

# ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

**MACRH 2024**  
VOL.17, NO. 3

**BALANCED FUEL MIX**  
Diverse energy sources that keep our lights on. p.2

**NEW STAFF & ROLES**  
Introductions and congratulations. p.5

**TREE TRIMMING & SPRAYING SCHEDULE**  
2024 Schedule. p.6-7

## MARCH CALENDAR



March is American Red Cross Month

Mar. 10: Daylight Savings ("Spring forward")

Mar. 19: First Day of Spring

Mar. 29: Good Friday - Office Closed

## SAVE THE DATE! June 6th, 2024

MJM's 85th Annual Meeting in  
Carlinville, IL

### 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



# A BALANCED TEAM FOR RELIABILITY



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



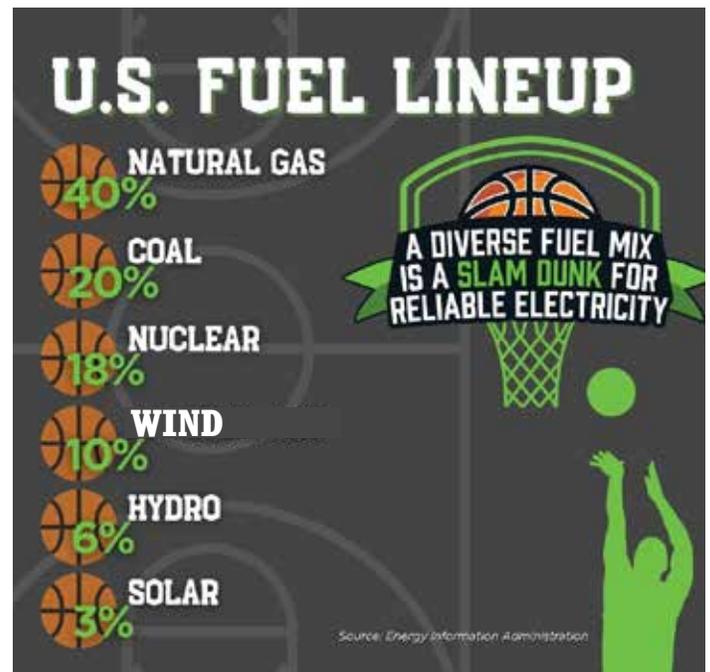
The winningest basketball teams in history are ones that are consistent and have players with varying abilities. Some are better at shooting three-pointers, some are best at defense. Having a balanced mix of skills makes the team a powerhouse on the court.

The way to keep electricity reliable is a bit like that too. The power team first requires a foundation of consistent sources that can be put in the game any time they're needed. Having enough "always available" fuel sources like natural gas and coal can ensure consistent power generation.

Just like a team needs different players for different situations, our power grid requires multiple sources to keep the grid running. Relying solely on one player to win every game is not an effective strategy—if they get injured, you'll likely lose. Similarly, using a single fuel source for electricity generation poses a significant risk to energy reliability. Natural disasters, geopolitical tensions or unforeseen disruptions can severely impact the supply chain of a particular fuel. A diverse mix of energy sources acts as a safeguard, ensuring that the grid remains operational even in the face of unexpected challenges.

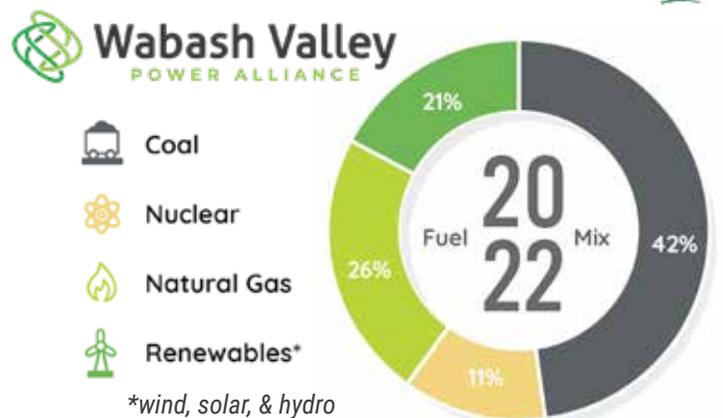
A diverse energy mix also enhances grid flexibility by accommodating the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Think of solar power like a team's inconsistent three-point shooter. It's awesome when the sun is shining bright, but what if it's nighttime or a cloudy day? That's where the other players, like wind, hydro, nuclear, natural gas and coal can step up and keep the team scoring.

