

ALONG THE LINES



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

SEPTEMBER 2024
VOL.17, NO. 9

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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR



September is Storm Preparedness Month

Sept 2nd: Labor Day - Office Closed

Sept 11th: Patriot Day

Sept 15-21st: Farm Safety Week

Sept 22nd: First Day of Autumn

Sept 24th: Voter Registration Day

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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WWW.MJMEC.COOP



EPA'S POWER PLANT RULE THREATENS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



As a consumer-member of MJM, keeping the lights on at a cost you can afford is the focal point of everything we do. Transparency is one of our core values, so in addition to sharing co-op successes, I believe we also have a responsibility to tell you about the challenges too.

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule that impacts energy production from power plants. The power plant rule will undoubtedly threaten access to reliable electricity for our local community and communities across the country.

The rule constrains existing coal and new natural gas plants by requiring them to install carbon capture and storage (CCS)—a technology that has potential but has not been proven to be viable as required. No power plant in North America currently uses CCS at the scale and levels mandated by EPA. When power plants aren't able to comply with EPA's CCS requirements, they will be required to shut down, significantly limit operations, or switch fuels. These unrealistic standards will force the unnecessary and early shutdown of many power plants that currently provide reliable electricity 24/7.

MJM's current fuel mix that comes from Wabash Valley Power Alliance is 34% coal, 33% Natural Gas, 22% renewables, and 11% nuclear. Wabash has made great strides over the past seven years in transitioning to cleaner energy sources to reach the 2050 nation-wide Net Zero carbon emissions goal.

Renewable sources, such as solar and wind, are important components of our overall generation mix. But given the intermittent nature of these energy sources, we simply cannot depend on them because the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine. The need for always-available power generating resources is still essential.

The timing of the power plant rule is equally troubling. At the same time the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants, utilities are facing a surge in electricity demand — driven by the onshoring of manufacturing, the growth of the American economy and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce and cryptocurrency.

Many states have already experienced rolling outages, and if the supply of electricity is further threatened by the EPA's power plant rule, the problem will only get worse. In fact, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's electric reliability watchdog, recently forecasted that over the next five years, all or parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling power outages during normal peak electricity demand conditions.

It's also no secret that when demand is high and supply is low, costs go up. We're concerned about threats to reliability as well as cost increases to our members.

I don't say all of this to worry you, but I do want our members to understand the challenges that lie ahead. Just as we've always done, we will look for solutions that serve our members best. We are joining electric co-ops across the country to fight these regulations, and we are working with our local elected officials to help them understand the consequences this would have on all Illinoisans.

Co-ops are no strangers to innovation, and we're taking proactive steps to address today's energy challenges and tomorrow's energy needs. We've led the charge on industry endeavors such as community solar projects, and we'll continue to explore new technologies and strategies that bolster reliability and our local grid.

Electric cooperatives like MJM deliver power to 42 million Americans. At the end of the day, our top priority is to meet our members' energy needs, and we must have reliable electricity available to do that.

If you're interested in learning more about policy impacts to power reliability, or to make your voice heard on this matter, visit [voicesforcooperativepower.com](https://www.voicesforcooperativepower.com).



ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative
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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.

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MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: 1971 Ford Lincoln Mark 4, good condition, low miles, \$6,499 OBO. Pedego Element Electric Bike. Great condition, 3 years old, \$699 OBO. Call or text 618-946-0962.

FOR SALE: 4 row Fasthitch cultivator, \$100. A 300gal fuel tank/stand, \$100. A 1 row Fox silage chopper with hay head, \$250. IH silage blower, \$500. Call 217-939-1757

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

FOR SALE: Eastlake Victorian antique furniture items. Settee/sofa, round marble top table, rectangle marble top parlor table, Willett chairs. Please call for prices. Litchfield 217-710-5614

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.**

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

GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR A SAFE HARVEST



BY MJM COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICE COORDINATOR, ERIC COOPER

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact MJM.

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.



- Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment. Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- Avoid using metal poles inside bins. Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL STORM PREPAREDNESS MONTH

by *SafeElectricity.org*

Severe storms are more common in the spring and summer, but they can occur any time of year. Be prepared for storms and know how to stay safe.

Assemble a kit of essentials, like water, battery-operated flashlights, and radios. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers, including the electric utility. Be prepared for the possibility of a prolonged outage due to power line and electric equipment damage.

If severe weather is on its way, pay attention to local weather reports and recommendations. A tornado or severe storm watch means conditions are favorable for those weather conditions forming. A warning means dangerous weather conditions are developing and imminent. Lightning can travel up to ten miles away from a storm, so seek shelter when you hear thunder.

Consider installing ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) or purchasing a portable GFCI. GFCIs detect dangerous electrical situations and cut off power before a person can be shocked. These dangerous electrical situations are likely to occur around water, so GFCIs should be installed in bathrooms, laundry rooms, kitchens, basements, outdoors and anywhere else water and electricity may meet.

If power goes out, switch off lights, large electronics and appliances to prevent overloading circuits and damaging appliances when power is restored. Leave one lamp or switch on as a signal for when your power returns.

Once the storms have passed and it is safe to go back outside, stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Assume any dangling wires you encounter are energized and dangerous. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away, and contact emergency personnel or electric utility. Also, when driving, be careful at intersections where traffic lights may be out. Stop at all railroad crossings and treat road intersections with traffic signals as a four-way stop before proceeding with caution.

Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off. Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your

electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances, or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords, or wires while you are wet or standing in water.

A permanent standby generator should be professionally installed and include a transfer switch to prevent electricity from leaving your generator and going into power lines where it can kill line workers.

To help you get through, have a storm kit prepared. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.

Include these items in your storm safety kit:

STORM SAFETY KIT

	Bottles of water	
	Nonperishable food	
	Portable phone charger	
	Flashlights	
	Batteries	
	Can opener	
	First-aid supplies	
	Hand sanitizer	
	Prescriptions	
	Pain reliever	
	Warm clothing	
	Blankets	
	Battery-operated radio	
	Toys, books and games	
	Important documents	
	Money	
	Baby supplies	
	Pet supplies	

Learn more: 



WINTER PREP: INSULATION CHECK-UP

Insulation in your home provides resistance to heat flow and lowers your heating and cooling costs. Properly insulating your home not only reduces heating and cooling costs, but also improves comfort. To maintain comfort, the heat lost in the winter must be replaced by your heating system and the heat gained in the summer must be removed by your cooling system. Properly insulating your home will decrease this heat flow by providing an effective resistance to the flow of heat.

Insulation is a crucial component, but it is only one part of an entire system. The thermal envelope system also includes siding, sheathing, vapor and wind barriers, drywall, plaster, and other materials that prevent heat loss through air leaks and keep wind from penetrating the thermal envelope. If any one of these components is deficient, the system is compromised, and the thermal insulating capabilities are reduced. Reducing the amount of air that leaks in and out of your home is a cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs, improve durability, increase comfort, and create a healthier indoor environment.

Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective air-sealing techniques that offer quick returns on investment, often one year or less. Caulk is generally used for cracks and openings between stationary house components such as around door and window frames, and weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and operable windows.

Homes that were built prior to 1970 have little or no insulation. They are prime targets for insulation. Newer homes have adequate levels of insulation as required by the municipal building codes. Here in Illinois, the minimum recommended standard for attic insulation is an R-49 (16-18in deep for blown-in style insulation). Often, energy-wise homeowners will upgrade to an R-60 for added savings and comfort.

MJM website resource page:
mjmec.coop/energy-saving-tips

Source: Energy.gov
<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/insulation>

MJM WELCOMES



BRIAN GUNNING

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Brian Gunning, of Carlinville, IL, joined MJM's team on July 29th. Brian has an MBA from American Intercontinental University Chicago and a BA in Accounting from Blackburn College. He served 4 years in active duty with the Army and has 20 years of experience in the accounting and finance field.

Brian lives in Carlinville with his wife Carrie and their 6 children. They also have 2 other children that are now adult age with places of their own. In Brian's free time, he enjoys weightlifting, family time, cheering his kids on at sporting events, and playing electric lead guitar.

We'd like to welcome Brian, and we think he will be a great addition to our team.



CONGRATULATIONS



JACK SCHWARTZ

STAKING TECHNICIAN

Jack has received a certification from Hi-Line Engineering for his completion of the Comprehensive Staking Technician Program. The program consisted of 3 phases, each phase required 4 days of training, for a total 12 days of training. After those trainings, there were a series of 15 tests on 12 different

Staking topics. These tests ranged from 30 minutes to a few hours to complete.

We'd like to congratulate Jack on his recent accomplishments within his first year here at MJM.

RELIABILITY: HOME GENERATOR PROGRAM

1. SPECIAL PRICING ON GENERAC GENERATORS

SIZE	SALE PRICE	
14kW	*\$4,706.28 (In Stock)	PRICE INCLUDES: GENERATOR, 200A TRANSFER SWITCH, MAINTENANCE KIT, PAD, & DELIVERY
18kW	*\$5,492.91 (In Stock)	
22kW	*\$5,957.71 (In Stock)	

*Discounted pricing subject to change and will be confirmed at time of purchase.

You can still order a generator through MJM at the discounted pricing even if you are not interested in participating in the Power+ Home Generator Incentive Program.

Contact our office at **217-707-6156** to order and fill out the purchase acknowledgement document via e-sign. Please allow 2-4 weeks for delivery on the standard stocked generators (14kW, 18kW, 22kW) and 3-6 weeks for special order sizes. MJM does not install or maintain the equipment. Member selects an installer and maintenance provider of their choice; please call for a list of preferred installers.

MJM will not recommend a specific size for your home. Sizing is heavily dependent on your large appliances and HVAC needs. Upon request, we can provide you with the historical peak hourly energy usage for your home that you can share with your installer/electrician to aid in sizing; this information can also be found on your SmartHub App. All warranties are provided through Generac.

2. "THE POWER SHIFT+" HOME GENERATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The MJM Board will be voting on the program at one of the next Board Meetings. More details to come.

This program's incentives are offered for being available to be remotely switched to generator by our power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Alliance, in the case of a peak energy event and during one test event per year.





Next Deadline:

October 7, 2024

Section 501(c)(3), 501(c), and 509(a)(1) non-for-profits organizations within the MJM service territory are encouraged to apply for an Operation Round Up (ORU) grant.

Please send all applications, additional forms, and paperwork to Operation Round Up, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL, 62626. Once the application and information is completed and submitted to MJM, the information will then be considered by the Grant Review Board for approval of funds.

<https://mjmec.coop/operation-round>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep you home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.