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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Director nominating petitions

Due May 1, 2017

Petitions are available now at the office for directors in Districts 3, 7 and 8 on the Board of Directors of Menard Electric Cooperative. Petitions must be signed by no less than 10 members and must be received in the co-op's office by 4:30 p.m. on **May 1, 2017**.

One co-op member will be elected from districts 3, 7 and 8 to serve a three-year term at this year's annual meeting Thursday, June 15, 2017.

Seeking re-election are incumbent directors Jodine Tate of Virginia, District 3; Mike Patrick of New Holland, District 7; and Warren Goetsch of Williamsville, District 8. Listed are a few details about a director's duties and you can find more in our bylaw book, available at www.menard.com;

call us if you need a copy. Stop by the office to pick up a petition.

Directors must:

- Establish policies and employ a General Manager who is responsible for all operational details of the co-op.
- Receive electric service from the co-op at their primary residence within the district, be a member in good standing, and not have conflicting business interests. (They pay the same rates for service and follow the same policies as all other members.)
- Be able to spend adequate time on board work and attend most regular board meetings held the fourth Tuesday evening of each month for several hours at the co-op office.
- Attend our annual meeting each year and other special board meetings, committee meetings, director's conferences and educational seminars as necessary.
- Be accessible to members within the district and willing to represent all members of the co-op.
- Acquire knowledge about the electric utility including finances, management and public issues. (It takes time to learn the system and for that reason our directors have made long-term commitments to serving the co-op.)



Jodine Tate
Treasurer
Virginia
District 3



Mike Patrick
Secretary
New Holland
District 7



Warren Goetsch
Vice President
Williamsville
District 8

Safe and reliable service

The importance of controlling vegetation in our right-of-way

Trees are a beautiful and important part of our area's landscape. Unfortunately, sometimes trees grow too close to our right-of-way, which can cause safety and/or reliability issues. Right-of-way is the strip of land underneath and surrounding our power lines and poles.

Safe service

The moisture within a tree's limbs provides electricity a perfect path to cause electrocution. Tree limbs too close to our lines are dangerous for our linemen working on power lines, members working in or near trees, and children climbing trees near lines. Even if branches seem far enough away, additional weight, winds or broken limbs can cause them to

unexpectedly contact lines. Safety is one of the major reasons for our right-of-way clearing program.

Reliable service

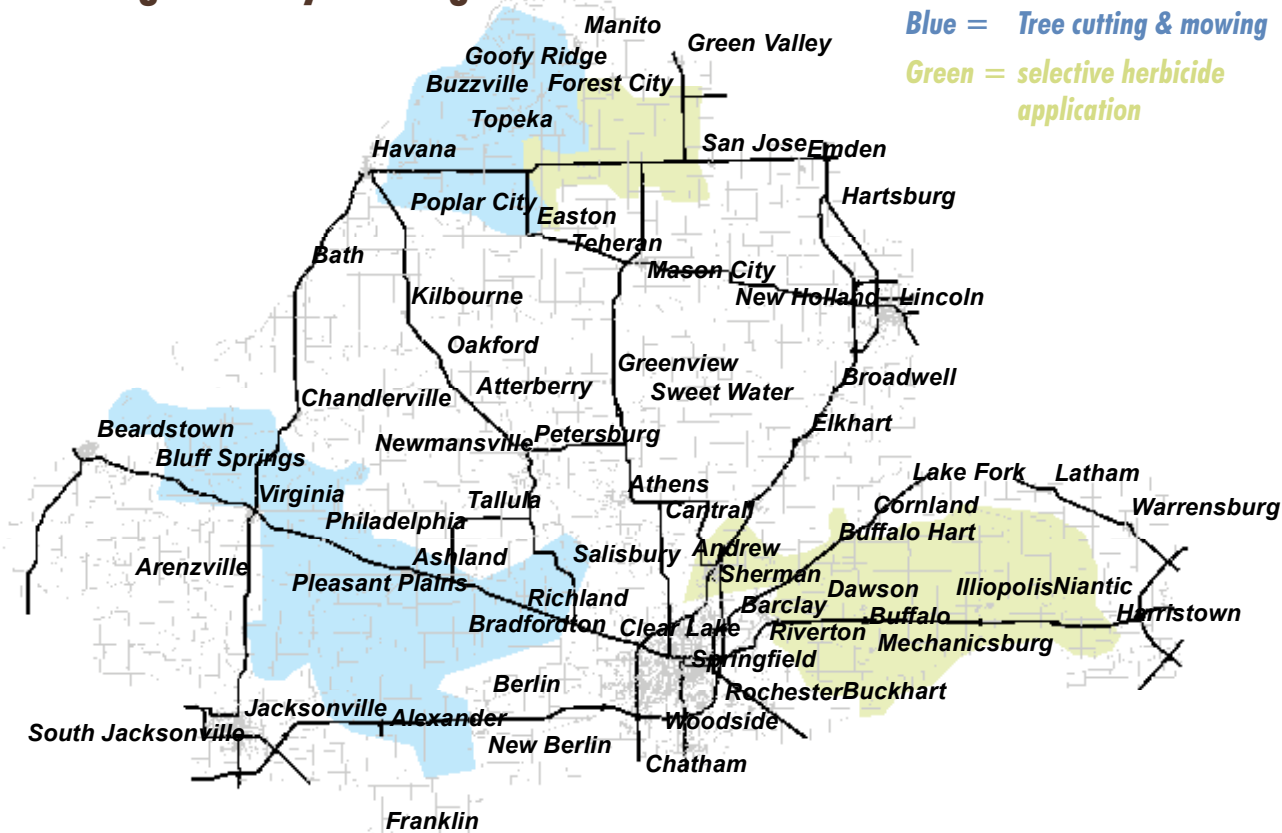
Tree limbs coming into contact with our lines are a leading cause of outages during any weather, and are often the primary cause of outages during storms producing high winds, snow or ice. Trees can cause lengthy outages and costly damage to our system during major storms. High winds cause branches to sway into, or break and fall onto, lines. Snow and ice accumulation weighs branches down until they come in contact with lines. Falling trees cause poles and lines to break.

Branches also come into contact with lines on mild days because of

Planting tip

Wondering how far away from our lines to plant a new tree? Take the diameter of the tree when full grown (available on its care tag or from the nursery), divide that number in half and add 15. Then plant your tree that many feet away. You want the outer edge of the branches (not the trunk) to be at least 15 feet from our lines when it's full grown.

2017 Right of Way Clearing



light winds, small animals, or age causing them to break or fall. This can cause outages or blinks (a momentary loss of power less than a second, or what causes your clocks to “blink” 12:00). A branch swaying into a line is a common cause of a blink. Once it occurs three times in a short time period, the power will stay off until a lineman can investigate and remove the problem tree branch.

Keeping the right-of-way clear is the best way we have of preventing these outages and blinks. This will result in more reliable electric service as well as lower restoration times and repair costs during severe weather events.

2017 right-of-way clearing schedule

In order to provide our members with safe and reliable service we must control vegetation within the right-of-way along our 2,600 miles of distribution lines.

To do this we partner with Spoon River Electric Cooperative’s forestry department and employ contract crews to control vegetation throughout our service territory. We are working towards a schedule of clearing each area of our territory every five to six years.

Throughout the rest of 2017 crews will cut and mow vegetation on circuits branching out from our substations in Virginia, Topeka, New Berlin and Bishop. These areas are shown on the map in blue.

Our specifications are to clear the area on either side of our single phase lines at least 15 feet and three phase lines at least 25 feet. Smaller trees and brush under and close to lines are removed to allow access and eliminate future growing problems. We direct all tree trimming crews to trim to the American National Standards Institute requirements to assure the continued health of trees. Some members may not view these standards as the most visually appealing, but they are healthier for the tree in the long term and



It's not just trees that cause problems. One of our linemen discovered this trumpet vine this winter when it prevented him from accessing a pole. We've also seen mailboxes, planters, signs and other items directly attached to poles. It is important that our poles are kept clear of all attachments.

safer for all members and employees.

