

Menard Electric Cooperative's

Connect to MEC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Youth to Washington Tour



Rhiannon Sanford of Forest City spent a busy week in Washington, D.C. as Menard Electric's representative on the Youth to Washington Tour this summer. Rhiannon was among 64 rural Illinois students selected for the trip and joined more than 1,691 young leaders from across the country.

While in D.C. she met with Congressman Darin LaHood and visited many sites. These included Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum and more.

The event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

To learn more about the Youth to Washington Tour visit www.youthtour.coop.

Summer electric bills

Small ways you can change your habits/lifestyle and your home to save this month



You'll soon be receiving your bill for your usage in the month of July. It is traditionally a pretty hot, sticky month and members often increase their electric usage, and their bills, as they try to stay cool.

Air conditioning and pool pumps are often the cause of this higher usage. If you'd like to see when you are using the most electricity you can give us a call and we'll pull your daily or hourly usage. Sometimes this information can help members find ways to save.

Here we've listed some simple ways you can save a little energy as you finish out the summer this August. We'll most likely have some more hot days ahead...but we all know Illinois weather is unpredictable. Let's all keep our fingers crossed we get some Fall weather this year and don't go straight from air conditioning to heating.

Your habits/lifestyle

All the small things can add up. Changing a few habits and/or making a few lifestyle changes can make a difference over the course of a month.

- Use ceiling fans on medium, blowing down, to cool rooms you are using so you can turn your thermostat up a degree or two. The air movement will create a "wind chill" effect, lowering the temperature and increasing comfort.
- Close your shades during the day to keep out the sun's heat.
- Try cycling your pool pump instead of running it continuously.
- In the bathroom, run the vent fan when bathing or showering and up to 30 minutes after you have finished.
- Try a clothesline this summer to avoid using the dryer.
- Only use the anti-sweat feature on your fridge if necessary. Don't use heat dry on your dishwasher.
- Use your kitchen exhaust fan when cooking, and especially when boiling water, to avoid adding humidity to the air. Be sure that your range hood is ducted to the outside, as recirculating range hoods are not effective in controlling moisture (or odors).
- Consider cooking outdoors when possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner. Or use toaster ovens, convection ovens, and slow cookers to get the job done with less energy.





Your home and HVAC system

Your home's air conditioner, duct work, insulation levels and air leakage all contribute to how much effort it takes to keep your home cool (and to keep your home warm this winter too).

- Air leaks in your home allow the cool, conditioned air to leak out and the hot, humid air to leak in. Caulk, caulk, caulk around every opening; consider windows and doors, where plumbing enters the home, around baseboards, and around window AC units.
- A lack of insulation could also allow cool air to dissipate. Be sure you have enough insulation in your attic and walls to keep the cool air inside.
- If you have an older air conditioner and are waiting until it quits working, consider if you are wasting money each month that could go towards paying for a new unit.
- Calling a contractor to tune-up your air conditioner could save you 5 percent or more on your bills, not to mention extend the life of your unit.
- Bigger is not better. Ensure your HVAC system is not too large (the U.S. Dept. of Energy estimates most residential systems are) as you could pay higher energy bills and not get the comfort you expect. If your unit is too big it is likely that it is running in short bursts, and not operating long enough to achieve optimum

efficiency or to eliminate all of the humidity in your home.

- Your fan speed could make a difference as well. If your indoor humidity is 60% or higher consider consulting a HVAC technician about your central air's indoor fan speed. (Damp, cool indoor air creates a muggy atmosphere that could also possibly lead to the growth of mold and mildew.)
- If you can reduce the indoor humidity level, you may be able

to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature with a higher thermostat setting and ceiling fans.

- Consider keeping your thermostat set as close to 78 degrees as is comfortable when you're home and increase the temperature when you're away--it will cost less to lower the temperature when you arrive home than to keep it at the lower temperature while you're away. Try raising the temperature one degree each day until you reach a higher temp that is still comfortable for your home.
- Ensure your outdoor unit is clean and free of debris. Consider that a shaded unit can be 10% more efficient than one in the sun.
- If you have a window unit, keep the fresh air vents closed.
- Change filters as needed and be sure they are facing the correct direction.
- Don't close off unused rooms and ensure all registers are open and not blocked by furniture or rugs. Your system relies on all the supply and return air registers to maintain the proper air flow; blocked registers could not only lessen efficiency but cause additional wear and tear on your system.



Board Meeting Report

For full minutes please visit our website at www.menard.com or contact our office.

Present were Directors Jay Frye, Jerry Brooks, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney, Jodine Tate and Steven Worner. Also present was Manager Eric Hobbie and Attorney Charles Smith.

Approved proposal from Auditor Kevin Kelso to continue co-op audit.

Approved \$250.00 contribution to CFC Integrity Fund, the same amount given in the previous year.

Approved Directors Worner and Goetsch as AIEC Annual Meeting delegates.

Hobbie distributed information regarding per diem amounts within State of Illinois. Motion made and seconded to increase per diem.

Hobbie presented Manager's Report

for April 2016. He reviewed the balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, operations report, irrigation construction report and irrigation load management update.

He presented review of AIEC Average Revenue per Kilowatt hours for Illinois Cooperatives.

Hobbie discussed NRECA Bolivia trip and possible co-op employee participant.

He reviewed his presentation for the Annual Meeting regarding the Resolution to increase the debt limit.

Hobbie presented the financial report for the month of April. Year to date margins were \$1,434,711 compared to \$1,224,903 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of April was 38.58% and the number of member

accounts served was 10,821 compared to 10,774 a year ago. Net utility plant at the end of April was \$44,199,678 compared to \$43,151,945 last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

The Board discussed and reviewed the plans for the Annual Meeting. Hobbie presented the Capital Credit Estate Refunds Report.

Frye provided dates for the PPI Annual Meeting and AIEC Annual Meeting.

He recognized Retiring Director Jerry Brooks for his many years of service to the co-op and thanked him for his contributions to the Board.

Tip of the Month

Thaw out

Do you thaw foods in your microwave? Did you know that using the fridge is far more energy efficient? Thawing foods actually contribute to the fridge's cooling needs. Plus, it is safer than thawing food on the countertop or in the sink.

College Scholarship Winner

Menard Electric General Manager Eric Hobbie, right, is shown presenting Tucker Hirsch of Sherman with a \$2,000 Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship.

Hirsch competed for the scholarship with sons or daughters of electric cooperative members from across the state. Candidates were judged on grade-point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay demonstrating their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

Applications for the scholarships are normally available in the fall of each year on our website at www.menard.com and through local high school guidance counselors.

