

# MJM

Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## along the lines

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www.mjmec.coop

# Fall in Love with Operation Round Up

How much is a penny worth to you? How often do you throw your pennies in a jar at home, stash them in your car's console tray, or simply leave them on the counter in the store? Here at the Cooperative, we've discovered the true value of pennies through the power of Operation Round Up. As you may know, this program would be funded by Members who agree to have their electric bills rounded up each month. On average, each participating Member could contribute fifty cents per month or six dollars a year. Multiply this by the number of Members participating in the program and instead of talking pennies, we're talking dollars...lots of them!

Adams Electric Cooperative (AEC), MJM's sister Cooperative in Quincy, had adopted this program in 2005 after Members voted in favor of it in 2004. Adams Electric calls it, Penny Power. In less than one year of adoption, the Penny Power program had awarded over \$21,000 in grant dollars to organizations all over their service territory!


Bill Stadler, Marketing and Member Service Manager at AEC, has a lot of great stories to tell. "There's story after story about local emergency respondents, veterans, underprivileged schools. It's extremely difficult to narrow it down," says Stadler. But he thought of his favorite experience with Penny Power. AEC donated to Two Rivers Regional Council in Quincy. The monies donated supported a 'Back to School Drive' for families who couldn't afford supplies for their children. One family had a boy who fell in love with a backpack he had found at Walmart. Since funds were low, he was heartbroken but had to leave the backpack behind. A few days later, his family attended the school supplies drive at Two Rivers Regional Council. Low and behold, there sat the backpack he had to leave behind at Walmart. Stadler admitted that the look on both the mother and child's face nearly brought him to tears.

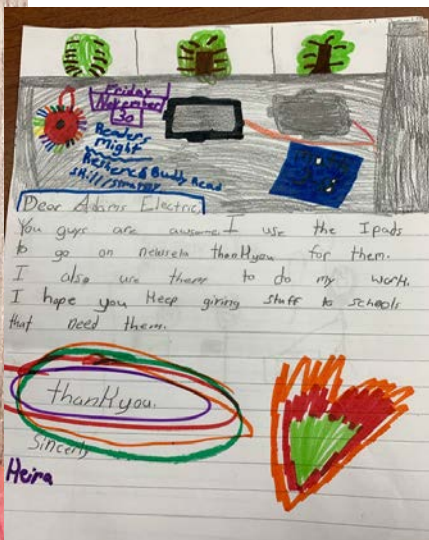
Thank you for funding the purchase of literacy materials for our classroom!

♥ Mrs. Flesner's Transitional Kindergarten Class

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Brad  
JACOB  
Mrs. Flesner  
A H B R E W

Stadler commented, "If there had been any doubt at all about the positive impact Penny Power would have on folks in our area, it was completely erased when making a check presentation to Members of the Quincy Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association last fall. A large group was on hand in the parking lot of County Market to accept the check, not knowing the amount. When it was revealed that the grant was for \$5,000, there were hugs, high fives, and even some tears. This group had been working tirelessly for months to raise enough money to purchase a new emergency response vehicle. The Penny Power donation helped them reach their goal. I wish every one of our members could experience the gratitude and genuine appreciation expressed toward the Cooperative that day. It's a feeling I won't soon forget."

This season fall in love with Operation Round Up and the opportunities it can create because of you, an MJM Member. On March 7th, 2020, you're invited to attend the 81st Annual Meeting at the Carlinville High School. Vote YES to adopting the Operation Round Up program to impact the community in a powerful way for just pennies each month. 





**MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Pay by Phone 1-855-313-6314

Office Hours

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



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**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 1-800-648-4729. Collect calls will be accepted to report outages. 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.

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**Member Trading Post**

**FOR SALE:** 300 gallon fuel tank with stand \$300 and a 1000 gallon LP tank \$1250. Please call 217-361-5983.

**FOR SALE:** 1,700 gallon white poly water tank with shut-off. Asking for \$400. Please call or text 217-473-6283.

**FOR SALE:** 16, 17 & 18" Chevy 1/2 ton tires and wheels. Call 618-303-7159.

**FOR SALE:** Fifteen acres, timber property with creek. All utility access. Great for hunting, RV

homesite or investment. Litchfield Unit 12 school district. Access off Illinois Route 16. Sorry, no contract for deed or hunting leases. Selling by original owner. \$94,000. Please call 217-324-3869.

**FOR SALE:** 2004 F-150 4x4 super cab. Silver. Very good condition. Very good tires. 108,000 miles. \$8950. Please call 217-532-3416.

**FOR SALE:** 1984 Chevrolet Sun-flyer motorhome. Sleeps 6-7. 75,952 miles. Asking \$4,000 OBO. Call 618-466-0909



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# WATERS TAKES ON THE LINEMAN'S SAFETY RODEO



Eleven teams of linemen from ten Electric Cooperatives and one municipal electric company participated in the 22nd annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) on Friday, Sept. 27. The rodeo gives linemen the opportunity to showcase their skills in a friendly competition with other line-workers across the state, as a team or individually.