Diverse fuel sources contribute to the stability and reliability of the electric grid. The different sources have varying characteristics, including generation patterns, responsiveness and storage capabilities. This diversity allows for a more balanced and resilient energy system that can adapt to fluctuating demand and unforeseen circumstances. Having a mix of these energy sources is like having a team with different skills to handle various situations and scenarios.



A diverse set of energy sources is essential, but that's not the only thing we need to have reliable electricity—or a winning team. Basketball teams are always trying out new plays or training rookies to create a versatile lineup. Similarly, electric cooperatives are constantly innovating to maintain reliability for tomorrow. But creating new ways to make our power sources more efficient and reliable takes time, money and advances in technology that aren't necessarily ready yet.

As we continue to work on the innovations of tomorrow, the key to keeping our electricity reliable right now is ensuring a diverse "team" of fuels. Each one brings something special to the table, and together, they make sure we have the power we need, whenever we need it.



# ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative  
www.mjmec.coop

**18300 Shipman Road (PO Box 80)  
Carlville, IL 62626**

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

**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:** W. Kay Schultz..... Godfrey  
**VICE CHAIRMAN:** Charles Huebener..... Brighton  
**SECRETARY:** Marcie Tonsor..... Jerseyville  
**TREASURER:** Robert Moore..... Medora  
 Robert Lehmann..... Girard  
 Tyler Heyen..... Raymond  
 Dwayne Milner..... Piasa  
 James Niemann..... Litchfield  
 Todd Stewart..... Nokomis

## STAFF

Joe Heyen.....President/CEO  
 Jeremy Pattillo.....Director of Finance and Accounting  
 Jennifer Peterson.....Executive Administrator  
 Matt Eisenmenger.....Director of Operations  
 Bob Brandon.....Director of Engineering

## EDITOR

Eric Cooper.....Communications &  
 Member Services Coordinator

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Details on which dealines are coming up.
- 5 New Staff & New Roles**  
Meet the new team members.
- 7 2024 Tree Trimming & Spraying**  
MJM's Forestry Department update.

# MEMBER TRADING POST

**FOR SALE:** Eastlake antique furniture items. Settee/sofa; round marble top table; two smaller parlor tables. Willett chairs. Budweiser and Cardinals items. Serious inquiries, please call for pricing. Litchfield 217-710-5614.

**FOR SALE:** 32 ft hay elevator. Located 10 miles west of Grafton, IL Used in 2023 but bought a smaller elevator for inside of barn. Sold with or without motor. Motor is stored inside each year after use. Call for more info 618-979-1066

**FOR SALE:** : Oak firewood, seasoned & split. 6 1/2 ft truck bed, \$90. Delivery or pick up available.  
 Call / text 217-716-0077

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, Carlville, IL 62626.**

Each ad will run for one month. Some restriction may apply.

# LINeworker SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE



The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship helps pay for costs to attend lineworker school. The \$2,000 scholarship is awarded annually to an individual who is related to an Illinois rural electric cooperative employee or director; is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative member; is enrolled in the Lincoln Land lineworker's school; or has served or is currently serving in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard.

Awarded for the first time in 2011, the scholarship was endowed by LaVern and Nola McEntire to assist students attending lineworker's school at LLCC. LaVern served as a lineworker for more than 42 years at McDonough Power Cooperative.

The deadline to apply for this scholarship is **April 30, 2024**. To apply, go to: [aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship](http://aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship)



# UPCOMING DEADLINES



## Operation Round Up Applications

APRIL 1st

[mjmec.coop/operation-round](http://mjmec.coop/operation-round)

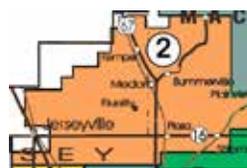


## 2024 Board of Directors Election Petitions: Districts 2, 3, & 8

APRIL 22nd

Contact the office to obtain a petition.

[mjmec.coop/how-were-governed](http://mjmec.coop/how-were-governed)



## Lineworker Scholarship Applications

APRIL 30th



**RURAL COMMUNITIES  
DEPEND ON CO-OP  
VOTERS - LIKE YOU.**

**Make a plan to be  
a #CoopVoter!**

Learn more and join us at [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop)



## WHAT ARE THE TOP ISSUES IMPACTING RELIABILITY?

- 1 An increase in demand for electricity as more and more of our economy becomes electrified.
- 2 An alarming reduction in supply as our country shuts existing always-available power plants to comply with various federal and state regulations.
- 3 The arcane set of rules and regulations required to build anything in this country limits the development of new power facilities.

