment. Litchfield Unit 12 school district. Access off Illinois Route 16/easement included. No contract for deed or hunting leases. Selling by original owner. \$93,000. Please call 217-324-3869.

To list your free ad, email brookeg@mjmec.coop, call 217-707-6156, or mail the ad to MJM Electric Cooperative, 18300 Shipman Road, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626. Each ad will run for one month. Some restriction may apply. Thank you.




LATE FEES RESUMING IN AUGUST!

When COVID-19 hit MJM's service territory, late penalties were waived for several months during this public health emergency. We are confident that many MJM Members benefited from this. However, beginning in August, the late fees will resume as normal if the bill is not paid by the due date of the 15th each month. 

Operation Round Up Postponed

Due to the current pandemic, a lot of summer plans have been postponed such as school programs and community events. For MJM, it has affected Operation Round Up (ORU). At MJM's Annual Meeting on March 7th, the Membership voted in favor of establishing ORU.

Originally, it was determined to begin ORU in 4-6 months after being approved in March. COVID-19 has delayed its development progress, and at the June board meeting, the Board of Directors voted to postpone plans for ORU until 2021.

Once a revised startup date is determined, we will notify our Membership by means of the MJM newsletter, MJM's website and on Members' bills. Until then, we look forward to 2021 and the opportunities it will bring for MJM and the community we serve. 





NRECA Taking Care of Co-ops and Communities During COVID-19

*By Dan Riedinger, Senior Communication Manager of
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)*

In the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, it was clear that the pandemic would change our perception of normal. As concepts such as “social distancing” first circulated among health officials, electric cooperatives looked ahead to identify and confront the possible impacts of COVID-19.

As co-ops responded to local concerns and circumstances, we worked to present a unified front to our political leaders in Washington and urged them to address the specific needs of our community and their cooperative. Working alongside the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), electric co-ops’ national trade association, we informed policymakers about the challenges being faced on the ground throughout the United States.

The economic health of electric co-ops is tied directly to the wellbeing of their community. Many electric cooperatives are seeing a spike in unpaid electric bills as local businesses close their doors and hardworking Americans lose their jobs. The rural membership of electric co-ops results in high fixed costs for delivering electricity, including maintaining 42% of the nation’s distribution lines to serve 13% of electric consumers.

One of the first things we looked at was the projected economic impact of COVID-19 on co-ops and their consumer-members. NRECA projected that electric co-op operating revenues could suffer up to \$10 billion in lost revenue through 2022. Operating revenues are projected to decline of \$7.4 billion as electricity sales fall by 5% due to lower U.S. economic output. A surge in unemployment, coupled with mandatory or voluntary moratoriums on service disconnections in 46 states is also expected to increase the balance of unpaid electric bills to \$2.6 billion.

In response, electric cooperatives have worked to help their local communities by working with co-op members on waiving late fees, delaying temporary service interruptions for accounts past due, extending payment plans, accelerating cash-back programs and expanding broadband access. But the federal government has a role to play, as well.

We are pleased that the Small Business Administration (SBA) issued a rule on May 14 to clarify that electric co-ops are eligible for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding. Not-for-profit electric cooperatives regularly return excess revenue to their consumers and have no shareholders. Because of this structure and the desire to keep energy costs as low as possible, some co-ops have limited reserve margins to sustain high rates of nonpayment.

Because electric co-ops face the same challenges as many other small businesses, NRECA worked diligently to ensure that coops were able to participate in the PPP.

Among other policy responses sought by co-ops is the ability to refinance loans from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Electric cooperatives deliver essential services in the most rural, and impoverished parts of the country. Many of them meet that challenge, in part, with low-cost financing from the RUS.

However, the RUS does not permit borrowers to adjust existing loans simply to take advantage of lower rates, and penalties are significant in the narrow circumstances that allow for refinancing.

NRECA and its members are pressing for legislation that would allow electric co-ops to adjust RUS debt to current market rates, providing greater cash-flow flexibility to meet the needs of rural consumers in these challenging economic times and allowing co-ops to be part of the long-term recovery.

Electric co-ops could realize \$10.1 billion in net present value savings from the repricing of \$42 billion in RUS loans.

One of the Seven Cooperative Principles—Concern for Community—is looming large right now in the minds of America’s electric co-ops. It has governed our response to the pandemic from the beginning, and will continue serving as our primary focus as we seek additional ways to help our co-op members. 🌈

I HIT A POWER POLE OR OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT: NOW WHAT?

We all think it will never happen to us, but it can, and in an instant.

Drivers veer off the road and run into a power pole. Farmers sometimes make contact with a power line while driving tractors or other machinery. Dump or feed truck drivers raise or lower their bed and snag a power line.

People can become dangerously close or enter electricity's path. **Knowing what to do in that situation can save your life.** Incidents with power lines or other utility equipment break the electrical current's usual path. This can make the ground, vehicles and other equipment electrified.