Third year apprentice lineman, Matt Waters, represented MJM Electric Cooperative at the event, held on the Chuck West Lineman Training Grounds at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield. He placed third in the Individual Apprentice Hurt Man Rescue.

Each year, teams of linemen, or individuals from Illinois Electric Co-ops and municipal utilities participate in competitive events using skills that focus on agility, speed and accuracy. While these skills are part of the judging criteria, above all, the linemen are judged on safe work practices.

Line personnel competed in four team events, three individual events and a head-to-head climbing challenge. Team and individual events included hurt man rescue, egg climb (linemen climb a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouth) and an H-structure obstacle course. Additionally, teams competed in a crossarm change. At the end of the day, individuals competed in a head-to-head climbing challenge and were seeded in a bracket based on their scores from the egg climb.

Scores for each event use a 100-point scale and 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.

Congratulations to MJM's Matt Waters for his individual effort! 🎉



# WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.

## PRIMARY WIRES

Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

## SURGE ARRESTORS

These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

## NEUTRAL WIRE

The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

## SECONDARY SERVICE DROP

Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire that's connected to the ground wire on the pole.

## GROUND WIRE

The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

## INSULATORS

Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

## TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES

These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.



**NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINeworkERS.**

*Original illustration by Erin Binkley*





# Act Now!




*Moratorium Take Over Now - December 31st!*

Many of you had homes and farms passed down to you by parents, grandparents, or maybe even great-grandparents. There is nothing more unique than living on Grandma and Grandpa's farm that you may have inherited many years ago but your MJM Electric bill may still be in your relative's name which is against MJM's Bylaws.

MJM realizes that some families may have kept the names unchanged because new Members are required to pay a deposit based on a utility credit check. In order to get our records up-to-date and comply with MJM Bylaws, we are offering a moratorium for consumers to update Membership information and transfer accounts into the correct Membership name. To clarify, this will move the existing deposit and account responsibility from a deceased relative's name to the current responsible party. This will not work if your parents, grandparents, etc. are still living and/or have an MJM account of their own. Furthermore, the account must be in good standing with excellent credit and a \$50 minimum deposit must be on file to complete the moratorium. Also, all new Memberships will be charged a one-time, non-refundable Membership Fee of \$5. This offer is only available until December 31, 2019, so act fast!

Keeping account names updated benefits both you and MJM. We are unable to discuss account information with people whose names are not on the account, so taking advantage of this moratorium will allow us to provide you with the best possible member service when needed. It will also ensure that future capital credits are rightly allocated to the person paying the bill, not the previous Member(s).

It is equally critical to keep Member contact information updated such as e-mails, phone numbers, mailing addresses and other information changes. To request a name change form or to update your contact information, please contact the MJM office at 217-707-6156 or email us at [info@mjmec.coop](mailto:info@mjmec.coop). 

## Training for the Members

On October 8th, at MJM's monthly safety meeting, Jesse Killam was presented with his Second Year Distribution certificate of completion. Killam has successfully completed 32 hours of training and demonstrated skills as required in the one-week session of EDL 132-01 Second Year Distribution School offered at Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Illinois, during the week of September 30 – October 4, 2019.

Matt Waters previously earned his Transformer School certificate of completion and was presented his certificate as well. Waters successfully completed 14.5 hours of training and demonstrated skills as required in the three-day session of Transformer School offered at Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, during the week of July 9-11, 2019.

MJM is proud to have such talented and educated men and women serving their Members every day. 



*Joe Heyen, Director of Engineering and Operations, presents the certificates to Jesse Killam (left) and Matt Waters (right).*





# Cooking Up Energy Efficiency

Winter months mean colder weather, which means many of us are spending more time indoors at home. It often means we are getting more use out of our kitchen appliances as well.

With a little planning and some handy tips from the Energy Education Council, you can select the best ways for you to make your cooking more energy efficient:

- Keep burner pans clean. When food spills and burns on a burner pan, it becomes blackened. As a result, it does not reflect heat as well and reduces its heating efficiency.
- Use the pan that matches the size of the burner for greater efficiency.
- Use lids when bringing contents of your pan to boil. It will heat faster.
- Resist the temptation to peek in the oven. The heated air in the oven is an important part of the cooking process. Each time that warm air escapes, the temperature decreases, and your oven uses more energy to raise the temperature back up.
- Make use of residual heat. You can turn the heat off just a few minutes early when cooking on the stovetop or in the oven by letting the residual heat finish the cooking process.
- Microwave when it is practical and convenient to do so. Microwaves cook more quickly and use less energy than stove tops or ovens. To make sure your microwave is working efficiently, be sure to keep it clean. Spills, drips, and splatters absorb heat energy just as much as the food you intend to heat!
- For small snacks, use a toaster oven instead of your larger kitchen oven. A smaller space to heat results in more energy saved.
- Cooking with steam is also an efficient option.
- Don't forget to turn off your range's exhaust fan after you have finished cooking.
- As always, when it comes time to shop for new appliances look for more energy efficient models that will provide savings in lower energy use. 🌟



# Is it Spring Yet?

One year ago, MJM broke ground for the new headquarters. Time seemed to stand still as this past spring brought above average rainfall and flooding to our area. Now, here we are anticipating spring of 2020 as our time to move out from the old and into the new. And we cannot wait!

