

# ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO SAFELY PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

**FEBRUARY 2026**

VOL.19, NO. 2

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INVESTMENT**

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## FEBRUARY CALENDAR



February is Black History Month

Feb. 2: Groundhog Day

Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

Feb. 16: President's Day

Feb. 21-28: National FFA Week

## SAVE THE DATE!

**THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026**  
**MJM'S 87TH ANNUAL MEETING**

### 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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[WWW.MJMEC.COOP](http://WWW.MJMEC.COOP)



# RELIABILITY REQUIRES INVESTMENT



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



As your local power provider, MJM's mission has always been simple: keep the lights on and support the communities we serve. But behind every switch, every warm home and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity

doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing investment in our local grid—through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must be repaired or replaced to maintain performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps extend that lifespan, but eventually equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur and create a stronger backbone for our growing community.

The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever, and that trend will only continue. Electric vehicles, advanced HVAC systems, smart appliances and new commercial facilities add load to the local distribution system. As these technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how we operate. Tools such as automated switching



devices, smart meters, drones and advanced monitoring systems allow us to detect problems faster and respond more effectively. These technologies can isolate problems, reroute power to minimize outages and provide real-time data that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently.

Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience—it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life—from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.



# ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative  
www.mjmec.coop

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CARLINVILLE, IL 62626**

**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.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIRMAN:** Todd Stewart..... District 8  
**VICE CHAIRMAN:** Charles Huebener..... District 3  
**SECRETARY:** Marcie Tonsor..... District 9  
**TREASURER:** Tyler Heyen..... District 6  
Tim Walsh..... District 1  
Dwayne Milner..... District 2  
Leann Barr..... District 4  
Frank Welling..... District 5  
James Niemann..... District 7

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Brian Gunning.....Finance and Accounting Manager  
Jennifer Peterson.....Office Manager  
Matt Eisenmenger.....Operations Manager  
Martin Hinton.....Engineering Manager  
Bob Brandon.....Right of Way Manager

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Member Services Coordinator

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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## SIGN UP FOR AUTO PAY:

Recurring Payments from Checking Accounts, Savings Accounts, Credit Cards, or Debit Cards - The payment will equal the account's net amount due on the day it is drafted, which is the 15th of each month. Unless otherwise stated on your bill. This payment option is available by signing up through SmartHub, online, or contacting MJM at 217-707-6156.

MJM accepts Visa, Discover, and MasterCard payments. If you are signing up a debit or credit card, you must sign up online.

## MEMBER TRADING POST

**FOR SALE:** Dixie Chopper zero turn mower. 27HP, 60" cut, 1060hrs, bought new, \$2,750. John Deere L110, 17.5HP, 42" cut, 333hrs, \$1,000. Call: 217-851-1841

**FOR SALE:** Eastlake Victorian vintage settee/sofa. \$275; Duncan Pfyfe vintage green painted drop leaf table, \$200; Antique "Smiley pig" cookie jar, \$225. 1996 Chevy S10, ext.cab, 2.2, 4 cylinder, manual shift, 2nd owner of 19 years. All records. Runs great, has cosmetic issues. \$2450. Call: 217-710-5614

To list your free ad, email [info@mjmec.coop](mailto: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.  
No Ads in May edition/Annual Meeting Booklet



# THE POWER SURGE:

## FACTORS DRIVING THE RISING DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY

by The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Across the U.S., the demand for power is climbing at one of the fastest rates in decades. As the economy becomes more reliant on electricity and data centers continue to sprout up in many parts of the country, electric cooperatives are preparing to meet the challenges that skyrocketing demand brings.

The North American Reliability Corporation--the watchdog for the U.S. electric grid--recently released the 2025-2026 winter reliability assessment, which echoed other recent reports, including longer-term outlooks that expect sufficient energy resources during normal conditions but potential supply shortfalls and outages under more intense weather conditions.

Extreme weather coupled with additional factors that are driving increased demand creates challenges for electric utilities, including cooperatives, in their mission to provide reliable power around the clock.

Several key factors are driving increased demand--including economic growth, expanded manufacturing, data center development and increased electrification in transportation. Together, these trends are reshaping how much electricity we consume and how quickly utilities like MJM must adapt to meet future needs.

One of the biggest drivers of rising demand is increased electrification. More homes and businesses are transitioning to electricity for home heating, water heating and transportation. EVs are becoming more common on the road, and many states are offering incentives to help consumers make the switch. Additionally, electric heat pumps are replacing traditional furnaces in many homes due to their efficiency. These transitions mean more energy use and pressure placed on our electric grid.

Data centers are another major contributor to rising demand. As AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing technologies grow, the need for data processing and storage has skyrocketed. Data centers require huge amounts of power to operate servers and cooling systems 24/7. Tech companies are building new facilities nationwide--many of which are in electric cooperative-served areas--and these regions are experiencing multi-year surges in electricity demand as a result.



Economic and manufacturing growth are also contributing to higher electricity use. As businesses expand and new industries take root, especially in rural and suburban areas, the demand for reliable, high-capacity power is increasing. The resurgence of domestic manufacturing has led to major facility construction. These facilities often require substantial energy loads, and many operate continuously to keep production lines running. This growth brings jobs and investment, but it also puts new pressures on the electric grid.

Population growth and housing development are also contributing to rising demand in many regions, and everyday life is becoming more energy dependent, too. Smart appliances, connected devices, home offices and entertainment systems are adding to overall consumption, even as efficiency improves.

While increased demand presents new challenges for electric utilities, it also has the potential to create significant opportunities for co-ops and the communities they serve, such as job growth, steady revenue and improved infrastructure. Electric co-ops are responding by planning carefully for the future--investing in grid modernization and developing programs and services to help co-op members conserve energy.

Electricity powers nearly every aspect of today's economy, and its role will only grow stronger. As electrification accelerates, long-term planning becomes more important than ever.

MJM is ready to meet rising demand in our local communities. Through innovation, investment and collaboration, we are preparing for a more reliable and resilient energy future.



# Why is the Demand for Electricity Rising?

Demand for electricity in the U.S. is booming. Recent data shows that power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least 38 gigawatts (enough electricity to power 3,600 homes for one year) between now and 2028. Meeting this new demand will require a combination of new power plants, grid upgrades and energy storage technology advancements. Here are the key factors that are driving increased demand.

- 1 Increased Electrification:** Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are increasing overall U.S. energy consumption.
- 2 Data Centers:** Driven by explosions in AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.
- 3 Economic Growth:** Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14% to 22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.
- 4 Manufacturing Growth/Onshoring:** New, expanding and “onshored/reshored” manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.

## CONGRATULATIONS ON DIRECTOR GOLD!

MJM BOARD DIRECTOR:  
**MARCIE TONSOR**



*L to R: CEO/President Joe Heyen with Director Gold recipient Marcie Tonsor, & District Seven Director, Jim Niemann. Currently, Jim and Marcie both hold Director Gold certificates.*

District Nine Board Director and Board Secretary, Marcie Tonsor received her Director Gold Certificate awarded by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) at the December 2025 Board meeting.

To earn the Director Gold Certificate, Directors must first earn NRECA's Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) plus three additional credits from BLC courses. The Director Gold Certificate program is geared toward Directors who are committed to continuing their education. By earning the Director Gold Certificate, Directors are taking initiative to be up to date on all Co-op matters and the best way to serve MJM's Members.

# FEMA PARTNERSHIPS HELP KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

**FEMA Partnerships Help Keep the Lights On**  
When a storm rolls through, MJM is ready to respond. Our crews work around the clock to restore power, repair damage and make sure every member's lights come back on as quickly and safely as possible. But when that damage is severe, the cost of rebuilding can add up quickly—and that's where the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) steps in to help.

Most people think of FEMA responding to natural disasters that make national news, such as hurricanes or widespread wildfires. But electric co-ops also rely on FEMA after smaller, localized events—the kinds of storms that may not always make national headlines but can still cause significant damage.

A few inches of ice or a sudden flash flood can snap utility poles, damage substations and leave miles of power lines on the ground. In rural areas, where electric co-ops serve fewer members across larger territories, repairing that damage can be especially challenging and expensive. FEMA assistance helps ensure those costs don't fall entirely on co-op members and that power can be restored quickly without putting financial strain on small communities.

FEMA's Public Assistance program helps co-ops like ours rebuild critical infrastructure after disasters, large or small. This essential partnership ensures that we can focus on restoring power and supporting our community instead of worrying about how to fund large-scale repairs.

The FEMA Act of 2025 is making its way through Congress and aims to modernize the agency's programs, making it easier and faster for essential service providers like [co-op name] to restore and rebuild. It's an important step toward keeping disaster recovery fair, efficient and focused on the people who depend on reliable electricity every day.



Whether it's a large-scale storm or a localized event that only affects a few towns, FEMA's support helps electric co-ops do what we do best—serve our members and keep the lights on, no matter what Mother Nature brings. Learn more at [www.electric.coop/fema](http://www.electric.coop/fema).

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS ⚠️

Enrolling in autodraft payments with your utility provider can help prevent certain types of utility bill scams. If a scammer contacts you with fake disconnection threats, you can rest easy knowing your bill is paid automatically through a pre-arranged, secure channel. Autodraft payments also eliminate the risk of exposing checks and personal banking info through the mail. If your utility offers autodraft payments, consider enrolling to stay on track and avoid certain scams.



Source: AARP





# POWER MOVES®

## 2026 RESIDENTIAL REBATE PROGRAM

For Residential, Commercial, & New Construction Business Rebates, go to: [www.powermoves.com](http://www.powermoves.com)

### Geothermal Heat Pump (with Electric Backup)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water-to-air closed loop <math>\geq 17.1</math> EER / <math>\geq 3.6</math> COP</li> </ul>	<b>CLOSED LOOP:</b>	\$2,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water-to-air open loop <math>\geq 21.1</math> EER / <math>\geq 4.1</math> COP</li> </ul>	Replacing an electric resistance, fossil fuel, air source heat pump, or into new construction	
	Replacing a geothermal	\$250
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water-to-water closed loop <math>\geq 16.1</math> EER / <math>\geq 3.1</math> COP</li> </ul>	<b>OPEN LOOP:</b>	\$1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water-to-water open loop <math>\geq 20.1</math> EER / <math>\geq 3.5</math> COP</li> </ul>	Replacing an electric resistance, fossil fuel, air source heat pump, or into new construction	
	Replacing a geothermal	\$250

### Air Source Heat Pump (Whole Home)

REPLACING:	COLD CLIMATE HEAT PUMP*	NON-COLD HEAT PUMP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electric Back-up</li> <li><math>\geq 15.2</math> SEER2</li> <li><math>\geq 8.1</math> HSPF2</li> <li><math>\geq 1.75</math> COP at 5° (Cold Climate ASHP only)*</li> <li>Condenser and coil must be replaced and installed as a matched set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electric Resistance Heat \$1800</li> <li>Natural Gas, Propane, Fuel Oil Heat \$1800</li> <li>Air Source Heat Pump \$1800</li> <li>New Construction \$1800</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$750</li> <li>\$750</li> <li>\$250</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

### Air Source Heat Pump (Partial Home)

REPLACING:	COLD CLIMATE HEAT PUMP*	NON-COLD HEAT PUMP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electric Back-up</li> <li><math>\geq 15.2</math> SEER2</li> <li><math>\geq 8.1</math> HSPF2</li> <li><math>\geq 1.75</math> COP at 5° (Cold Climate ASHP only)*</li> <li>Condenser and coil must be replaced and installed as a matched set</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electric Resistance Heat \$800</li> <li>Natural Gas, Propane, Fuel Oil Heat \$800</li> <li>Air Source Heat Pump \$800</li> <li>New Construction \$800</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$250</li> <li>\$250</li> <li>\$250</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

### Natural Gas, Propane, and Fuel Oil with Heat Pump - Split System (Ducted)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><math>\geq 15.2</math> SEER2</li> <li><math>\geq 7.5</math> HSPF2</li> <li>A new heat pump may be installed on an existing gas furnace</li> <li>New system must heat and cool entire home</li> </ul>	<b>REPLACING ELECTRIC RESISTANCE:</b>	\$500
	electric furnace, ceiling cable, baseboard	
	<b>REPLACING FOSSIL FUEL AND CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING</b>	\$500
	<b>NEW CONSTRUCTION</b>	\$500

### Heat Pump Water Heater

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum UEF of 3.3</li> </ul>	<b>REPLACING ELECTRIC RESISTANCE TANK</b>	\$800
	<b>REPLACING NATURAL GAS OR PROPANE WATER HEATER</b>	\$800
	<b>NEW CONSTRUCTION</b>	\$800

### Wi-Fi Thermostat

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved Wi-Fi thermostats</li> </ul>	<b>REPLACING NON WI-FI THERMOSTAT WITH WI-FI THERMOSTAT</b>	\$75
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### PURCHASE RECEIPTS REQUIRED FOR ALL REBATE APPLICATIONS.

AHRI Certificates required for all geothermal, air source heat pump, and heat pump water heater rebate applications.

Heat loss/heat gain calculations required for geothermal and air source heat pumps.

Failure to provide requested information may result in forfeiture of rebate.

All installations are subject to verification and/or inspection.

For full requirements, see applications.

**REBATE PROGRAM ENDS DEC. 31, 2026, AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.**

We also offer prescriptive and custom rebates for businesses to make qualifying energy efficiency upgrades to their facilities.

Visit [PowerMoves.com](http://PowerMoves.com) or call your local electric cooperative's Energy Advisor for more information.



## SMARTHUB BILL PAYMENTS MADE EASY

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 usage 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:

[www.mjmec.coop/smarthub-help](http://www.mjmec.coop/smarthub-help)



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.

