

# along the lines

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www.mjmec.coop

# TRICK-OR-TREAT! SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2020 NOW READY

Laura Cutler, President/CEO, has announced that MJM and the Illinois Electric Cooperatives will award academic scholarships to high school seniors in 2020. The MJM Scholarship Program and the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program are designed to financially assist deserving students in the "Electric Cooperative family."

What is the MJM Scholarship Program?

MJM will award two \$1,000 scholarships to sons and daughters of MJM Members. The applicant must be a high school senior who is planning to enroll in a full-time

(at least 12 hours) undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, community college, or vocational/technical school in the United States.

What is the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarship Program?

Twelve scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded in 2020 through the IEC Memorial Scholarship Program

Out of these awards, six scholarships are awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois Electric Cooperative Member receiving service from the Cooperative.

Four scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two- year Illinois community

college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois Electric Cooperative Members, employees or directors.

One scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois Electric Cooperative employee or director.

One 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.

"We hope to assist Electric Cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric

leaders with these scholarships," says Cutler. "MJM and the other Illinois Electric Cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker's scholarship. It will benefit not only Electric Cooperative youth but also those fine men and women who have served their country through their military service and may now be wanting to become a trained lineworker."

For more information regarding the scholarships, visit https://www.mjmec.coop/scholarships.

Call Brooke Gross at 217-707-6028. Information will also be shared with area high school guidance counselors.





# MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

264 N. East St., Carlinville, IL 62626

Office **1-800-648-4729**Pay by Phone **1-855-313-6314** 

Office Hours

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



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**Brooke Gross.....** Communications and Member Services Coordinator

#### 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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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions and/or civil sanctions.

/s/ Brooke Gross, Editor





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 may run for the Board of Directors? Directors are your friends and neighbors and the decisions they make for your Cooperative effects their electric service the same as yours. This year, District 4 –Robert Lehmann, District 5 – Louis Johnson and District 7 – James Niemann are up for re-election held at our annual meeting Saturday, March 7, 2020 at Carlinville High School.

To know which Director represents you, you must know what district you fall in. To find your district and more 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. For participation details contact us at 217-707-6156 or email us at info@mjmec.coop by Wednesday, November 20, 2019.

# **Balloons Vs. Powerlines**



Colorful metallic balloons can brighten any celebration, but using them improperly causes inconveniences and safety hazards. With the proper precautions, metallic balloons can be used without problems.

Metallic balloons have a coating that conducts electricity. If the balloons are released and come in contact with overhead electric lines, they can cause serious damage—including power outages and fires.

The following tips will help you use Mylar balloons safely:

- Always keep the balloons weighted so they do not accidently fly away.
- Never release a metallic balloon. When you are done with the balloon, deflate it and throw it away.
- Do not tie metallic balloons to children with metallic ribbon. If the balloon comes in contact with electricity the child could receive a fatal shock.
- If a balloon does get in a power line, do not attempt to retrieve it yourself. Contact your power company and emergency services.

On Sunday, September 1st, Members in Palmyra experienced an outage. The outage was caused by someone's birthday balloons that had been let go. These exact balloons that caused the outage are pictured to the right. Although these balloons look great, make sure to properly dispose of them. Releasing balloons is also terrible for the environment.



# WHEN YOU VOTE, THINK CO-OPS VOTE

Our Co-op's number one priority is providing our Members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. But doing this job requires a lot more than stringing and maintaining power lines throughout our service territory. It requires political engagement. That may seem far removed from our core mission, but it's absolutely essential to serving you, our Members.

That's why we're participating in a national program of America's Electric Cooperatives called Co-ops Vote.

Co-ops Vote encourages all Co-op Members to participate in national, state and local elections while educating political candidates and elected officials about the important role played by electric cooperatives in their communities.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the service organization representing the nation's Electric Co-ops, launched

Co-ops Vote in 2016. Co-ops Vote started as a national non-partisan get-out-the-vote initiative that helped drive rural voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election.

