



MJM
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ALONG THE LINES

Vol. 15, No. 3

March 2022

www.mjmec.coop

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!
Coming: March 20th

In This Issue:

Pg. 4 - New MJM Staff

Pg. 5 - Storm Watches vs Warnings

Pg. 6 - Spring into Safety

Pg. 8 - Member Trading Post

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



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of Operations

Editor

Eric Cooper..... 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 or use your
SmartHub app.**

When you report an outage, give your
name and location number. Before call-
ing, 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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March 13th, 2022 - SPRING FORWARD
March 17th, 2022 - ST. PATRICK'S DAY
March 22nd, 2022 - NATIONAL AG DAY
March 31st, 2022 - MLB OPENING DAY

April 15th, 2022 - GOOD FRIDAY (office closed)
April 17th, 2022 - EASTER SUNDAY

June 10th, 2022 - MJM ANNUAL MEETING



**Have you checked out what the
PowerShift Wifi Program offers?**

Get **\$50** for just signing up, and
another **\$25** for each year you stay
enrolled!

You can enroll today at:
enrollmythermostat.com/powershift

*not all Wi-Fi thermostats are eligible for
this program; see complete list on the
website listed above.

Energy Efficiency - Tip of the Month

March is a great time to schedule your cooling system for annual service
so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of
the thermostat, condition of the belts and motors along with other factors
that can impact the efficiency of your system.



GOING GOLD

At the January 27, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting, Director **Robert Lehmann** received his Director Gold Certificate renewed by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA).

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.

Pictured from left to right is District 4 Director Robert Lehmann and CEO Joe Heyen.



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LOWER YOUR BILL RIGHT NOW!

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.



SIGN UP FOR PAPERLESS BILLING AND AUTO-PAY.

You can sign up for Paperless Billing and Auto-Pay on SmartHub.

Get a notification by text and/or email that your bill is available to view in SmartHub rather than get a paper bill in the mail.

If you would like to have your payment drafted from your checking/savings account or credit card every month - sign up for the Auto-Pay program on SmartHub.

Because we are a co-op, one of our main concerns is making of members' lives easier. That is why we offer the SmartHub account management app. Take control of your electric account with both mobile and web-based apps.

With SmartHub, you view your usage data where and when you want to and you can manage your account right from your mobile device. SmartHub is fully integrated with MJM Electric Cooperative and delivers account information, mobile payments and more in a safe, secure environment.

With SmartHub you can:

- Check your kWh usage
- Pay your bill anywhere and at any time
- Compare your usage month-to-month or year-to-year
- Report outages from your mobile device
- View graphs showing how the weather affects usage

And much more!

Need help creating a Smarthub account?
Go to: <https://mjmec.coop/smarthub-help>

Discounted Estate Retirements for Capital Credits – Now Available!

In January 2022, MJM started offering a discounted option to close out unretired capital credits for estates – or rather, for those MJM Members who have passed away. Please contact the billing department at 217-707-6156 if you are interested in learning more. If you prefer to continue receiving capital credit checks as they are retired by Board direction, you do not need to contact MJM.

MJM WELCOMES SARAH TOLBERT



Accounting Clerk

MJM would like to give a warm welcome to Sarah Tolbert of Jerseyville as one of our newest hires! Sarah started on January 24th as the Accounting Clerk. She has joined us from GRP Wegman in Bethalto after working as a Billing Accountant in the Industrial Field. Sarah received her Master of Business Administration from Missouri Baptist University.

Sarah and her husband Ryan live right outside of Jerseyville with their 3 children: Hank (7), Hannah (4), and Hunter (7mo.). When Sarah is not at work, she enjoys family time, being outdoors, and traveling.

Sarah is excited to continuing learning and meet new co-workers on the MJM team!

MJM WELCOMES ERIC COOPER



Communications
& Member Services
Coordinator

MJM would also like to give a warm welcome to Eric Cooper of Carlinville as one of our newest hires! Eric started on February 1st as the Communications and Member Services Coordinator. He is originally from Gillespie and currently lives in Carlinville with his wife Theresa (the kids might know her as MS. Theresa from Children's Garden Learning Center), and their three children: Weston (13), Thekla (11), and Kennedy (9).

Eric is a graduate of Gillespie High School and studied Music Performance and Education at Blackburn College. He worked for twelve years at Cross Church as the Worship Pastor and Creative Team/Arts/AV Director, and most recently at CNB Carlinville as a Universal Banker and Facility Coordinator. You may have also seen Eric out in the community playing music as a member of Miles Station, who have been together for 17 years. Eric also has been coaching youth soccer for several years and is a member of the Carlinville Soccer Board.

Eric is very excited to start his new role here at MJM and looks forward to providing great communication and service to all MJM members, and we are excited to have him join the MJM Team!

MORE "NEW STAFF" INTRODUCTIONS COMING NEXT MONTH!

Be prepared and stay safe: Storm watches vs. warnings

At any moment, 1,800 thunderstorms occur worldwide, according to the National Weather Service. That is 16 million storms a year! In an average year, 1,200 tornadoes cause 60 to 65 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the U.S. alone.

To protect yourself, your family and your property from seasonal thunderstorms and tornadoes, you need more than a flashlight and a few cans of food (although they are essential parts of your emergency kit).



Beyond the items in your preparedness kit, it is a good idea to fully understand how dangerous storms can be and how to interpret weather alerts to minimize risk.

Watch versus warning

When bad weather is approaching, people typically turn on the TV, pull up a weather app or look online for information. If you see a severe weather watch or warning, something bad could be heading your way. However, many people do not consider the differences between the two.

A **watch** means there is a significant chance of a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Watch and wait for more information while taking precautionary measures, like unplugging electronics and checking the contents of your emergency preparedness kit.

A **warning** means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted or seen on radar. The moment you get a warning, take shelter in the safest part of your home, which is usually in your basement or the interior part of your home.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are some of the most common yet destructive weather events on Earth. Most of the damage comes from flooding caused by heavy rains, lightning strikes and high winds. Some storms also deliver hail and can even spawn tornadoes. Bad weather systems, such as those that cause thunderstorms, can cause broken windows, extreme water damage, fallen trees, serious fires, downed power lines and more.

Do not ignore the potential hazards of thunderstorms. Keep flashlights or battery-operated lights well supplied with batteries or charge them regularly. Keep a supply of nonperishable food and drinking water on hand. Turn off and unplug electronic equipment to protect it from power surges. Move valuables out of the basement or other locations that may flood. If a power outage occurs, never use a portable generator in your home, enclosed structure or garage. Do not step into a flooded basement or area since the water could be electrified.

Tornadoes

The central part of the United States is sometimes referred to as Tornado Alley because it is the most common geographic location for these disastrous storms. The Great Plains have the perfect environment and climate for severe storm creation. While tornadoes can happen in any month, they are much likelier in the spring and summer than in other seasons. April, May and June have more than twice as many reported tornadoes as any other time of the year.

To stay safe during a tornado, be aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms that could breed tornadoes. Know the best place to shelter both indoors and out, and always protect your head, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Understanding severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings can help keep you and your family safe. Do not underestimate the potential power of these weather systems. Take steps to protect yourselves and your property before a storm hits. For more information about storm preparedness and electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



Reap What You Sow: Stay Safe During Planting Season

by SafeElectricity.com

SPRING INTO SAFETY

Spring is in the air and that means more than just a change of season for farmers. During the busy planting season, follow these eight safety tips:

- TRANSPORT SAFELY**
Ensure equipment is compliant with agriculture road and travel safety rules
- SHARE SAFETY TIPS**
Teach anyone working or doing business on your farm about electrical hazards
- ENCOURAGE YOUNG WORKERS**
Be sure to match age and ability level with each chore
- BE CLEAR**
Explain where the "back 80" or Smith field is; not everyone may know how to get there
- WRITE IT DOWN**
Keep directions (with proper road and farm ground names) at home, in the shop and in cabs
- LOOK AROUND**
Inspect your space and look for hazards before you start planting
- EVALUATE PROCEDURES**
Consider new safety precautions you can implement, such as lockout/tagout
- MEET AND DISCUSS**
Conduct morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day and talk about potential hazards

Source: Royal Mutual Insurance Co., www.rmgroup.com

SafeElectricity.org

Long hours and fatigue are a constant battle for farmers during planting season. If you farm, remember to take care of yourself by getting as much rest as possible and allowing yourself breaks to clear your head.

Be especially aware of electrical hazards around the farm. Be cautious and think twice before acting around electricity. Safe Electricity offers farmers the following reminders:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line (even when your tractor or truck makes contact), you are now a "pathway to ground" and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.
- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from a distance) to stay in the tractor or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- When using machinery with long extensions or tall antennas and when using ladders, look up to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- Even if there is no contact, an electrical current can jump or arc so keep equipment at least 10 feet from surrounding power lines at all times.
- Remember, non-metallic materials (such as tree limbs, ropes and hay) can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay at least 50 feet away; call 9-1-1 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- Every day, map out where equipment will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- When working in the vicinity of power lines, always use a spotter who has a broad vantage point.
- Train anyone working with or for you (including seasonal employees) to be aware of power line locations and teach them proper clearance distance. Also design and implement a safety training program that includes a review of electrical hazards and how to safely deal with power lines.
- According to American Family Insurance, "know your PTO." To stay safe when working with a power take off (PTO), always disengage the PTO, turn off the engine and remove keys before getting off the tractor. Also, never step across a rotating power shaft.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



HARDENED HOUSE:

UNIQUE ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL WOOD FRAMING OFFERS SEVERAL ADVANTAGES FOR HOMEOWNERS

by Wabash Valley Power Alliance

Noble REMC energy advisor Brian Hawk worked with high school students pouring concrete in a project that even taught him valuable lessons.

Hawk helped the students to set forms and pour a basement using insulated concrete forms (ICF). ICF blocks are made from a foam exterior with rebar placed on the inside, which has connective plastic webs, before concrete is poured in between. The concrete dries and the blocks together form the exterior structure walls. While ICF has existed for decades, it has gained attention in recent years from people building more energy efficient structures. Also, as lumber prices skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic, some people have considered ICF as an alternative to traditional framing.


“They are a lot more versatile than what contractors are willing to find out,” said Hawk, who worked with a vocational program in Noble County to pour the concrete into the ICF forms. “That’s probably why I geek out so much over them. If a high school team can put it together, why aren’t more experienced contractors doing this?”

By combining a foam exterior with concrete, ICF has a more consistent – and frequently higher – R-value than traditional framing, which can allow for more heat transfer than ICF (the greater the R-value, the greater ability to keep conditioned air where you want it). ICF’s R-value can mean lower costs to heat and cool the home while keeping occupants comfortable during extreme weather.

“It has definitely gained more attention,” Hawk said of ICF. “More and more homeowners are demanding efficiency when they build a new home.”

The ICF system is comprised of blocks that can be “formed” over several days – less time than traditional framing processes. The concrete walls also will not have the same moisture issues as wood framing, which can lead to a more resilient structure that will last for decades, Hawk said.

He has seen several homes built with ICF, including one in Northeast Indiana as part of the Power Moves Home program. Homes in the program are at least 20 percent more efficient than traditional homes, and come with an energy efficiency report and HERS score, as well as a heating and cooling cost guarantee.

“We have seen multiple ICF homes in the last few years,” said Dan Phillips, senior analyst of grid innovation and energy efficiency at Wabash Valley Power Alliance, which administers the Power Moves Home program. “The advantages that ICF brings make it very appealing, and new homeowners incorporating ICF into their new homes have been pleased with the results.” 



MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Stibel Eltron Electric boiler, 240 volts, 12.0 kilowatts, 50 A. Used to provide hot water for in-floor heating of a 1200 sq. ft. workshop for three years. Like new, cost \$1100 new, asking \$300. Also, cast iron ends from a wooden John Deere grain drill with a deer in relief on each. Asking \$30 for the pair. I can email photos of the items; call 217-556-7511

FOR SALE: 2009 Bison Stratus 8ft wide, awning, 3 horse, walk thru door, 8ft short wall/13ft long wall, rear track, fridge, gas stove top, microwave, jack knife couch, table, shower, and stool. Very clean, lots of storage, \$29,500 OBO; 618-410-6275 or 618-786-2999

FOR SALE: RBW industrial 5th wheel hitch, \$250, Hillsboro area 217-556-6948

FOR SALE: Premier X62009 Folding Elliptical Trainer, very nice. Asking \$400.00. Call 217-854-2342 or 217-825-6108.

FOR SALE: Commercial charcoal carbon water filter made by Structural Fibers Inc. 42in tall and 10in diameter. Asking \$25. Next, a 750gal Fiberglass water tank on heavy duty, 2 axle trailer for \$800. 2 Golf club sets: 1 men's, 1 women's, both come with bags, only one has a cart, asking \$25 per set. Please call 217-854-2063

WANTING TO BUY: Old bottles, Fruit Jars, Milk Bottles, and wooden boxes. Litchfield & Carlinville area call 618-402-4420.

FOR SALE: Old beekeeper cutting back: 5 gal. buckets - jars - other beekeeper equipment for sale. Call: 1-217-999-7840 (please leave a message if no answer)

To list your free ad, email ericc@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.