In addition to trimming and mowing, contract crews will also selectively apply herbicide to brush as needed in areas that were trimmed in 2016 in order to control problematic re-growth. In 2017 this will include the areas served by substations in Sherman, Barclay, Lanesville, Allen and portions of Topeka and Virginia. These areas are shown on the map in green.

Using this selective herbicide application allows us to extend our trimming cycle and reduce the amount of brush needing cleared during our normal trimming cycle. It is the most effective and cost-effective method of right-of-way maintenance.

If you'd like more information about our right-of-way program see our website at www.menard.com or call our office.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

**Plan ahead
Call JULIE before digging**

Remember, it's the law that you must notify JULIE before you do any digging in your yard.

The depth of utility lines can vary for many reasons — even digging only a few inches can cause problems. Striking a line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and outages.

Plan ahead for spring projects and call 8-1-1 or visit www.illinois1call.com.



EFFICIENCY

Refrigerators

An extra fridge kept in a garage can use a lot of energy. Do you really need it?

Board highlights

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

December 27, 2016

- Present: Directors Jay Frye, Dennis Ryan, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney & Steven Worner; Manager Eric Hobbie, Interim Manager Lynn Frasco, Mgr of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton. Absent: Director Jodine Tate & Attorney Charles Smith.
- 3 additions to agenda: approval for Frasco to sign as General Manager; USDA Responsible Party; Prairie Power Inc. Director position.
- 2017 financial budget approved after discussion.
- Hobbie: Discussed balance sheet, budget, outage summary, safety report, inventory adjustment of negative \$1,286.00.
- Hobbie: Gave November financial report. Year to date margins \$2,618,726 compared to \$2,241,785 last year. End of November equity 39.67%. Served 10,884 member accounts. Net utility plant \$45,760,792 compared to \$43,943,760 last year. Co-op meets requirements of RUS, FFB & NRUCFC.
- Goetsch: Discussed AIEC personnel changes & executive summary.
- Martin: Gave Prairie Power, Inc. & Prairie State update.
- Hobbie: Discussed schedule to move to Prairie Power CEO position.
- Board entered executive session; reconvened.
- 2016 Sick Leave Bonus Plan discussed; approval of 2017 plan.
- February meeting moved to 3/7/17; March meeting moved to 3/28/17.

Manager search

The deadline for this publication was before the Board of Directors was due to make its decision in selecting a new General Manager. We hope to be able to provide details in the next publication. Check our website and Facebook page for possible updates now.

SAFETY

Stay away!

Downed lines can be dangerous even if you are without power.

More tips @ www.menard.com

The cooperative difference – it matters!

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

Cooperative Guiding Principle #2 Democratic Member Control

When, seven decades ago, rural residents banded together to form this co-op and bring the conveniences of electricity to their communities, they structured the co-op around the same democratic principles as our great nation. Those principles are as strong and relevant today as they were back then. With our upcoming annual meeting and director election, this month is a great time to talk about what democratic member control means to you.

Each summer, our members gather for an annual meeting, during which they elect directors from among the membership to serve three-year terms on the board of directors. Each membership is given one vote for director. The elected directors are the voice of the members in setting policies and making decisions for the co-op.

Because the directors are your neighbors, working and living in your communities, they want the same things for our cooperative that you do. They seek to make decisions that allow the co-op to

maintain its focus on keeping the lights on safely and reliably while keeping costs affordable.

See the article on 18a regarding director petitions.

Participate in the democratic process of placing your vote for directors at our Annual Meeting of Members Thursday evening, June 15, 2017, at PORTA High School. The evening will also include dinner, prizes and news from your co-op.