



# Inching Closer



# to Welcoming You

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is the fact that life is always unpredictable. As employees await moving day from our current headquarters at 264 N. East St., we are being taunted with anticipation to begin working in the new headquarters at 18300 Shipman Road. At this time, we are still at the same headquarters and a moving date has not yet been determined. As we wait for things to settle, we will then be able to determine a move in date.


MJM took proactive measures when designing this building for the physical safety and well-being of our employees and Members. Cameras have been installed throughout the building and property. Building entrances will be locked at all times and require security key fobs for all entrances except for the lobby.

In the new lobby, Members will notice a much different look as compared to the previous facility. The lobby will be a confined space with controlled access to other areas of the building. The lobby offers two payment windows, in which one window is specifically ADA compliant. If Members are in a wheelchair or needing to sit down, this will give them opportunity to have a workstation at a level that is convenient for them.

Off the lobby is a guest restroom and a waiting area. In addition, there is a convenient meeting room available for Members, visitors and salespeople who would like to speak with an MJM employee without unnecessary access to the rest of the building.

As we continue to face dreary, rainy weather, we understand that Members may not want to get out of their car when dropping off a payment. MJM will have a drive thru that Members can drop off their payments in either a drop box or with an employee during regular business hours – just like you would at a bank! If you choose to pay using the drive thru or drop box option, cash, or check payments will be accepted.

We are able to process credit/debit card payments in the lobby area only. Remember, you can pay your bill with a debit/credit card by calling our automated system at 855-313-6314 or utilizing SmartHub. Office staff will not process debit/credit card payments over the phone or at the drive-up window.

We are so excited and ready to serve you in our new building. Keep on the lookout for our move in date! 

**MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

264 N. East St., 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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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:** 500 gallon plastic, vertical water tank, never used for chemicals. \$500. Hegner 14" single speed scroll saw with blade. \$450. Call 217-436-2174


**FOR SALE:** 2 twin bed metal box springs with covers \$15 each. Rectangle patio table \$10. Five shelf bookcase \$5. 18 inch girl's bike \$10. Call 217-556-5361.

**FOR SALE:** Gammill Longarm Quilting Machine for sale. Opportunity to start your own business or just quilt your own creations! Loads of accessories! Asking \$10K. Call 1-786-3875 for more info.

To list your free ad, email brookeg@mjmec.coop, call 1-800-648-4729, or mail the ad to MJM Electric Cooperative, 264 N. East St., P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626. Each ad will run for one month. Some restriction may apply. Thank you.

## Load Control Switches

About 30 years ago, MJM offered a program called "Switch and Save" where a switch was installed on Member's water heaters. It was an agreement between the Member and MJM, whereas, MJM desired to control the peaking of the kilowatt demand for electric energy. To achieve that end, the Member allowed the Cooperative to control the electric water heater at any time of the year, especially during the period of June 14 through September 15. Each month, the Member received an incentive of a specified dollar amount as a credit on their electric service billing.

This program ended many years ago. Many Members have already removed the switch, yet some left it in place. Recently, a Member contacted MJM that their switch had never been removed and proved to be hazardous in their situation. While MJM doesn't believe the switch in its current condition was not installed by MJM personnel, MJM would recommend that if you still have one of these old load control switches on your water heater, that you have it removed or at least looked at for precautionary and safety measures. 

# Brighten Your Future with MAC!



COVID-19 this, Coronavirus that. Seems like topics that revolve around isolation, quarantine and viruses are all that we talk about anymore. It's time to chat and look forward to something brand new! With your schedules cleared for the next couple of months, what are you going to do to fill those empty spaces? By joining MJM's Member Advocate Committee (MAC), that is how!

The Member Advocate Committee was created to enhance the understanding of MJM's core business, principles and values. The purpose of this committee supports the second cooperative principle of democratic Member control and the fifth cooperative principle of education, training, and information. MJM is looking for a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills which complement the skills of MJM's Board of Directors. The advocate group will not have authority to govern the organization but will serve to make recommendations and/or provide key information and materials to MJM's management team.

Because this is a newly formed committee, MJM has extended an invite to those who have already served to remain serving in order to stagger the terms, and to keep the momentum flowing. Since not everyone will continue forward, we are reaching out to the Membership once again to see if they are interested in being on the Member Advocate Committee. It's a great opportunity to learn about YOUR cooperative and also offer up ideas that might help benefit YOUR cooperative.

We would like for the Member to serve a two-year term and could meet up to six times during this term. Meetings will start at 6 p.m. and last approximately 90 minutes and includes a meal. Applicants will be selected from varying demographics – age groups, occupations, community involvement and utility rate. Our goal is to get Members to represent each of MJM's nine districts. Meetings will be held at the new MJM headquarters at 18300 Shipman Road Carlinville and/or may occur at locations around MJM's service area. As much as we would like to give a time frame as to when meetings will begin, we won't have many plans placed out of respect to the state's stay-at-home order. However, we want you to look towards what is yet to come.

If you are interested in serving on this committee or need more information, please contact the MJM office at 217-707-6156 between 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, and ask for Brooke Gross. Please respond promptly so that we can begin the application process. It's as simple as that! We look forward to hearing from YOU! 🌈




# June is National Safety Month.

## How safe are you?

Unfortunately, safety can be taken for granted—until something goes wrong. Don't be caught off guard with electrical safety. June is National Safety Month and a good time to make electrical safety education a priority and take an active role in learning all that you can to keep you and your loved ones safe.

"Whether, it's lights, TVs, computers, or refrigerators—electricity powers our everyday lives in a number of ways," says Jim Monk, Safe Electricity Advisory Board member. "Yet, we need to remember to respect the power of electricity and know what steps to take to stay safe around it."


Safe Electricity shares the following tips to help you avoid electrical hazards:

- **Establish a network:** When traveling, ensure that safety is within reach. Take your cell phone with you so that call for help when needed. If you see a downed line, stay away, warn others to stay away, and call 911 to have the utility notified.
- **Plug into safety:** Check that cords and plugs are in good shape, with no cracking or fraying. Never use a damaged electronic, and do not try to repair them yourself.
- **Don't get overloaded:** Plugging in too many appliances to an outlet can strain your electrical system.
- **Give electricity its space:** Always keep a minimum distance of 10 feet from overhead power lines. Look up and look out for overhead wires, especially when working on a roof, trimming trees, and using ladders.
- **Know what is below:** Take the time to call 811 before you start any digging project. Even if you have had an area marked before, call to have the area checked again. Natural changes to the soil, such as erosion or root growth, can alter the depth and location of buried lines. Once all buried lines have been marked, respect the boundaries, and dig carefully.
- **Stay out of hot water:** Do not use electrical equipment when it is raining or the ground is wet. In addition, all outlets near areas with water should have GFCI protection. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) monitor the flow of electricity in a circuit. If there is an irregularity of electrical flow, the power is cut off, preventing an electric shock.
- **Maintain the calm before the storm:** Stay up-to-date with the forecast so that you can take the appropriate shelter in case of severe weather. Develop emergency communication plans with your family and keep your emergency preparedness kit stocked in case power is lost. 

## Waters' Advancement



Matt Waters successfully passed the required written exams and completed a number of different lineman workshops such as advanced regulators, transformers, and the 3rd year apprentice school. He also completed the Apprentice 3rd Year OSHA Job Competency Demonstration requirements with Director of Engineering and Operations Joe Heyen.

Congratulations, Matt, on your continued success at MJM! 

# REPORTING AN OUTAGE? OUR PHONE MENU HAS CHANGED!

To continue providing excellent Member service, MJM has recently implemented a new way to document incoming outage related phone calls. If you have an outage to report and call it in, you will hear a new message with a few more options. When you first call MJM, you are prompted to press a number in correspondence to the phone call. If an outage is being reported, press #5. At this point, the new Call Capture system will take over.

First, it will ask if you are reporting an outage. "If you are, press #1. If you are checking the status of an existing outage, press #2."

The Call Capture system will attempt to automatically recognize a caller's account. It will then have the caller verify information by choosing one of three options:

- #1 – Caller ID
- #2 – Phone Number on File
- #3 – Account Number


It will also ask the caller to verify the service address. Once this is completed, Call Capture offers the caller an option to be called back when service is restored and then verifies the call back number.

The caller can then hang up. However, if the caller has more information that should be reported related to the outage, they are to stay on the line and choose one of the options:

- Loud bang - Press #1
- Tree on the line – Press #2
- Fallen pole – Press #3
- Downed Power line – Press #4
- Structure fire – Press #5
- Leave a message – Press #6
- No additional information – Press #7

To enhance our communication efforts with MJM Members, new outgoing calls have also been put in place. Some examples of these messages include a notification of an outage repair, an upcoming planned outage, and account related information. **If you receive a call from a Taylorville, IL number at 217-707-6156, that is MJM calling with an important message. Please save our main contact number in your phone today!**

Please note: If you press the star key (\*) during these calls, MJM will no longer be able to send you automated phone notifications. This includes planned outage notifications and resolved outages.

We anticipate that this enhancement will help meet our Members' expectations and improve our communication efforts. 



# Smart Home Devices to Lower Your Electric Bill!

While America practices stay at home order, there are a lot of household projects taking place. While you're spending money on those, don't forget that some smart devices for your home can help you save money! Others are designed for pure convenience – like phone apps you use remotely to close your garage door, unlock your door, or see who is on your front porch.

Using smart devices that can impact your energy bill won't make you rich, but they can help lower your bills each month, which adds up over time. Here are some devices to consider:

## 1. Smart thermostat

A smart thermostat studies your heating and cooling trends over time and can help reduce your energy bill by optimizing energy-saving tactics. You can also adjust the temperature of your home remotely and know how much energy you are using to heat or cool your home in real time. So while a programmable thermostat can help you save money, a smart version earns its name by all the extra things it can do above and beyond programming.

In either case, adjusting your thermostat up (air conditioning) or down (furnace) just one degree can make a difference in your utility bill, according to EEC Board Member Sam Adair. Adair says households can save up to 3 percent on the heating and cooling portion of their bill by making that simple adjustment. "So if your smart thermostat can shed a few degrees for a couple of hours or more, it should do nothing but save you money with the added convenience of peace of mind," Adair said.

## 2. Smart window coverings

Smart window coverings are pricey but they can help you save money on your energy bills over time. For example, they allow you to lower blinds on a hot and sunny day even if you're not home, which may prevent your air conditioner from kicking on. About 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters your home to become heat, according to energy.gov. Conversely, about 30 percent of a home's heating energy is lost through windows, and the efficient use of window coverings can reduce energy loss when it is cold outside.


## 3. Smart water valves

According to the U.S. EPA, an average household's water leaks can account for 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Collectively, that's 1 trillion gallons of water each year in the U.S.! Smart leak sensors monitor leaks under sinks, behind toilets and near other water sources in your home. And, like most smart home devices, the sensors can be linked to your smartphone to alert you of leaks. There are also smart water valves designed for your main water line for catastrophes like bursting pipes, although these are pricey and require professional installation.

## 4. The smart plug

This device plugs into a regular outlet and allows you to control appliances remotely via a phone app. Most smart plugs track energy use so you can see how efficient (or inefficient) an appliance is. Some of them have a convenient away feature that allows you to program lights to make it look like someone is home. 🌈

# Have YOU Responded to the 2020 Census Yet?



**Respond to the 2020 Census online.**

The 2020 Census is here, and it's your chance to shape your community's future. You can respond online using a mobile phone, tablet, or computer — even if you haven't received your census invitation.

**Responding is as easy as 1-2-3:**

1. Visit [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://2020census.gov) and click "Respond."
2. Complete the online form. Be sure to include everyone who lives in your household.
3. You're done!

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Shape your future  
START HERE >

United States  
Census  
2020

Help shape the future of your community. Responses can be done online or on a smart phone at <https://2020census.gov>. You may also respond by calling 844-330-2020.

## What's new for the 2020 Census?

Far fewer paper forms. The Internet and mobile phones are in. Here's what you can expect.

Every 10 years, the U.S. government counts every person living in the country. The nation's founders mandated the decennial census in the Constitution.