Through this program, Electric Co-ops realized they had a unique advantage: As Co-ops, the civic virtue of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community—one of the seven cooperative principles—through participation in our democracy.

Co-ops have another advantage. Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the Electric Cooperative family has put into political

engagement. When we all get involved, we can make things happen politically and in our local communities.

Our participation in Co-ops Vote helps to ensure that rural issues remain part of the national discussion—and are supported by our elected officials. But Co-ops Vote isn't just for Co-ops. It's for Co-op Members just like you.

You can participate by registering to vote and committing to cast your ballot on November 5th. Visit www.vote.coop to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Election Day!



# Co-ops Risk Losing Their Tax-Exempt Status

Electric Cooperatives are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, community-focused organizations that provide safe, reliable, affordable power to their Consumer Members. Recent changes to the tax code by Congress cut right to the heart of who we are as not-for-profit tax-exempt Co-ops.

These changes now classify government grants as non-member revenue, which means if your Coop receives FEMA disaster relief aid (events suffering significant damage to its poles and wires, by any hurricane, ice storm, tornado, wildfire or flood), energy efficiency grants, economic development support, or rural broadband grants, non-member revenue will increase and their tax-exempt status will be at risk.

The crisis is an unintended consequence of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that Congress passed in 2017. The law contains a provision that counts federal, state and local grants to Co-ops as non-member income. Before that, grants had been defined as capital.

Co-ops must receive at least 85% of their income from Members to remain tax-exempt under federal law. If grants are counted as income, some Co-ops could have difficulty maintaining their not-for-profit status.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers from rural areas introduced the RURAL Act in April to allow Co-ops to take grants without jeopardizing their tax status, but the bill has not yet been scheduled for a vote in the House or Senate.

NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) is leading a Co-op advocacy effort to pass the bipartisan RURAL Act, which will restore power after a storm, invest in broadband, apply for energy efficiency grants or be able to help with economic development projects. Instead, Co-ops will have to spend more of their Members' money paying taxes.

As Congress returns from recess, they have less than two months of legislative days left to act, so it is vital for all of us in the Co-op family to push Congress to pass this legislation. We encourage you to contact your Members of Congress and urge them to support the RURAL Act. If we all do that, if we all speak up, if we all stand up – then we can get this fixed!

To learn more about this issue visit action.coop/ruralact.



# MJM and the Farm Progress Show

Those attending the Farm Progress Show in Decatur could not have asked for better weather. August 27 - 29<sup>th</sup> was sunny and a high of 75 degrees. If you attended this year's Farm Progress Show, it's hard to visit every single booth. However, MJM had a booth that came to mind when thinking about their favorite booth there. That favorite booth was in Lot 217 on Second Street between Central Progress and East Progress Avenue. That booth was the Illinois Touchstone Energy Cooperative's® booth.

On August 28th, Communication and Member Services Coordinator Brooke Gross represented MJM Electric along with several other Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Throughout the day, Gross discussed electric safety, energy efficiency, the Cooperative difference and more. Those visiting the booth received give-a-ways such as color changing cups, frisbees, tote bags, toy hard hats and insulated lunch boxes.

Corn Belt Energy Corporation sponsored a Live Line Safety Demonstration. During the demo, a safety expert talked about electricity and how to stay safe around electrical equipment. He showed how contact can cause damage if the proper precautions are not taken. There were a lot

of sparks and a few flames! Two linemen from Norris Electric Cooperative performed pole climbing demonstrations every other hour of the day to give a glimpse of what linemen must do every day.

Although we think we are being safe around electricity, the Live Line Safety Demonstration showed how the simple mistakes can be the most dangerous. MJM Electric is proud to help sponsor the Illinois Touchstone Energy Cooperative's® booth every other year to communicate the safety message.





## Do You Have the Electric Heat Discount?

If you have recently added electric heating as the primary heating system for your home, you may be eligible for a discounted electric rate.

The electric heat discount is applied during November through March at \$.03620 per kilowatt-hour (kwh) for energy used in the 2,500-kwh block between 1,000 kwh and 3,500 kwh for a maximum discount of \$90.50 per month.