If you hit a power pole, pad-mounted transformer ("green box") or other electrical equipment, **DO NOT** get out of the vehicle. Instead, **call 9-1-1 and wait for utility crews**

to come and de-energize power. Here are some examples; in all instances, call 9-1-1:

- Your tractor or car **strikes a guy wire** (guy wires are the wires staked into the ground that stabilize utility poles). Under normal conditions, the guy wire is neutral, but if the wire is weakened, pulled out of the ground or otherwise damaged, it could become energized.
- You hit a patch of ice and go off the road **and hit a utility pole**. Or you are in a car accident and **one of the vehicles strikes a power pole**. Only get out of the car if there is smoke or a fire; otherwise, stay put. If there is a fire, make a clean jump or hop from your car or truck (without touching it), and hop with your feet together or shuffle keeping your feet on the ground at least 30 feet to safety. Think of the downed line sending electrical current across the ground in a ripple-like effect. Each ring of the ripple represents a different voltage. If you step from one ring to another, **this is called step potential** and it can electrocute you.
- You see an accident that involves a **downed power line**. **DO NOT** approach the scene.
- You hit a **pad-mounted transformer** or other type of **electrical box**.
- Your vehicle hits a **substation**.
- You ran off the road, hit a pole and it's dark out, but **YOU DON'T KNOW** if lines are down.

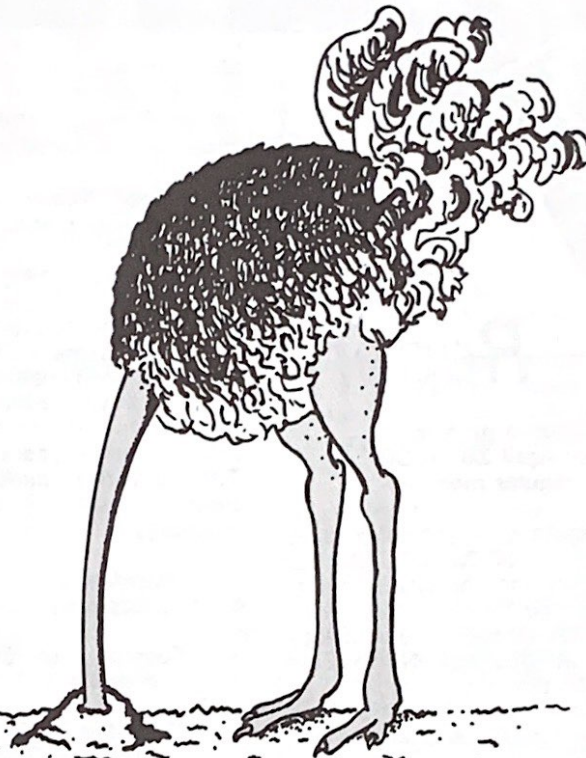
Other situations consist of:

- You get something stuck in power lines (drone or remote-control device): Do not try to retrieve it.
- You see kids climbing or sitting on pad-mounted transformers: Tell them not to sit or play on it.
- You are carrying a tall ladder or pole: Look up for power line locations and keep at least a 10-foot clearance at all times.
- You see kids climb trees that have power lines above: Warn them not to climb trees near power lines.
- You are using a portable generator: Never plug it into a wall outlet. This can cause backfeeding into the line and kill a lineworker or neighbor. 🚧

By Safe Electricity



**The best
heating
and
cooling
source?**



It's underground.

Whether planning your new home's heating and cooling system or changing your present system, you're looking for the cleanest, safest, most dependable and efficient option. Don't overlook geothermal heating and cooling. It's right under your feet. This system has an unending fuel supplement—the constant warmth of the earth around your home. No fuel tanks to fill. Quiet and odorless. With low-cost operation and maintenance, it will pay for its installation cost in just a few years.

Your electric cooperative has the details. Don't stick your head in the sand. You'll miss out.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for ALL Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Originally printed in May 1990.
Did you know geothermal
heating and cooling was talked
about 30 years ago?

M.J.M. News

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Volume 18

January 1980

Number 1

Originally printed in January 1980. Cooperative's are now trying electric cars! Times sure have changed.



Cooperative Trying Diesel Car

In a move to conserve energy, your cooperative has purchased a diesel-powered Volkswagen Rabbit. Charles W. Witt, general manager, and Lowell R. Riffey, member services director, inspect the new vehicle, which was purchased as an experiment. If the Rabbit's performance proves satisfactory, your cooperative may move to using more diesel-powered

vehicles. The new car replaces a 1976 Chevrolet Impala that had more than 80,000 miles on it. The VW will be used for highway trips with one or two passengers. A full-sized auto is available for use when more passengers are involved. Records to date indicate the Rabbit is performing well and getting very good fuel mileage.

Advisors Mark 10th Anniversary



James Warford of Grafton, 1969 committee president, congratulates Larry Boston of Raymond on his re-election as committee president for 1980. Looking on are Charles W. Witt, general manager and Board President, Wayne Harms



Member Advisory Committee officers elected for the ensuing year are: (from left) Joe Jarden, Bunker Hill, vice president; Larry Boston, Raymond, president; and Renee Wilding, Jerseyville, Secretary.