It's the largest peacetime government project in the country. The census has moved away from paper as the primary way to collect data, for the

first time since it began in 1790. You will be able to answer the census on the Internet, and census workers in the field will use mobile phone apps.

Here's a look at what's new at each stage of the 2020 Census:

- The Census Bureau is preparing its biggest push ever in advertising and outreach for 2020, with a special focus on digital advertising and social media. Some state and local governments, as well as non-profits,
- You don't have to fill out a paper form anymore. Most homes are expected to answer the 2020 Census online or by phone. Households were mailed letters with census instructions, asking people to go to the [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) website to complete the questionnaire. Paper forms were sent to areas that have less Internet access.
- "Just to put it simply, everyone will have a chance to respond to the census the way they choose to respond," said Al Fontenot, associate director for decennial census programs, "online, over the phone or on paper."

No matter the medium, you respond to the census by answering a handful of questions for every person in the house. Officials say it should take you 10 minutes or less. The questions ask for name, age, sex, Hispanic origin, race, relationship in the household and homeownership.

## Why should I respond to the 2020 Census?

The census is so important to democracy. For a government to represent people and fairly fund its programs, it has to know how many people there are and where they live. In 2016, the federal government distributed about \$883 billion under programs that relied on 2010 Census data, according to the George Washington Institute of Public Policy. The first population counts from the new census will be used to fulfill the survey's constitutional purpose: re-allocating congressional seats among states.

While the risk of losing a congressional seat drives census interest, many communities focus on the fact that census data is used for funding roads, schools and health services. U.S. Census Bureau leaders said one important thing residents can do if they are hunkered down during the coronavirus outbreak is to respond to the 2020 Census. Your response now reduces the need for census workers to go door-to-door later.

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, Census Bureau managers have slightly pushed back the field work to August 14, this is when Census workers will go to the doors of households that have not yet responded. The agency is planning to continue counting through October. 🏠👤

Shape your future  
START HERE >

United States  
Census  
2020

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## Hardest and Easiest Part of Fatherhood? Here's what MJM Dads Had to Say:

There's the neighborhood, puppyhood, adulthood and, of course, fatherhood. On Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, the nation recognizes those who have taken the role of a father in their lifetime. Out of all 29 MJM employees, 21 of those employees are fathers. To honor their title, a few fathers from each department were asked one question: What is the hardest and easiest part of fatherhood?

Accountant Ben Beckwith is the father of two boys, Kevin, 4, and Paul, 4mo. Ben says, "The easiest part is putting my family first. It becomes easier to do the things you don't want to when you have a family that needs you. The hardest part is having patience. Especially, when you're tired and know they're going to make it hard for you."

Engineering/GIS Coordinator Jeromy Miller is the father of two girls, Ciara, 15, and Ally, 8. Jeromy says, "Both my girls have been pretty easy to raise. They are well mannered. I'd say the hardest part is trying to instill the same values in them in which I was raised. The present world we live in makes that challenging."

IT Administrator Chris Franzen has a 13-year-old son named Brady. Chris says, "Easiest part of fatherhood for me has been finding him gifts that make him smile. The hardest part is being a split family and having to divide up time."

Area Utility Leader Chuck Lucykow is the father of Lauren, 18, and Paige, 15. "Easiest part is having the love and family bond. The hardest part of being a father is the financial responsibility."

Lineman Jared Stanton has two children Austin, who is 15, and McKenzie, who is 13. He couldn't be more right about fatherhood when he said, "The hardest part and the most enjoyable part of being a father are one the same. That is watching them grow up."

Line Foreman Adam Crowe is the father of Clay, 18, and Shelby, 12. Adam says, "The hardest part is missing how they were little. The easiest part is hanging out with them and always having them around."

Director of Finance and Accounting Jeremy Pattillo is the father of Rosalie who will be two in July. He says, "The easiest/best part is getting to watch her grow and learn every day. Hardest part is keeping her active and entertained during this quarantine!"

Sounds like fatherhood can always throw you a curve ball and make it challenging. However, the easiest part of fatherhood always outweighs the hardest part. To all the fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and cousins, we wish you a Happy Fathers' Day! 🎈🎉