The discount will be approved after an inspection by a MJM Electric representative to verify that an electric heating system has been installed and is the primary source of heat for the home.

You are still eligible for the discount if you have gas appliances or a gas back-up heating system. Your main source of heat must be electric in order to receive the discount.

To schedule an inspection appointment, call Communication and Member Service Coordinator Brooke Gross at 217-707-6028.



You may have energy vampires in your home stealing money from you right now. Some electronics draw power from the outlet and money from your wallet, even when they are turned off. They go into standby mode, which uses electricity for features like displays and remote controls.

The Energy Education Council has advice to help you put a stop to energy vampires in your home:

- When possible, unplug electronics that you are not using.
- If you have a room that you do not use regularly, plug electronics into a power strip, and turn the power strip off when items are not in use.
- Purchase smart power strips for your computers and televisions. These devices sense when the computer or television is sleeping or off. The smart strip cuts off power to related electronics, such as DVD players, video game consoles, and printers.
- Buy low-standby products. Most Energy Star endorsed products draw smaller than average amounts of electricity when turned off.



For more information on keeping your home energy efficient, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org. 🥸



# **5 Every Day Steps Towards Online Safety**

Cyber security is present in every aspect of our lives, whether it be at home, work, school, or on the go. Regardless of one's technical ability or background, there are simple steps everyone can take to stay safe online.

Protect yourself online and help to make the Internet safer and more secure by following these simple tips from the Stop. Think. Connect. <sup>TM</sup> Campaign:

#### 1. Enable stronger authentication.

Always enable stronger authentication for an extra layer of security beyond the password that is available on most major email, social media and financial accounts. Stronger authentication (e.g., multifactor authentication that can use a one-time code texted to a mobile device) helps verify that a user has authorized access to an online account. For more information about authentication, visit the new Lock Down Your Login Campaign at www.lockdownyourlogin.com.

## 2. Make your passwords long & strong.

Use complex passwords with a combination of numbers, symbols, and letters. Use unique passwords for different accounts. Change your passwords regularly, especially if you believe they have been compromised.

#### 3. Keep a clean machine.

Update the security software, operating system, and web browser on all of your Internet-connected devices. Keeping your security software up to date will prevent attackers from taking advantage of known vulnerabilities.

# 4. When in doubt, throw it out.

Links in email and online posts are often the way cyber criminals compromise your computer. If it looks suspicious (even if you know the source), delete it.

#### 5. Share with care.

Limit the amount of personal information you share online and use privacy settings to avoid sharing information widely.

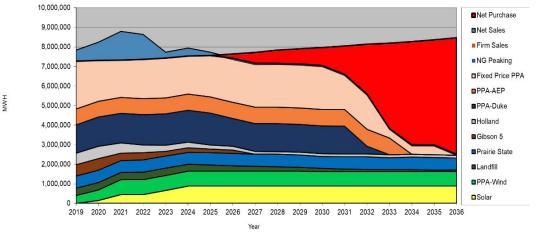
# Member Advocate Committee Meets WVPA

MJM Electric hosted a Member Advocate Committee (MAC) meeting on Thursday, September 12th, at the Blackburn College campus. Presentations were given by two guest speakers from MJM's power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Alliance (WVPA): Kathy Joyce, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, and Lee Wilmes, Executive Vice President of Risk and Resource Portfolio. Joyce began the discussion by giving a background on Wabash Valley Power Alliance.

WVPA is a not-for-profit generation and transmission electric Cooperative serving an alliance of 23 locally-owned distribution Co-ops in Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. Out of the 23 Members, three Members are in Illinois. Those Co-ops are Enerstar out of Paris, Corn Belt Energy out of Bloomington and MJM.

WVPA services 318,698 meters all together. MJM currently has 9,377 meters and makes up for 1.76% of WVPA's load. Through WVPA, MJM Members can obtain energy rebates through their POWERMOVES Program. WVPA also helps with economic support within the MJM territory. WVPA offers MJM many ancillary services such as HR, operations, engineering, technical, cyber security and more.

Wilmes described himself as the "power guy". His job is to conduct studies, predict how much of a demand for electricity Members need and where that electricity will come from. He explained the wholesale power market is in a transition and requires several different energy resources. The mix of electricity generation resources is called their Energy Supply Portfolio. This specific graph gives a representation of how much energy WVPA has purchased for future energy usage until 2036. The red in the graph is energy that is yet to be purchased. The purpose of the energy portfolio is designed to reduce risk and provide stable rates to its Member Co-ops. The portfolio is moving away from coal to natural gas and carbon free and well positioned for Illinois renewable mandates.



WVPA supports renewable energy by owning landfill gas and solar generation and purchasing the output from wind farms and biogas generators. WVPA sells, separately, the environmental attributes associated with this generation to third parties. Therefore, WVPA does not claim the generation as renewable within its own power portfolio. Below you will see a graph that shows a comparison chart of 2018 fuel mix and 2019 fuel mix.



Kathy Joyce

# POWER SUPPLY PORTFOLIO COAL | BIOGAS | LANDFILL GAS | NUCLEAR | NATURAL GAS | SOLAR | WIND | HYDRO 2018 FUEL 41% COAL 36% FIXED PRICE CONTRACTS\* 7% NUCLEAR 9% NATURAL GAS 6% ALTERNATIVE\*\* 1% ENERGY EFFICIENCY 18 ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Lee Wilmes

# Here's to Reading

# What Operation Round UP Could Help Fund

Recently, MJM has been promoting a program called Operation Round Up®. Operation Round Up® rounds your monthly electric bill(s) to the nearest whole dollar. For example, if your electric bill for one month is \$85.75, the bill would be rounded up to \$86.00 and the extra \$0.25 would be deposited in the Operation Round Up® fund. The donation averages \$6.00 per year per account.

By now, you understand how funds are collected but do you know who/what those funds could support? The fund is used to benefit people and organizations for community service projects, economic development, education and youth programs, environmental projects, and emergency assistance. One example is *Here's to Reading* based out of Jerseyville.

David and Darla Cavins have created a nonprofit called *Here's to Reading* by establishing small, rural libraries. The little libraries are accessible and open to everyone. David and Darla have successfully placed 10 x 16 cottage sheds in Dow and Otterville. They are planning to place library cottage sheds in Dehli, Grafton and Kane. The reason for *Here's to Reading* is to help expand the reach and skillset of rural readers through access to books and reading materials.

Darla says, "Our nonprofit, *Here's to Reading*, will fund these libraries for ten years. After ten years, the libraries will be given to the rural areas. Except for electricity, there is no cost to any organization or community that wants to be involved."

These libraries are free for all age groups and with all genres of reading available. The books come from donations by friends of the library, book stores, churches and personal donations of good clean books.

"We believe books provide a gateway to other worlds and opportunities that may seem inaccessible to rural children and communities. Books are an integral part of connecting with the world at large and interacting with others in it. We want to build a bridge between our rural communities and everything the world has to offer, regardless of location, situation or circumstances," says Darla.

Here's to Reading encourages students to read a variety of books by offering the "Read a Book Program". This program is designed to help children and teenagers maintain reading skills learned through the school year. Each participant is to read five books during a five-week period. Those books must come from a Here's to Reading library. Once the five-week program is completed, a certificate from Subway, Dairy Queen, Taco Bell, Imo's Pizza or McDonald's is awarded. These rural libraries also offer internet on Chromebooks to students who are needing to complete assignments. For more information, see their website at herestoreading.com.

During our Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 7, 2020, Members will have the opportunity to vote 'yes' to adopt Operation Round Up®. This program can help fund *Here's to Reading*. If you don't wish to participate in Operation Round Up®, you will receive ample time to opt out before the program begins.

Vote YES on March 7, 2020.