# TWENTY-YEAR SERVICE AWARD



## BOB LEHMANN DISTICT 4 BOARD DIRECTOR

MJM District 4 Board Director, Robert Lehmann, was presented with a 20-year service award from Wabash Valley Power Alliance President/CEO, Jeff Conrad.



MJM President/CEO Joe Heyen, Bob Lehmann, WVPA President/CEO Jeff Conrad



Bob Lehmann, WVPA President/CEO Jeff Conrad

## WELCOME TO MJM:



### Paul Fraley

*Journeyman Lineman*

Paul is from Carlinville, IL and joined MJM's Carlinville Lineman Crew on December 11th, 2023. Paul's past work experience in the utility field has made his transition to MJM very smooth, and he's been a great addition to the team.



### Tiffany Bomkamp

*Billing Specialist*

Tiffany is from Carlinville, IL and joined MJM's front office team on January 15th, 2024. Tiffany has past billing and customer service experience, and we are excited to have her here at MJM.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

### PROMOTIONS/NEW ROLES:

#### Chuck Lucykow

*Line Foreman*

#### Matthew Waters

*Area Utility Leader*

#### Zach Porter

*Forestry Foreman*

#### David McCoy

*Operations Field Coordinator*

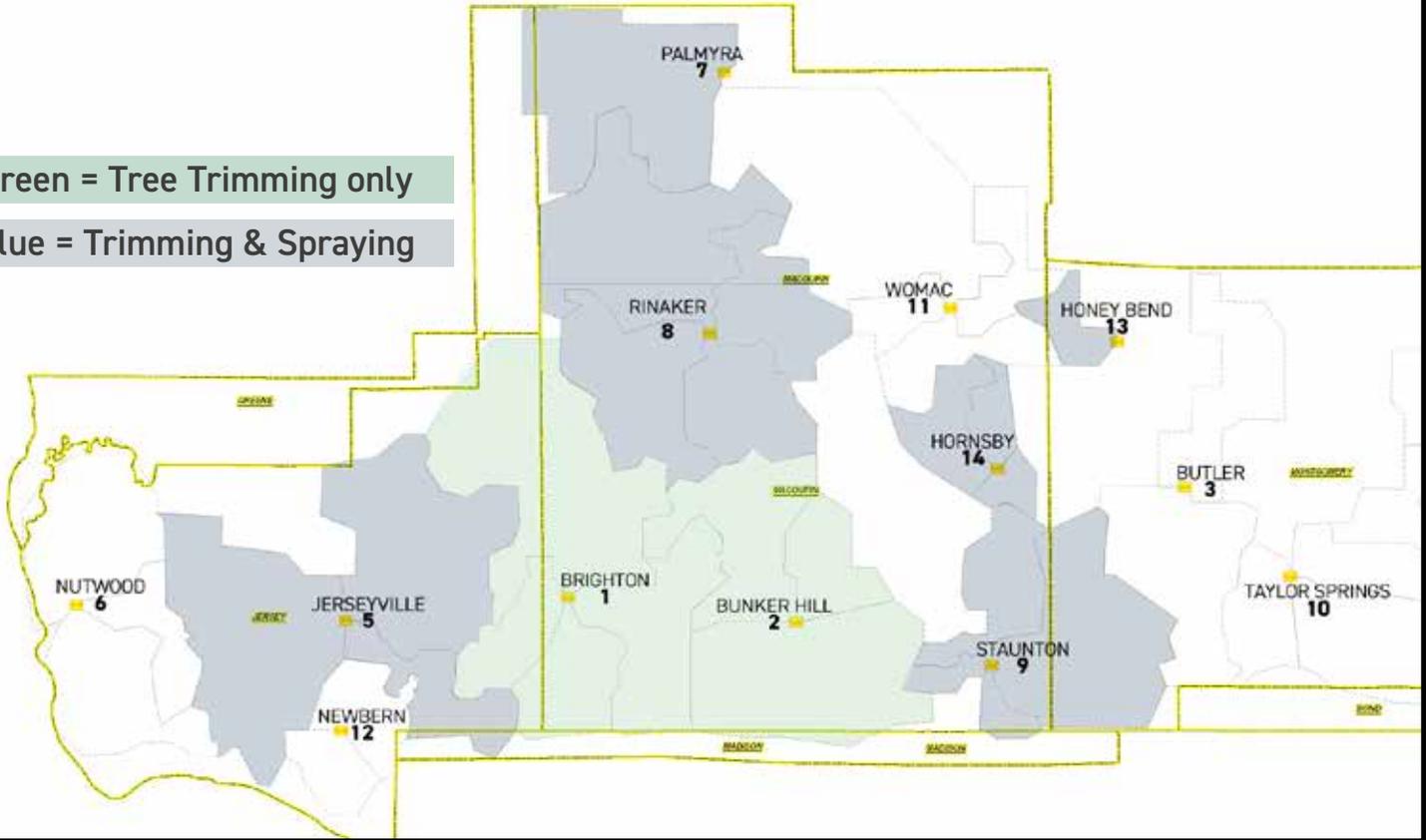
#### Stefanie Frizzo

*Operations Office Coordinator*

# 2024 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Green = Tree Trimming only

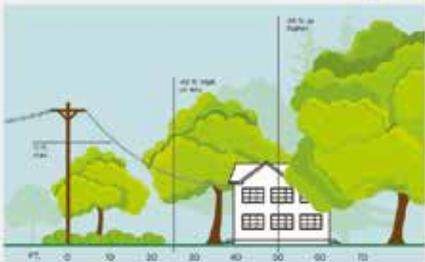
Blue = Trimming & Spraying



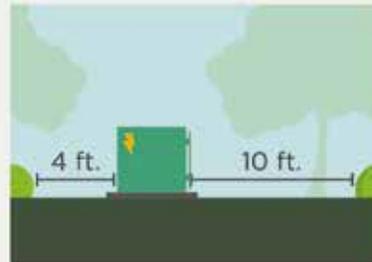
## 3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them. Here's how you can help:

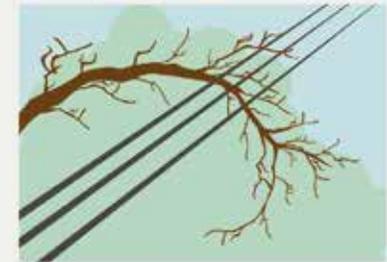
**1. Plant trees in the right place.** Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



**2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers.** Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.



**3. Report dangerous branches.** If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



**Trimming improves safety for all.**

**Let's work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TREE TRIMMING

## SAFETY, RELIABILITY, & AFFORDABILITY

by MJM's Operations Field Coordinator  
David McCoy



### Safety

Working near power lines can be dangerous, and we care about your safety and that of our lineworkers. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose a grave danger to families. If children can reach those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor such as a tree.

Any tree or branch that falls across a power line creates a potentially dangerous situation. A proactive approach lessens the chances of fallen trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

