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Helping others

We wanted to share two examples of Menard Electric employees helping others from the storms that hit our region at the tail end of last year, just as this newsletter was being prepared.

Aiding Corn Belt Energy

Apprentice Lineman Stormy Hild, Area Serviceman Seth Parker, Leadman Jeremy Willis and Lineman Jason Beggs traveled to the Princeton area Dec. 28 to aid an Illinois electric cooperative, Corn Belt Energy, as it sought to rebuild the damage to its system caused by ice and high winds.

The co-op reported more than 130 broken poles, along with other damage that caused widespread outages for its members.

Our linemen worked for four days alongside Corn Belt employees, linemen from other co-ops, and contract crews.

Our linemen were happy to help; they've gone to other cooperatives before and crews from

across Illinois have come to our aid in the past as well. It's the cooperative way.

First on the scene

The same storm system that caused Corn Belt's ice, brought flooding here. During troubled times like power outages and storms our linemen do whatever they can to aid our members; it's no surprise that this sense of duty carries over to coming to the aid of others any way they can.

Because our service territory is made up of rural roads and secluded areas, our crews can be the first to arrive at an accident scene. This is just what happened when Groundman/Mechanic Michael Justice discovered

a delivery truck overturned in a field along a water-filled roadway. Upon investigation Michael discovered the driver of the vehicle was trapped inside. He was able to pry open the door and lift the man out, staying with him until other help arrived.

We posted these events on our Facebook Page; be sure to Like our Page to see more.

Our linemen replacing poles in a hard to access area in Corn Belt's territory. Restoring power from broken poles takes time and having more crews available reduced outage times for that co-op's members.



Randy Avery retires

Assistant General Foreman Randy Avery retired in January after more than 40 years with the co-op. He began with Menard Electric in 1974 as a warehouseman. He then worked through our apprenticeship program to become a Lineman before moving to Crew Leader and a few years ago to Assistant General Foreman. He has worked to fill in as General Foreman as needed, but says working outside with the crews is the part of the job he always enjoyed the most.

Randy has the most experience of anyone in our Operations Department. He's seen a lot of changes in 40 years. "The men have always been good workers. That hasn't changed. It's the equipment we have available that's been the biggest change. It's a little easier on the body now; not that we don't still work hard! It used to be we had to hand tamp all of the poles. My gosh, we did a lot more shoveling back then compared to now," he says.

When Randy started there were no bucket trucks or hydraulic tools, and the co-op had to rely on subcontractors more to bring in equipment. "The equipment we have now makes the job easier and faster and enables us to perform maintenance without disconnecting power to our members. People often don't realize how much work we do on an everyday basis that is maintenance work. We don't have to take them offline to do that now like we used to," he says.

Congratulations Randy on your retirement!



Left: Randy in his early years with the co-op. Above: Randy and his wife Georgia.

Tip of the Month

Plan ahead

Cross your fingers the groundhog forecasts an early Spring and our winter weather is behind us. Before we get to those "open window" temperatures of the mild months take note of any cold drafts you've been feeling. Take the time now to seal any air leaks so you will save energy and be more comfortable during this summer's heat and next winter's cold. Visit www.togetherwesave.com for how-to tips.

New area serviceman



Kyle Hill is the new Area Serviceman for the northernmost portion of our territory. He has been a Lineman with us for three years. Take a look at the map here to see if Kyle is your serviceman.



Food pantry donation

Once again we collected food in December for the Menard County Food Pantry. Employees and members contributed items and they were delivered just before Christmas.

For every five items members donated they were given an entry into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit. Five winners were drawn.

Thank you to everyone who donated items.

System Engineer Dustin Crosier was on hand to deliver the items to food pantry volunteer Mary Jane Hurie.



Win the trip of a lifetime!

**Youth to Washington
June 10-17, 2016**

For over 55 years Illinois electric cooperatives have sent youth from their communities on an annual trip to Washington, D.C.

Last year, students visited the Capitol Building, Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, The U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum, and took a Potomac River cruise.

Menard Electric Cooperative will again sponsor two high school juniors on the trip. Students must live with a parent/guardian who is an active member of the co-op and must attend Youth Day in Springfield April 13th. Applications and more information can be found on our website at www.menard.com or by calling Michelle at 800-872-1203. Deadline to apply is March 11.



2015 Youth Tour Participants met with Senator Dick Durbin, Congresswoman Cheri Bustos and Congressmen Rodney Davis, Mike Bost, John Shimkus and Adam Kinzinger. Pictured are Sophia Pensabene, Congresswoman Cheri Bustos, Connor Wade and Tucker Hirsch.

Board Meeting Report

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

Present were Manager Eric Hobbie, Attorney Charles Smith, Manager of Accounting & Information Systems Chris Hinton and Directors Jay Frye, Jerry Brooks, Warren Goetsch, Gary Martin, Donald McMillan, Michael Patrick, Roy Seaney and Jodine Tate. Director Steve Worner was absent.

Hinton and Hobbie reviewed the proposed 2016 financial budget summary and discussed options with the Board. They discussed Prairie Power, Inc. deferred revenue options for 2015 and 2016. The Board approved that the cooperative proceed with the revenue deferral at the \$1.00 level for 2015. Hobbie advised staff would

review 2016 further and report back at the next meeting.

Hobbie presented the Manager's report. Hobbie reported on the status of delinquent State of Illinois accounts totaling \$87,962.56, and discussed what action, if any, was being taken by other cooperatives.

Hobbie presented the financial report for the month of October. Year to date margins were \$2,228,928 compared to \$2,063,798 a year earlier. Equity as of the end of October was 38.71% and the number of member accounts served was 10,824 compared to 10,766 a year ago. Net Utility Plant at the end of October was \$43,958,360 compared to \$42,855,308

last year. The cooperative continues to meet the requirements of the RUS, FFB and NRUCFC.

Board went into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

Director Goetsch discussed AIEC guidelines for State of Illinois delinquent accounts.

He also discussed the AIEC Bolivia project (an international program sponsored by the AIEC). The Board voted to follow his recommendation to donate \$5,000 to the project.

Director Martin discussed PPI solar energy options.

New Operations Manager

Dalton Whitley was recently named Operations Manager at Menard Electric. He began with the co-op eight years ago as an Apprentice Lineman. Dalton worked through the apprenticeship program to become a Lineman, and in 2012 became Area Serviceman to our northernmost territory.

I would like to thank the members in parts of Tazewell, Mason, Menard and Logan counties for their hospitality and friendliness since 2012. The memories I have made in my short time as your area serviceman will be cherished for years to come.

Within the ever changing demands of the electrical industry, I hope to continue in the guidance of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to members of Menard Electric.

*Thank you,
Dalton Whitley*

