

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.menard.com

Budget for safety and comfort

A few items to consider

If you plan a 2017 budget, we'd like to suggest a couple of ideas. Choose one from each category to make your home safer and more comfortable next year. And don't forget we offer a Budget Billing payment option, where you can pay the same amount 11 months of the year – contact the office for details.



Safety

- Add GFCI outlets to the bathroom, kitchen, garage and or outdoor outlets. They'll protect your family against shock.
- Can't afford to install them outdoors? Purchase GFCI protected extension cords to use with outdoor items such as pool pumps and power tools.
- Add AFCI outlets to the bedroom outlets. They protect against the risk of electrical fires.
- Have an older home? Have the electrical system checked by an electrician – you may have more appliances and electronics than your home was wired to accommodate.

Comfort

- Have an energy audit conducted to see your home's air leakage and insulation needs. A blower door test and infrared camera audit will tell you what improvements will give you the best payback.
- Invest in weather stripping, caulk and expandable foam to seal your home's air leaks.
- Install additional insulation in the attic, walls or crawl space (if all air leaks are sealed first)
- Carefully consider the cost differences versus the energy usage on any new appliances – budgeting a little extra money up front may save you over the lifetime of the product.



Think before you change the thermostat

Everyone is comfortable in their home at a particular temperature. When jack frost appears and a chill comes around that comfort level can seem to change. Don't let increasing the thermostat be your first move – try these other ways to warm up first.

- Drafts can make the room colder and your heating system work harder. Sealing air leaks will yield greater comfort and energy savings too.
- Warm air rises. Try running your ceiling fans on low and reverse to bring warm air down.
- Double check your fireplace damper – leaving it open is an easy mistake that lets in a lot of cold air.
- Closing heavy drapes at night to help insulate windows against the cold, and opening them during the day to let in the sun can help a little.
- Consider if installing a programmable thermostat would allow you to lower the temperature when you are away and asleep enough to offset increasing it when you are home.

Rate increase

The Board of Directors approved a small rate increase for 2017 and 2018 to the facility charge and security lights. The new rate will take effect on your March 7 bills. The inflationary increase on an average residential member is about 1.5%. See table below for increases.

Rate Class	Rate Code	2017	2018
Residential	10, 10S, 11, 11S, 13, 17, 17S, 18, 18S, 19, 19S	\$2.50	\$2.50
Small Commercial	20 and 21	\$5.50	\$5.50
Large Power	30 and 31	\$8.00	\$8.00
Irrigations	50 and 52	\$4.50	\$4.50
Commercial/ No Demand	60, 61 and 62	\$3.00	\$3.00
Security Light		\$1.00	\$0.50



Mark that new calendar now to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday evening, June 15, 2017.

The cooperative difference – it matters!

In this series we'll explore all the reasons we are proud to be a cooperative

Cooperative Guiding Principle #6:

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Our founding fathers knew that by working together, cooperatives could do great things. We share resources, information, and in some cases, even manpower. Some examples are co-ops joining together to promote legislative issues, perform safety audits, create joint purchasing alliances, perform right-of-way clearance (tree trimming), and even internationally to provide power in countries such as Bolivia and Ethiopia.

The most noticeable way this principle is enforced is when one co-op's system receives

significant storm damage. Electric co-ops have long relied on one another to get power restored to members faster after a major weather event. Sometimes help comes from a few counties away. Other times it comes from across a few states. We've been on both the giving and receiving sides of such aid.

We hope you can see why Cooperation Among Cooperatives is a reason you can be proud to be part of an electric cooperative. This is just one of the ways the cooperative model allows us to provide you with the best service possible.

CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION

Power outage safety tips

Check your meter for a display of numbers. If you see them, the problem is on your side and you should check your breakers. If you don't see numbers, the problem could be on our side and you should give us a call.

You might want to turn off your heating and cooling system, appliances and electronics so that you don't overload your system when the power comes back on. Just leave a few lights on to alert you when power is restored.

If your neighbors power is restored and yours is still out, you might want to give us another call – you could have an individual outage due to an additional issue.

Use a generator carefully – they can backfeed power onto lines if not installed correctly. See our website for more detailed generator safety tips.

Be prepared for winter outages by keeping an emergency kit well stocked with items you might need.



EFFICIENCY

Thermostats

are best set at 68° or ▼

Department of Energy

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

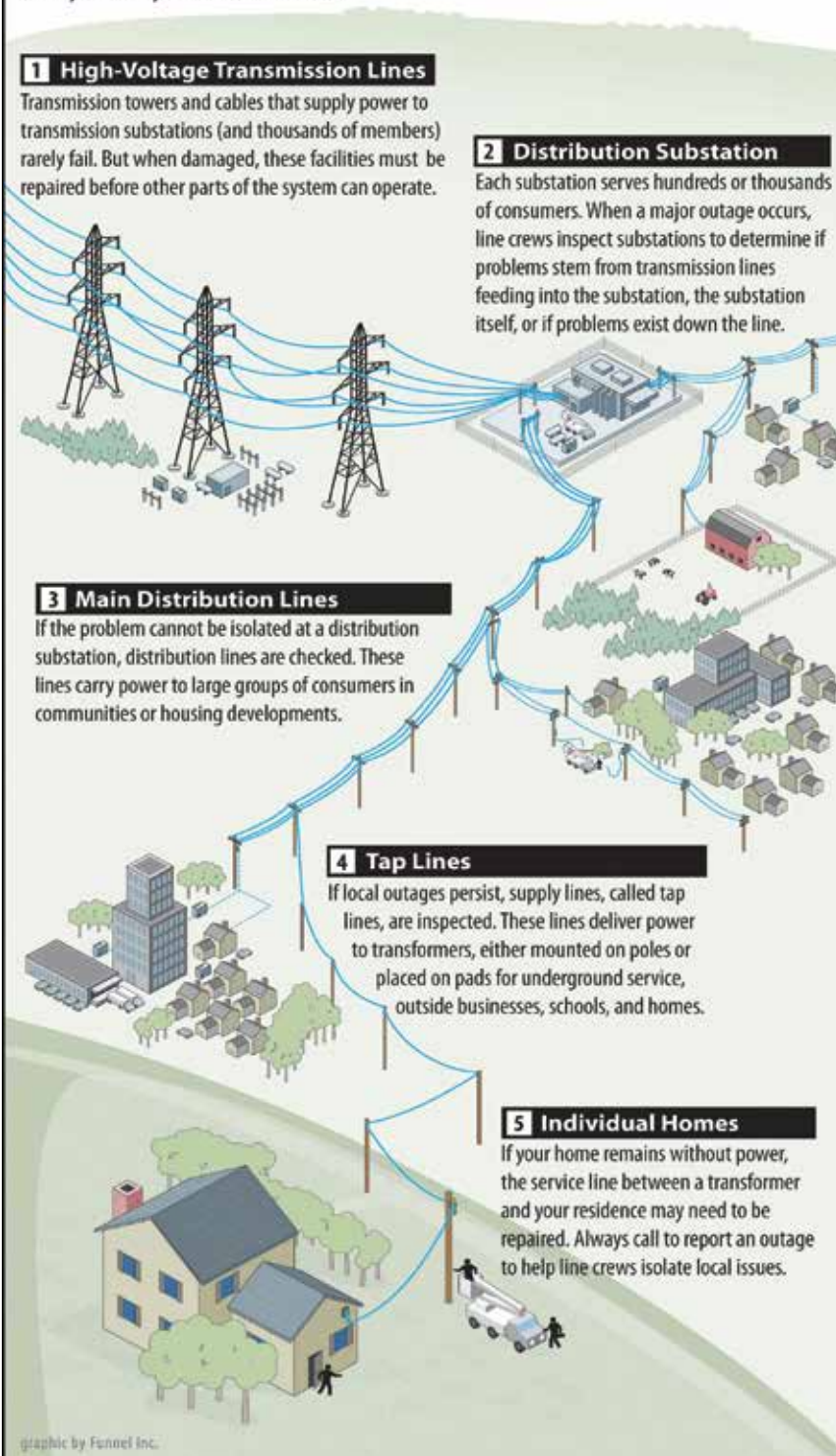
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

Board Highlights

For full minutes visit www.menard.com or contact the office.

October 27, 2016

- Present were Directors Jay Frye, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Dennis Ryan, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate & Steven Worner; Manager Eric Hobbie & Attorney Charles Smith.
- Frye: Reviewed consensus agenda.
- Co-op Staff: Presented budgets for general office, member services, insurance, engineering, operations, accounting, manager and board.
- Hobbie: Discussed balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, 42,500 feet of underground installed, scoreboard donation for PORTA High School, Arch Coal Bankruptcy, Christmas party plans, capital credit estate refunds report.
- Hobbie: Gave financial report for month of September. Year to date margins were \$2,508,251 compared to \$1,912,791 last year. End of Sept. equity was 39.33%. Served 10,866 member accounts. Net utility plant was \$45,535,502 compared to \$43,824,322 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB, & NRUCFC.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC activities & executive summary.
- Frye & Hobbie: Appointed as delegate & alternate delegate to ICWCG/RSI annual meeting.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power Inc. & Prairie State reports; advised Hobbie selected as new PPI General Manager.
- Board entered into executive session.

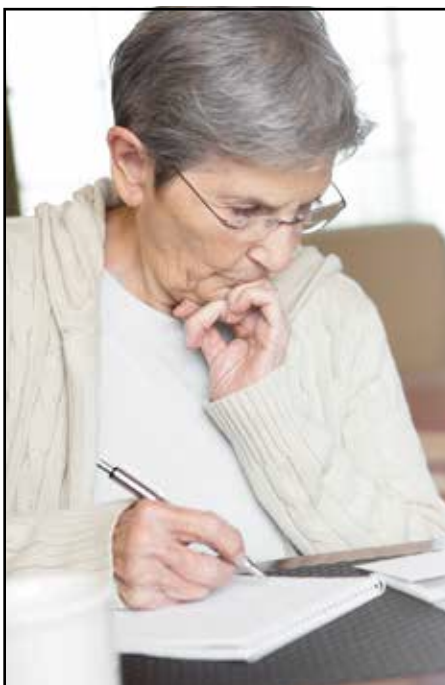


SAFETY

Generators

Need a transfer safety switch
Must be placed away from
doors, windows & vents

More tips @ www.menard.com



Need payment help?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may be able to help pay your electric bill. Contact your local office as soon as possible.

Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois (CAPCIL)

Logan County-217-732-2159; Mason County-309-543-6988;
Menard County-217-632-3878

Decatur-Macon County Opportunity Corp. 217-428-2193

MCS Community Services (Cass & Morgan County) 217-243-9404

Sangamon County Dept. of Community Resources 217-535-3120

Tazewood Community Service, Inc. (Tazewell County) 309-694-4391