

ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO SAFELY PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

DECEMBER 2025

VOL.18, NO. 12

**PROGRESS & PLANNING
FOR THE FUTURE**

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DECEMBER CALENDAR



December is Safe Toys/Gifts Month

Dec. 1: NWS Winter Weather Safety Day

Dec. 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Dec. 14-22: Hanukkah

Dec. 21: First Day of Winter

Dec. 24 & 25: Office Closed - Christmas

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1: Office Closed

Happy Holidays!

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.



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CARLINVILLE, IL 62626

WWW.MJMEC.COOP



REFLECTING ON PROGRESS, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



As we close another year, I want to pause and express gratitude—for you, the members of MJM—for your continued trust and support. Our cooperative was built on the promise of people coming together to improve the quality of life in their communities, and that promise still guides everything we do today.

Each decision, whether it's about delivering reliable electricity, innovating for the future or advocating for smart energy policies that impact our local community, comes back to one simple question: How will this benefit the members we serve?

This past year has been marked by meaningful progress, both in strengthening our local system and in working at the national level to influence energy policies that directly affect reliability, affordability and resilience. While the details of federal regulations can feel distant, they shape our daily operations here at home.

Over the past year, electric cooperatives across the country came together for advocacy efforts on the EPA's Power Plant Rule. As originally written, the rule would have forced a rapid shift away from always-available power generation resources, threatening the accessibility of a diverse fuel supply that keeps electricity reliable. Renewable energy sources are an essential and growing part of our energy future, but we also know that the demand for electricity is rising rapidly, and natural gas, coal and nuclear remain essential for ensuring power is available around the clock. As we collaborated and engaged with policymakers, we pressed for a more balanced approach to generating power—one that supports clean energy innovation while still recognizing the role of traditional resources. Our efforts are helping to shape a more workable path forward that better protects reliability and keeps costs in check for MJM members.

Another area of ongoing progress came through advocacy work on federal permitting reform. For too long, outdated rules and lengthy delays have stood in the way of building critical infrastructure, including new transmission lines and generation projects. Modernizing this process is essential if we are going to strengthen



the electric grid and keep pace with growing demand. This year, electric co-ops helped move the needle on permitting reform, advocating for policies that make the process faster, more predictable and more efficient. Investments we make in infrastructure will reach communities sooner, improving reliability and preparing us for the future.

We're also seeing progress with bipartisan support of the FEMA Act of 2025, which would speed up the disaster recovery process for electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. If passed, the bill would make FEMA a stronger, more responsive agency to help strengthen rural resilience, protect taxpayer dollars and ensure essential services are restored as quickly as possible after a natural disaster.

Achievements like these are not just wins in Washington—they are wins for MJM members like you. In addition to advocacy efforts, we are proactively addressing our communities' needs for the future by investing in new technologies and programs that improve service for our members.

As we look ahead to a new year, I see both challenges and opportunities on the horizon. The energy industry is undergoing significant change driven by the rising need for more electricity, new tools and technologies, and federal energy policies.

The path forward requires innovative thinking and member-focused solutions. I'm confident that with the dedication of MJM employees and the continued support of our members, we are well positioned to adapt and meet challenges head-on. Through it all, our promise to you remains steadfast: reliable power for today—and tomorrow.



ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative
www.mjmec.coop

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OFFICE: 1-217-707-6156

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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Best times to buy if you are upgrading.



Happy Holidays!

We wish you and your family a
very blessed holiday season!



~ MJM Board of Directors,
Staff, & Employees

MJM OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:
DECEMBER 24 & 25,
DECEMBER 31 & JANUARY 1



BRIGHT IDEAS FOR SAFE LIGHTING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

by SafeElectricity.org

Sparkling lights and dazzling decorations are hallmarks of the season. Make sure your holiday decorating is done with safety in mind.

- Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label.
- Before decorating, check each light strand for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs.
- Always be sure to unplug the lights when replacing a bulb.
- Don't string together more light strands than recommended by the manufacturer.
- Outdoors, use only lights, cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with GFCIs. Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them.
- Take extra care not to throw strings of lights over tree branches that are near power lines and service connections.

SAFE ELECTRICITY OFFERS THESE ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR SAFE HOLIDAY DECORATING:

- Place fresh-cut trees away from heat sources—such as heat registers, fireplaces, and radiators — and water the tree frequently.
- Match plugs with outlets. Don't force a 3-pronged plug into a 2-pronged outlet or extension cord, or remove the third prong.
- Keep electric cords out of high-traffic areas. Do not run them through doorways, hide them under carpets, or staple, nail, or tack them to the wall.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.

Overloaded circuits are a major cause of fire. Flickering or dimming lights, sparks from appliances or outlets, and wall plates, plugs, or cords that are warm to the touch are warning signs that demand immediate action.



If you spot an electrical danger, make sure to unplug the malfunctioning appliance or device immediately and replace with one that works properly.

The holidays bring plenty of opportunities for holiday cooking and entertaining. Be safe in the kitchen as well, since 49% of home fires and injuries are caused by cooking equipment, according to the National Fire Protection Agency.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO AVOID HOLIDAY SHOCKS OR FIRES:

- Inspect all small appliances and electric cords to make sure they are in good repair before using. Don't use appliances with cracked or frayed cords.
- Read the operating instructions of any appliance before use.
- When purchasing new kitchen appliances, look for UL-Listed appliances with automatic shut-off features.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet.
- Keep cooking areas free from items that could catch on fire; also clean up any greasy spills as they happen if you can safely do so.
- Stay focused and attentive to baking, brewing, and simmering foods.
- Make sure outlets near sinks are equipped with properly tested ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to prevent shocks.
- Always have a working fire extinguisher on hand and know how to use it.



