

# ALONG THE LINES



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

NOVEMBER 2024

VOL.17, NO. 11

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## NOVEMBER CALENDAR



November is Military Family Month & Child Safety & Protection Month

Nov 3rd: Daylight Saving Time - "Fall Back"

Nov 5th: Election Day

Nov 11th: Veterans Day - (Office Closed)

Nov 28-29th: MJM Office Closed

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

### 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



# WHAT IS THE SERVICE DELIVERY CHARGE?



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



On your monthly bill, one of the lines we get the most questions about is the "Service Delivery Charge." This line item represents the cost of making electric grid accessibility available at your location (for consumption and generation) and is charged to every member, every month, to cover everything

MJM Electric Cooperative needs to keep power flowing.

The intent of the Service Delivery Charge is to recover the fixed costs of providing service to our members. This includes the cost of the infrastructure needed to serve our members remains the same regardless of the amount of power a member uses.

- Poles
- Wires
- Transformers
- Equipment & Parts
- Meters
- Substations
- System Improvements
- Trucks
- Storm & Outage Repairs
- Fuel
- Insurance
- Staff & Payroll
- Accounting & Billing
- Safety & Training
- Maintain Facilities
- Computers & Software
- Cybersecurity
- Taxes
- Phone Services
- Online Services
- Right-of-Way & Tree Trimming Services
- AND MORE!



higher energy charge, which means members using more electricity would pay for more than their share of the cooperative's fixed costs. A higher energy charge would also create a subsidy for those members who install distributed generation at their homes, like rooftop solar or wind. We believe that our rates need to be structured so that all members pay their share of the cooperative's fixed costs, regardless of their electric use or interest in installing renewable resources.

Think of the service charge like property taxes. Property taxes help pay for road construction and maintenance, police and fire protection, and other such services. If you are away from home for a month, do you get to waive property taxes for that month? No, we all still owe property taxes even if we are not at the property. That is because the county/township/village still incurred the costs of making those roads and services available.

The service charge is necessary to keep our finances healthy so we can continue to make investments in our distribution system and ensure power reliability for years to come. We appreciate your understanding so we can continue providing power for the future.

For more information on understanding the charges on your monthly bill, please visit our website:

[www.mjmec.coop/understanding-your-bill](http://www.mjmec.coop/understanding-your-bill)





# ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative  
www.mjmec.coop

**18300 SHIPMAN ROAD, PO Box 80  
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:** W. Kay Schultz..... Godfrey  
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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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# MEMBER TRADING POST

**FREE:** Metal building. You take it down. Call 618-910-9522

**FOR SALE:** Track Lighting Fixtures and Bulbs, box of 16 brand new Lazer track lighting fixtures by Halo, black in color, LZR 301 MB (each lists online for \$50) plus 12 50W, 120V flood lights (each lists online for \$9), \$300 for all. Also, Patriot Lighting, 3-light vanity light. Dee Collection, brand new in box, \$35. Call: 618-876-9264.

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

**FOR RENT:** Indoor storage spaces available for car, boat, or camper. Call 618-334-4298

**FOR SALE:** John Deere 2555 MFWD w/loader. Runs and operates as it should. Asking \$16,000. Call or text Rich @ 609-658-0467.

**FOR RENT:** One bedroom house near Fieldon. \$425/mo. Call 618-376-4006

**WANTED:** Donahue implement trailer. Call 618-374-1281.

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, Carlinsville, IL 62626**.

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

# MAY YOUR HOLIDAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT



BY MJM COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICE COORDINATOR, ERIC COOPER

As November kicks off, it's hard to believe we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

As your local electric cooperative, our team at MJM cares about your wellbeing. This month, I'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

## Safety first.

My family truly enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. Before we deck the halls, I always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. I also double check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. I test mine on the first of each month, so it's easy to remember. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

## 'Tis the season for savings.

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can lower your bills.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home.



Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient lighting options available, more strands can be connected together, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food--not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings.

I hope you will implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your holiday plans. For additional advice, visit our website at [www.mjmec.coop/energy-saving-tips](http://www.mjmec.coop/energy-saving-tips). We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

From your friends at MJM, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright.

· H A P P Y ·  
*Holidays*

# IS A DUCTLESS MINI-SPLIT SYSTEM RIGHT FOR YOUR HOME?



How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house. This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, and their energy efficiency aspects are so popular.