### Reliability

Keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation improves service reliability. After all, we've seen the whims of Mother Nature during severe weather events with fallen tree limbs taking down power lines and utility poles. While many factors can impact power disruptions, about half of all outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation. This is why you sometimes see MJM crews out in the community trimming trees near power lines. Our trimming crews have been trained and certified based on the latest industry standards.

In fact, all U.S. electric utilities are required to trim trees that grow too close to power lines. Scheduled trimming throughout the year keeps lines clear from overgrown or dead limbs that are likely to fall, and we are better able to prepare for severe weather events.

Plus, we all know it's more cost-effective to undertake preventative maintenance than it is to make repairs after the fact. Drone inspections of power lines and vegetation allow us to reduce labor and equipment costs while bolstering reliability.

### Affordability

As you know, MJM is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

## 2024 TREE TRIMMING

MJM's Forestry Crew is working on the Brighton Substation area and plan go to Bunker Hill Substation area next for trimming & clearing.

## 2024 SPRAYING

After ROW (right-of-way) clearing and tree trimming, crews will be out spraying in the Jerseyville, Staunton, Rinaker, Palmyra, Hornsby, and Honey Bend substation service areas. All herbicides used are registered with the Illinois Environmental Protective Agency. Additionally, professional applicators will take special care to assure safe handling and precise application.

The most common cause of power outages is related to trees that grow into power lines or trees that fall into the lines. The goal of MJM's Vegetation Management Program is to provide safe and reliable electric service while respecting the environment. Typically, the year following brush removal we will do an herbicide application. This allows for a transition of tall overgrown brush and trees to become a diverse environment of low growing grass and plants.

If vegetation or pole problems should arise in the areas not listed, please contact MJM Operations for assistance.

**Office: 217-707-6156**



## 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

Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening and use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.