# Convenience with Members in Mind

The new facility will offer an improved service lobby for our Members. Adequately sized, the lobby is suited to better assist Members visiting inside the facility. It now includes adequate seating for those waiting to meet with MJM staff, a restroom for Members and visitors and two payment windows whereas, one is designed to meet ADA compliance requirements. Kelly Bouillon, our Member Services Representative (25 years of service), will remain taking payments and be your first point of contact when you visit MJM. Brenda Qualls, Billing Administrator (12 years of service), Brooke Gross, Communications and Member Services Coordinator (2019) and Jennifer Peterson, Executive Administrator (8 years) will also be assisting with Member service in the office and when you call the office.

One of the new facility improvements that has been highly anticipated includes a convenient drive-thru window. The drive-thru includes an awning which will help protect you from inclement weather and save you time while making payment for your electric service.

In addition, if you do not require a payment receipt or stop by after normal business hours, you will still have the option to submit your payment in a secure drop box located under the drive-thru awning and built right into the building. This drop off option will be available 24/7 for your convenience.

The variety of payment options that MJM offers is another way the Cooperative demonstrates having the



Member's best interest in mind. In addition to making a payment inside our lobby or the drop box, payments may also be submitted by calling IVR's secure payment line (1-855-313-6314), on our website (www.mjmec.coop), through the SmartHub app or by mailing it to MJM's office (PO Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626). For those Members that are interested, we also offer an auto pay option. By logging in to our website or the app, you can set up recurring monthly payments which will continuously process automatically each month on the due date using a credit/debit card or checking account for payment. Autopay is designed to save the Member time, avoid snail mail delays, late fees and postage expenses.



Over the last few months, the Cooperative has made a change to enhance payment security. MJM is no longer accepting credit and debit card transactions when calling the regular office phone number (217-707-6156). If you call to make a payment, we will help get you to the right place to successfully make your electronic payment.

We encourage Members to use the method of electronic check payments as this option is less expensive to the Cooperative as compared to fees related to credit and debit card transactions. Checking account payments may be processed as a one-time payment or recurring monthly auto payments.

We look forward to serving our Cooperative Members for years to come!



By Jennifer Peterson, Executive Administrator

11 October 2019

# Member Trading Post

**FOR SALE: FOR:** Jealousie windows  $2-25 \times 58$  &  $1-33 \times 58$ . Comes with extra glass replacements. Asking for \$150. Please contact 618-635-2814.

FOR SALE: Maytag Estate washer, white color, electric, good condition \$75; Whirlpool dryer, white color, electric, good condition, \$75; the whole set \$125. A set (2) of aluminum wheels with snow tires for 2009 Toyota Camry, good condition \$150. A set (2) of steel rims with used radial snow tires for 2005-2015 Toyota regular cab truck for \$100. Craftsman 12-1/2 HP 38" cut riding mower for \$150. Four feet snow blade for Sears lawn mower for \$50. Please call 618-467-0079. Elsah area.

**FOR SALE:** Tom Sawyer ski boat 16.5 deep-V, good condition \$3700. Honda Magna 80's model 28k miles, well maintained \$3000. 5.5 HP Evinrude Fishman outboard boat motor with tank \$400. Please call 618-467-0079.

FOR SALE: 300 gallon fuel tank with stand \$300 and a 1000 gallon LP tank \$12. Please call 217-361-5983.

FOR SALE: Two portable cattle self-feeders with creep gates. \$2,500 each. Small calf creep feeders \$350. Big bale rings. Some are new, some aren't. Priced accordingly. Round bale trailer. \$750. Upright plastic 1,350 gallon water tank with valve. \$400. N.H. 855 round baler with alarm, auto wrap and auto oiler. Great for corn stover. \$6,500. All are priced as is O.B.O. Call 217-854-2570. Leave a message.

**FOR SALE:** 2019 Jeep Cherokee Latitude. Diamond black color with black interior. 4,400 miles. Asking \$25,000. Must sell quickly. 618-585-3919.

FOR SALE: St. Louis Blues Starter jersey. Size man's medium. Great condition, \$20. Call 618-585-4824.