2026 SCHOLARSHIPS INFORMATION

This year, the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program will award \$3,000 scholarships to 17 deserving Illinois students in the “electric cooperative family” 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, 2025**).

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, 2025**).

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, 2025**).

1 scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, is awarded to a student to attend the line-worker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL.

(Deadline to apply **Apr. 30, 2026**).

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

Application Links:

www.mjmec.coop/scholarships

2025 CAPITAL CREDITS UPDATE

MJM to return \$518,774.84 in Capital Credit Refunds: 1987, 1988, & partial from 1989

In a Cooperative like MJM Electric, you are a member-Owner of the business. One major difference between a Cooperative and an investor-owned utility is that you see ownership in the business through capital credits. When capital credits are returned to members, you see the return on your investment. This is one of the benefits of being served by a non-profit utility!

Many MJM members do not realize that we are a not-for-profit utility. Every month you pay your bill, you are helping to finance, not just the purchase and production of power, but improvements to the system that keep the lights on. You are investing in YOUR Cooperative. Your immediate payback is in the form of increased reliability and affordable rates.

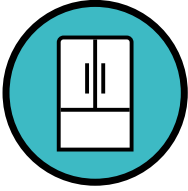
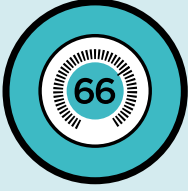
During the October 23, 2025, Board meeting, a motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously, to retire \$518,774.84. This amount represents 100% of 1987's & 1988's capital credits, and 66% of 1989's capital credits. The 1987, 1988, and (partial) 1989 capital credits will show as a bill credit on current MJM members' December 1st, 2025, billing statement.

Active members who have been named as an heir of an estate and members who are no longer on MJM lines are receiving this capital credit refund via check. Please note, if a final refund payment is under \$10, a check will not be reissued but will be donated back to the Cooperative as permanent equity.

Don't forget that even if you have moved away from the Cooperative lines, you are still eligible to receive your capital credits. Always make sure that we have a current address on file. If you have any questions, please call the billing department at 217-707-6156.

In 2025, a cumulative total of more than \$744,700 was retired to inactive and active members as a result of the regular retirement mentioned above and discounted estate and (voluntary) active member retirements.

Purchasing Appliances and Electronics: **Best Times to Buy**

Product Type	Best Time to Buy for Discounts
 Refrigerators and Freezers	Late winter to early spring (March/April); New models arrive in spring, and older models are discounted; Holiday sales (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day).
 Washers/Dryers, Dishwashers, Ovens and Ranges	September and October when new models are released and older models are discounted; Holiday sales (Labor Day, Black Friday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day); End-of-year clearance.
 Large Home Electronics (TVs, home theater)	Holiday sales (Black Friday and Cyber Monday); Amazon Prime Days; Late fall/early winter; Other promos, like Super Bowl sales for televisions.
 Smart Assistants and Other Smart Devices	Holiday sales (Black Friday, Cyber Monday); Other sales events, like Amazon Prime Days.
 Air Conditioners, Heaters and Other Seasonal Appliances	Off season (purchase AC units in fall or winter, heaters in summer); Retailers offer bigger discounts when demand is low.

Additional Purchasing Tips:

- When possible, bundle major appliances for significant savings.
- Be on the lookout. When new models arrive, older models drop in price.
- Retailers typically clear out inventory at the end of the year, which mean big discounts.
- Local retailers typically try to meet end-of-month/end-of-quarter sale quotas, which could mean flexible prices and/or negotiating.



Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



- Snowbrush
- Shovel
- Windshield washer fluid
- Cat litter for traction



- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Drinking water
- Nonperishable foods



- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher



- Reflective triangles
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)



- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Compass
- Car charger for cell phone

Safe
Electricity.org®

Source: NSC

Prepare your vehicle: Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Look out for the “energy-saving device” scam. Whether sold on social media platforms or through random emails, consumers have fallen victim to scams where these products claim to reduce or even eliminate energy bills. These products are advertised as devices that will “balance” or “clean” the power in your home, thus saving you money. There is no such device that can simply be plugged in to lower energy use.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Lionel American Flyer train sets. Some train cars in original boxes. \$1,000 (OBO). Maytag Wringer Model E Washing Machine with laundry tubs and hoses, \$400. Call: 618-362-6232

FOR SALE: Split Seasoned Fire Wood, pickup truck bed loads \$120 or call for delivery price. Call Leroy @ 618-972-4658

FOR RENT: Storage spaces for boats & campers. Call 618-334-4298

FOR SALE: Split Seasoned Fire Wood, \$100/pickup load. Litchfield area. Call 217-324-4685 or 217-556-4905

FOR SALE: Christmas plates. Blue snowmen design. 16 plates. Used, in perfect condition. \$10. 12 white plates. Used, in perfect condition. \$5. Text 217-691-1492.

FOR SALE: Homestead wood quilting frame, Hinterberg design. Instructions included. Clean, like new. U pick up. \$75 cash only. 217-532-3206

FOR SALE: Eastlake Victorian vintage settee/sofa, \$275. Duncan Pfyfe vintage green painted drop leaf table, \$225. Antique "Smiley Pig" cookie jar, \$250. Cardinals & Budweiser misc. items Litchfield area. Call: 217-710-5614

FOR SALE: 1988 Classic Goldwing trike Lehman GL 1500 GL, excellent condition, 67,000 miles, hand stenciled by motorcycle artist Scarecrow, must see, \$6,000. 217-320-1011

FOR SALE: 2002 Chevrolet Silverado Double Cab, 5.3 V8, 225,000 Miles. Runs. New tires. New front brakes. Rust below doors and bed above tires. \$2,500. Call or text: 618-670-7238

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