MJM's current headquarters, located at 264 N. East Street in Carlinville, has simply become too small to serve our Members' and employees' needs to the best of our abilities. For instance, on October 8th, linemen attended their monthly safety meeting, which was held out in a section of the warehouse where the smaller trucks are also kept (pictured bottom left). This is the same area where all employee meetings are held. During these times, it is a recurring process to tear down and set up tables and chairs for the employees. It is a burdensome task to try to get technology to work for use at the meetings and it takes man hours to clear the trucks, trailers, material and debris to make room for the meetings which is non-productive time. It's simple inefficiency.

You can believe the temperature in the warehouse is very uncomfortable during the hot days of summer and cold days of winter! In order to hear the speaker(s), we must turn off the ice machine, fans or anything else that may cause noise. Dare you open the garage doors; you are distracted by the noise of vehicles driving on the street and in our parking lot. It's hard to stay focused with these types of distractions.

Let's just say it's extra challenging to do business in an efficient and professional manner. The best way to solve many of our hindrances, though, is right around the corner! For example, the new headquarters is designed to improve efficiency and safety for the linemen while on site and provide their own work area where they can come and do their paperwork and hold department meetings with access to use up-to-date technology. For small scale office meetings, there is an adequately sized conference room set up with technology capabilities for teleconferencing and WebEx' trainings.

A bonus for the new headquarters is that it includes a multi-purpose room that will provide space large enough to hold meetings for all employees at one setting. This will eliminate the need to continually tear down and set up meeting spaces. Technology will be available in this area as well.

We are excited for the new headquarters for countless reasons. Sharing the multi-purpose room as a community room is one of those. The community room (pictured lower right) is large enough to hold up to 96 people and offers an attached kitchen. In addition, there are dedicated restrooms for users of the community room. "One of the 7 cooperative principals, concern for community, was a decisive factor in adding this feature to the building," said CEO Laura Cutler. "We look forward to serving our MJM community in a new way."

This new facility will serve MJM Members well into the future and will be one that MJM Members, employees and the community can be proud of. Count down is on for spring of 2020! 🎉



One of the seven Cooperative principals, **concern for community**, was a decisive factor in adding this feature to the building.

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## Annual Review of Cost-based Rates



In 2017, MJM spent a great deal of time educating Members on the new cost-based rates that went into effect January 1, 2018. The implementation of the cost-based rates would be completed over a period of time using a step approach. The change was necessary to help alleviate the dependence of kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales due to rising energy efficiency and conservation efforts, the growing popularity of distributed generation and renewables, and weather.

The third-party engineer, who designed the rates from the 2017 cost-of-service study, estimated that the current 35 distributed generation (DG) Members (2 wind & 33 solar accounts) were a loss of revenue to the Coop of approximately \$33,000. It was predicted that the number of DG would double in 2018 to 70, with the expected loss of \$66,000 in revenue; and an increase in

2019 to 105 DG Members with an expected loss of \$99,000 in revenue. The engineer's prediction was spot on with his estimate as there are currently 106 DG Members. Meanwhile, applications continue to stream in.

Weather fluctuation plays a key role in kWh sales, too. MJM experienced the worst June since 2014 in kWh sales due to the mild weather; yet July temperatures picked back up and kWh sales were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest since 2014. Because the outcome of kWh sales is unpredictable, it is important that cost-based rates continue to be truer to the actual cost it takes to run the Cooperative.

As a review, the *service delivery charge* on your bill is the only revenue that MJM is guaranteed to cover fixed costs. The remainder of MJM's revenue is based on kWh sales. These stranded costs are collected through the *distribution energy charge*. As MJM's 2020 budget preparation begins, Management will provide the Board with the necessary financial information to decide if there is a need for any changes to MJM's portion of the rates.

The *power supplier charge* is the wholesale power that comes from Wabash Valley Power Alliance (WVPA) and is a pass-through to the Member. The wholesale power bill is becoming more dominated by demand charges due to the continual rising of transmission costs, however, the bright side is that energy prices have dropped due to cheaper power costs. Even though MJM Members did see a slight decrease to their power supplier charge in 2019, WVPA has predicted that there will be an increase in 2020.

Members will be notified of the changes to the 2020 rates once those have been received, reviewed by the Board and established. As in the past, a rate calculator will be provided on the Cooperative's website for Members to see how a change might affect them. 