Nearly 160 present and past members of the M. J. M. Electric Cooperative Member Advisory Committee gathered at Carlinville High School Monday night, November 26, to commemorate a decade of advisory committee service to your cooperative.

The advisory committee, composed of two young couples from each of the nine director districts, works on special projects for your board of directors and serves as a communications link between the board and the member-consumers. Each couple serves a term of three years. The committee meets once each quarter to receive reports on your cooperative's operations from the staff and manager.

Presently serving on the committee are Richard & Renee Wilding, Jerseyville; Randall & Kay Reno, Medora; Robert & Phyllis Beuttel, Edward & Marlene Koertge, Brighton; Howard & Helen Rich, Hettick; Joe & Theresa Jarden, Bunker Hill; Nathan & Paula Foiles, Plainview; Larry & Kathleen Boston, Raymond; Larry & Dorothy Marburger, Walshville; John & Sharen Adden, Mt. Olive; John & Lou Clark, Hillsboro; and Joe & Sina Ringhausen, Fieldon. Beginning their three-year terms at this meeting were Jack & Bette Smith, Grafton; Gene & Georgia Weller, Carlinville; Robert & Diane Sederwall, Carlinville; and Kent & Barbara Klinefelter, Nokomis.

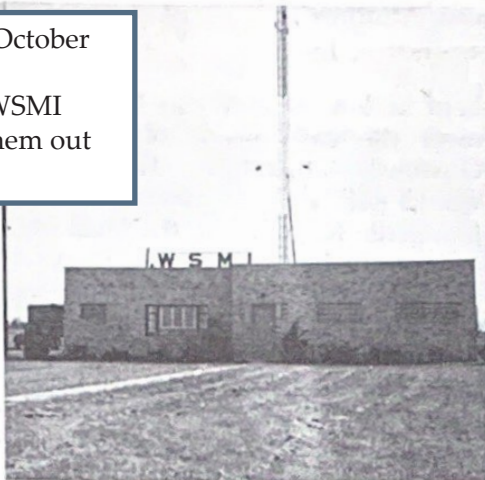
One highlight of the regular quarterly meeting was the selection of Mr. & Mrs. Larry Boston as the advisory committee couple to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting March 2-6, 1980 in New Orleans, La. The Bostons will be attending the general sessions and many of the conferences during the annual meeting. Through participating in the meetings the Bostons will have an opportunity to experience firsthand the magnitude of the rural electrification program on a national basis. They will hear the many problems being experienced by the electrical industry. The Bostons will make a complete report at the Spring meeting of the advisory committee. In the event that the Bostons are unable to attend, the first alternate selected was Mr. and Mrs. John Adden and the second alternate selected was Mr. and Mrs. Gene Weller.

Originally printed in January 1980.
Today's Member Advisory
Committee is starting on year
three!

WSMI HAS GROWING PAINS

Originally printed in October 1961.

Do you still listen to WSMI on 1540 AM? Check them out today on 106.1 FM!



Radio Station WSMI, 1540 on your dial, had some of the same problems many of you members have had and are still having. Due to expanded operations, WSMI outgrew its existing 60 amp meter loop and service, causing it to experience some voltage difficulties and heating of conductors. The problem was solved by the installation of a new 200 ampere service and meter loop. We think this will give good service for some time to come.

WSMI is located on Highway 16 between Litchfield and Hillsboro. This radio station is on the air from 6:00 A.M. to 10:10 P.M. daily, and, has an output of about 1000 watts on standard broadcast and 6100 watts on F.M. Broadcasting. WSMI's listening area covers a forty-two mile radius

from the station and it has about 400,000 listeners. Seventeen persons on the staff and three mobile units bring you the latest news, music, weather and other general information. Sports programs broadcasted by this station include the University of Illinois football games, St. Louis Cardinals' football games, as well as many of the local high school games.

We urge all of you, who have never listened to WSMI, to be sure to tune in 1540 on your dial, and of the regular listeners, we ask, "Does your radio sound different lately?"

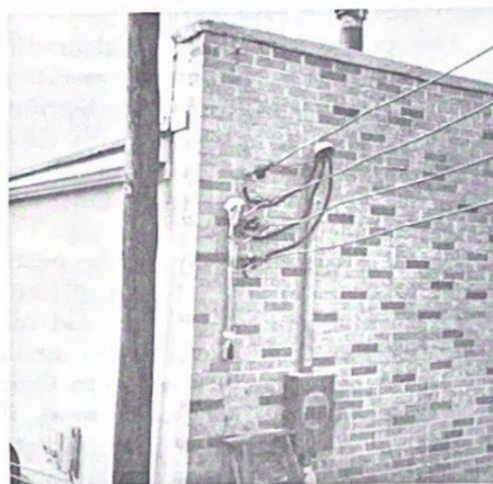


Photo shows old 60 amp entrance on left and new 200 amp entrance and meter socket on right.

Both services were temporarily connected to allow the change over to be made without interruption to the station's broadcasts.