Let's unpack some mini-split basics and explore whether this type of system is a good choice for your home heating and cooling needs.

A mini-split system is a type of HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Similar to central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components--an outdoor compressor and an indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor unit(s) to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than the whole home.

## IS A MINI-SPLIT SYSTEM RIGHT FOR YOU?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be furthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install requiring a small hole for the conduit connecting the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized because each includes a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.



## COOL SOLUTIONS

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier, and because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

However, according to the Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, those in particularly colder climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified technician to learn if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home.



# SMARTHUB

## NOTIFICATIONS



Sign up for a number of different notifications using our SmartHub app. Pick and choose the ones that you want to receive! Planned outages, regular outages, billing changes, payment due, payment confirmations, auto pay, and many more you can choose from.

Log into your SmartHub account and navigate to the notification screen to manage your notifications. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call us during regular business hours at 217-707-6156 and press option #2. You can also find helpful videos on our website: [mjmec.coop/smarthub-help](https://mjmec.coop/smarthub-help)



**Billing Notifications** – Bill Available, Credit Card Expiration, Delinquent Notices, Declined Auto Pay, Payment Confirmation, Payment Posted, Payment Reminders, Scheduled Payment Notifications.



**Service** – Planned Power Outages, Power Outage, Power Outage Restored



**Miscellaneous** – Auto Pay, Login Credentials Change, Personal Info Change

To set up the specific notifications that you want, simply log in to SmartHub and go to: **"Settings > Manage Notifications."**

- **PAY BILLS ONLINE**
- **TRACK YOUR DAILY USAGE**
- **REPORT OUTAGES**
- **GET NOTIFICATIONS**



# 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS REMINDER

The Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program awards \$2,500 scholarships annually to deserving students in the "electric cooperative family" entering college 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, 2024).**

**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, 2024).**

**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, 2024).**

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

**(Deadline to apply Apr. 30, 2025).**

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

Application Links:

<https://mjmec.coop/scholarships>



# 2024 LINEWORKER'S SAFETY RODEO

Photos and Article by: The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives



MJM Team 1 (L-R): Paul Fraley, Luke Wilson, Andrew Wieseman



MJM Team 2 (L-R): Tanner Mullen, Brian Bell, Riley Marsh

SPRINGFIELD – Line personnel from M.J.M. Electric Cooperative participated in the annual Lineworker's Safety Rodeo coordinated by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) on Thursday, Sept. 19. Fifteen teams from 12 electric co-ops and one municipal electric utility participated in the friendly competition, along with seven others competing individually. The rodeo highlights the skills lineworkers use to work safely and efficiently.

Two teams represented M.J.M. at the rodeo, held at the LLCC Line School Yard in Springfield. Competing as Team 1 were Paul Fraley, Andrew Wiesman and Luke Wilson. Brian Bell, Riley Marsh and Tanner Mullen competed as Team 2. They competed against teams from across Illinois in events using skills that focused on agility, speed and accuracy. While these skills are part of the judging criteria, above all, participants are judged on safe work practices.

Line personnel competed in a series of team and individual events including the 40-foot climb, hurt man rescue and crossarm change. The cutout change was a team event, and the day concluded with a head-to-head climbing challenge.

Scores for each event are based on completion time, proper execution of the task and safety. Deductions were made to a team or individual's overall performance score due to mistakes such as slipping when climbing poles, dropping tools or executing inappropriate procedures or methods.

At the end of the day, M.J.M.'s Team 2 won third place in the crossarm change. Congratulations to our lineworkers on their team and individual efforts!





## BOARD LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



MJM follows the basic principle of Democratic Member control: one Member, one vote. Did you know that as a Member of our Co-op, you are eligible to run for a Board of Director position? The Board of Directors are your friends and neighbors. The decisions they make for your Cooperative affect their electric service the same as yours.

To know which Board of Director represents you, refer to the MJM bylaw booklet (Articles IV – Board of Directors; V – Meetings of Director; and VI – Officers, Misc.) available online at:

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

For more details on how to participate, you can contact the MJM office at **217-707-6156** or email us at [info@mjmec.coop](mailto:info@mjmec.coop).

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually.

Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles.