



ALONG THE LINES

DEDICATED TO SAFELY PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

October 2026

Local Voices Shape Local Solutions

by Joe Heyen, MJM President/CEO



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH! When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of MJM.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: they're led by the people they serve—and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives—like MJM—provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit—it's to provide value, meet unique local needs and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes MJM different. Our story began in 1939 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to

provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve. That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money. Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology or creating new opportunities for local students.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm. The office employees answering your questions when you call. The MJM team members volunteering at community events. The board members—your neighbors—who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for many generations yet to come.

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference, because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's MJM, your local credit union or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible—and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.



MJM CALENDAR

- Nov. 11 - Veterans Day (Office Closed)
- Nov. 26 & 27 - Office Closed
- Dec. 24 & 25 - Office Closed
- Dec. 31 - Office Closed
- Jan. 1, 2027 - Office Closed

CONTACT US

MJM Electric Cooperative

Phone: (217) 707-6156

Fax: (217) 854-3918

Pay-by-Phone: (217) 707-6156 (opt.1)

www.mjmec.coop

Mailing Address

PO Box 80,
Carlinville, IL 62626

Physical Address

18300 Shipman Rd.,
Carlinville, IL 62626

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Board of Directors

Directors are voted on at each Annual Meeting by the membership. If the election is not contested, the director running will be elected by acclamation.

Chairman

Todd Stewart (District 8)

Vice Chairman

Charles Huebener (District 3)

Secretary

Marcie Tonsor (District 9)

Treasurer

Tyler Heyen (District 6)

Directors

Tim Walsh (District 1)

Dwanye Milner (District 2)

Leann Barr (District 4)

Frank Welling (District 5)

James Niemann (District 7)

For more information, visit:

mjmec.coop/how-we-are-governed

Staff

President/CEO

Joe Heyen

Finance & Accounting Manager

Brian Gunning

Office Manager

Jen Peterson

Operations Manager

Matt Eisenmenger

Engineering Manager

Martin L. Hinton

Editor

Communications & Member Services Coordinator

Eric Cooper

Office 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.



MJM recipient, Elizabeth Hammann (far left) and other 2026 THM IEC Memorial Scholarship recipients at the AIEC's Annual Meeting in Peoria, IL.

Scholarship Application Portal Now Open!

EACH YEAR, THE ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES presents scholarships to 20 high school seniors associated with Illinois electric cooperatives. One is the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship; the remaining 19 are Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships. As of 2026, each annual scholarship is worth \$3,000. The scholarship must be used for educational costs, and the student must enter college within a year from the time the scholarship is issued.

Scholarships are awarded based on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience,

participation in school and community activities, biographical statement and creative, thoughtful responses to how electric cooperatives can serve their future members, as demonstrated by a short essay.

This application also enters students from the MJM service area for a chance to receive an MJM scholarship or honorary scholarship.

To apply, a student must meet the required criteria and complete the online scholarship application through their local electric cooperative website link or by going to www.aiec.coop/iec-scholarship. Each applicant is responsible for submitting all information required to apply for a scholarship by **Dec. 31, 2026**.

Chairman Stewart earns Director Credential BLC

MJM's Board Chairman, Todd Stewart (right) pictured receiving his NRECA Board Leadership Certificate from MJM President/CEO, Joe Heyen.

The Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) is the second tier of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) three-part director education program. It focuses on advanced industry and governance topics. Topics covered within this certification include, risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology, and policy development. Congratulations Todd!



This Fall, Refresh Your Cybersecurity Habits

AS THE LEAVES BEGIN TO CHANGE, and we settle into the routines of fall, it's a good time to take stock of a few things around the house—preparing for cooler weather, checking our heating systems and getting ready for the months ahead. It's also a good time to refresh our cybersecurity habits and awareness.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but protecting your personal information is something that deserves attention all year long.

At MJM, cybersecurity is a critical part of providing safe, reliable electric service. While much of our focus is on protecting the physical systems that operate the electric grid, we also work to protect the systems and information that help us serve you—including online accounts, payment systems, member portals and outage communications.

Unfortunately, scammers are becoming more sophisticated, too. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making it easier for cyber criminals to create convincing emails, text messages, websites and even voice messages that can look and sound legitimate. The FBI has warned that generative AI can make fraudulent schemes more believable by eliminating many of the errors that once helped us identify a scam.

That matters when it comes to utility scams. A scammer may impersonate MJM and claim your account is past due, your service is about to be disconnected or you need

to make an immediate payment. The message might even include our logo, use professional-looking language or direct you to a website that appears legitimate. With AI helping scammers create more convincing communications, simply looking for spelling mistakes or other obvious warning signs may no longer be enough. And these scams are not a small problem.



According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing \$3.5 billion to imposter scams in 2025, making these types of scams the most commonly reported type of fraud. Nearly one in three fraud reports involved an imposter scam.

So, what should you do if you receive an unexpected message claiming to be from MJM?

If a message creates a sense of urgency or threatens immediate disconnection, take a moment to verify it. **Don't click the link or call the phone number provided in the message.** Instead, **contact MJM's office directly** using our trusted

methods. You can reach us by phone at **217-707-6156**; or by email at **info@mjmec.coop**.

You can also take steps to protect your online accounts before a scam occurs. Start with your password. Longer is generally better than simply adding more special characters. Choose a long, unique passphrase that is difficult for others to guess, and don't reuse the same password across

multiple accounts.

If the accounts you access online offer multifactor authentication (MFA), consider using it. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring an additional way to verify your identity, such as a code sent to your phone, email, or an authentication app like Google Authenticator.

Most importantly, remember that you don't have to make a payment simply because someone

tells you that you do. We want you to have an opportunity to verify any unexpected issue or request.

MJM is committed to protecting the systems that help us deliver your electricity and serve our members. You can help by protecting your own account, slowing down when something seems urgent and contacting us directly when you're unsure.

For questions about your account or payment options, contact MJM at 217-707-6156 or email info@mjmec.coop.

Copper Theft in the MJM Service Area

As the price of copper has increased, so have copper thefts. Copper theft is especially harmful because of the safety risks it creates. Thefts from electric utility property, such as substations and power poles, can cause blinks, fires, explosions, power outages, and electric shock.

Copper theft is not a victimless crime. It is expensive to fix the damage done by copper thefts. For example, these criminal actions from across the nation have forced airport runways to temporarily shut down, required hospitals to run on generator power, created traffic problems when traffic lights did not have power, and caused deaths from fires and explosions.

Copper theft is also dangerous for thieves themselves. Substations and power poles carry high levels of fatal electricity. Many copper thefts have been killed or seriously burned or injured while trying to steal from electric utilities.

Safe Electricity & MJM have the following tips to empower you to help stop copper theft.

- Common targets for copper theft are construction sites, farming equipment, and electric utility property. If you notice suspicious activity around one of these copper theft targets, **notify authorities. Do not try to intervene yourself.**
- If you are responsible for a construction site or farm, properly secure your property. If you have large quantities of copper, you may consider a tracking device that can help locate your copper if it is stolen.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.
- Help spread the word about the dangers of copper theft.
- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire, etc. **contact MJM immediately.**
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than utility personnel or contractors, **call the police.**



Member

Trading

Post

FOR SALE: A Ferris zero-turn mower, \$2,500.
Call: 618-910-8298

FOR SALE: Fire Chief wood burning furnace, model 700, 150,000BTU, some duct work. \$500. Call: 217-556-6744

FOR SALE: A 1998 Yamaha Big Bear 350, 4x4 ATV. Good condition. \$2,500. Call: 618-781-4978

FOR SALE: 2002 VW Golf 2.0, 4 door, white, manual shift, bought from original owner. 169,000 mi. Very good condition. Cold AC. \$2,550. Standard farm wagon, needs upgrade, bed. \$395 as is. Eastlake Victorian vintage round marble top table 36" across. \$375. Call: 217-710-5614

FOR RENT: Inside/covered storage space for boat, camper, or car. Call: 618-334-4298

FOR SALE: Used Graco stroller, in good condition. \$40. Better Homes and Gardens sheet set - Full size, washed but never used, got the wrong size. White wicker magazine holder \$1. White decorative wooden shelf \$10.
Text: 217-691-1492

FOR SALE: 180 Lb. Hay Budden Anvil. \$900.00 firm.
Call: 618-498-3833

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

FOR SALE: 2018 Jeep Wrangler Sport, white, 38k miles, excellent condition, includes Blue Ox tow hitch, \$24,500. 14' x 32' tiny house / hunting lodge, full bath, kitchen, and furniture. Must move on your own. Built in 2019. Excellent condition. \$30K. Call: 618-207-7615

FOR SALE: Swisher, 24 inch Predator rugged cut, 9hp, electric start \$800. Call 618-786-2999

To list your free ad, email info@mjmec.coop, call 217-707-6156, or mail the ad to **MJM Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626**. The deadline for next month's issue is **October 9th** and/or until space is filled; first come, first serve basis. Member Trading Post is printed only if space allows.



Have you changed your number, disconnected your landline, or simply have a better contact number?

If you are not getting notifications about outages or scheduled maintenance, please make sure to update your main contact phone number with the MJM office. Please call the office at **217-707-6156**.

MEDICAL DEVICE SAFETY YOUR BACKUP POWER OPTIONS

Know if your device works with **batteries** or a **generator**, and for **how long**.



If you depend on electric medical equipment, MJM will do all they can to assist you during a power outage by giving your residence a priority tag. Examples of lifesaving medical devices include an oxygen concentrator or a ventilator.

If you or someone in your household depends on life-sustaining medical equipment, contact MJM to let us know.

Although MJM will do all they can to help, it is best to have a backup plan in place in case of severe weather events, which can cause prolonged outages. In case of a power outage, know your power backup options, whether your device works with batteries or a generator, and for how long.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords. Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder for criminals to crack than a short, complex password. Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection.

Source: NIST



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy