

# MJMJ

*Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

*along the lines*

VOLUME 4

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NUMBER 6

[www.mjmec.coop](http://www.mjmec.coop)



**Chris M. Spears**  
*President/CEO*

## *Advancements in Billing & Payment Options*

Since last January, MJM Electric Cooperative has been accepting credit cards, debit cards and e-checks. It is also offering automatic payment options whereby the amount due is automatically removed from a member's bank account or placed on their credit card/debit card on the due date. Additionally, the Cooperative is offering Ebill, an on-line payment option. At this time approximately 150 members have made arrangements for an automatic payment of their bill and more than 700 per month are making payments on-line.

Ebill allows members to view their bill and make a payment on-line any time day or night. Members can also use Ebill to receive an e-mail notification when a bill has been processed, which includes the amount due. Even if members prefer to send payments through the mail, they can still sign up for an e-mail bill notification by registering their account on Ebill. This can be done simply by providing an e-mail address and a password. This could be especially helpful when mail service is delayed as members will no longer have to wait

until a bill is physically delivered to their home or business to find out how much they owe. It should be noted that MJM Electric Cooperative continues to offer Budget Billing for members who would prefer to pay the same amount each month.

MJM Electric Cooperative uses Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC), to answer the phones during times when the office is closed. In the past, CRC was used primarily to report an outage, submit a meter reading, or to provide an updated phone number. While CRC still provides those services, arrangements have also been made so that CRC can inform a member as to the amount of their bill and can take payments over the phone too if a member wants to make a payment with a credit card, debit card or e-check.

For many years MJM Electric Cooperative has accepted a Postmark on an envelope, dated the 10th, as being on time. Now it is taking longer for the mail to be processed and delivered. Furthermore, automated printing of Postmarks has made it increasingly difficult to read the date of the Postmark. When payments arrive well past the due date, costly and time consuming adjustments have to be made manually for

those payments Postmarked the 10th. In an effort to reduce costs and improve efficiency, the Cooperative has decided to stop accepting a Postmark beginning in August. However, a five day grace period will be observed instead. Other businesses use this same approach and it appears to be an acceptable solution to the problem at hand. Payments will still be due on the 10th of the month but beginning in August, if a payment is received in the office or posted on-line within five business days after the 10th, the net amount will be due. If the payment arrives in the office or is posted on-line after the close of the business day, 5 business days following the 10th, the gross amount will be required regardless of when the payment was mailed.

MJM Electric Cooperative is committed to improving upon its level of service to the member and that is why members now have more payment options available to them. Additionally, that is why the Cooperative is replacing the acceptance of the Postmark with a five day grace period. For additional information pertaining to these billing and payment options, member's can visit [www.mjmec.coop](http://www.mjmec.coop) or call the office at 217-854-3137 / 1-800-648-4729.

**Ebill - A Safe and Easy Way to View and Pay Your Bill On-line**

[www.mjmec.coop](http://www.mjmec.coop)

**M.J.M Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



264 North East Street  
Carlinville, Illinois 62626  
Phone: 800-648-4729

Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Board of Directors**

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Laura Cutler ..... Office Manager

Dale Gansz ..... Director of

Operations

Bronson Borowiak ..... Member

Services Director

**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 800-648-4729. Do not call the  
local lineman. 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.

**M.J.M. Along The Lines**

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# Planning is important

A lot has happened since my last article. Record numbers of tornadoes have occurred in several states, resulting in massive destruction and loss of lives.

Probably few, if any, lives were lost to those who planned ahead and installed a safe room. For many years I have recommended that folks include a safe room as part of their new house construction. Planning is important.

Record flooding has also occurred, resulting in similar destruction and additional loss of lives. Although the flood plain maps will no doubt be revised, those who planned ahead and built above the existing flood plain received less damage than those who did not. When I built my wife's new house, I used the 500-year flood map. I had seen way too many houses flooded that were located in the 100-year flood plain zone. Twice in the last eight years, I have been glad that I used the 500-year map. Again, planning is important.

And now, adding to our problems, there are record prices at the gasoline pump. Because of this and other things, we are seeing cost increases in practically every item that we buy. What are we going to do? Well, I hate problems, but I enjoy trying to solve them. I have learned that most can be solved if common sense prevails. Common sense tells me that if there is a shortage of funds, I must spend less or make more money. Some of you are already thinking – here comes his energy efficiency stuff again. And you are right.

I have a friend who has lived in his 1,800 square foot Doug Rye house for 25 years. He spent an extra \$2,000 to build his house to my specifications, which included a geothermal heat pump. As best we can determine, he has saved his family about \$10,600 in utility bills by doing so. And consider this – he is still saving money every month for as long as he lives in the house. When someone else lives in the house, he or she will receive the benefits. Remember the famous Doug Rye saying, "Energy efficiency

costs nothing, it makes you money"? Think of this. If he had not used my techniques in his new house, he would have sent that \$10,600 to the utility company.

Actually, he included the \$2,000 into his 30-year loan, which increased his house payment by \$12 per month. That saved him \$25 per month on his utility bill, which means he spent none of his own money and had a positive cash flow from day one. That was some super smart planning.

We are now in the summer season. If your utility bills are high, why not make a plan

now that will help lower those bills? It's a little difficult for me to tell you exactly what you need to do at your house, but if you have read, and continue to read, these monthly columns, you should be able to develop a good plan. With the 30 percent federal tax credit, geothermal is more feasible now than ever, so you might want to make it a part of your plan.

I just returned from conducting seminars in Florida and Alabama where the electric rate is almost a third higher than in Arkansas. Every indication is that electric rates will increase in the near future. You can either make and implement your plan or find a way to increase your income. Planning is important, but it is up to you. Feel free to call me and I will also help you.



**Doug Rye**

*Column reprinted with permission of the Association of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives. Doug Rye is a licensed architect living in Saline County and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show. He works as a consultant for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to promote energy efficiency to cooperative members statewide. To ask energy efficiency-related questions, call Doug at 1-501-653-7931. More energy-efficiency tips, as well as Doug's columns, can also be found at [www.ecark.org](http://www.ecark.org).*

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Can you see the lines?

How about now?



Before



After



Before



After

Can you spot the electric lines and poles in the pictures to the left? How about the pictures to the right, which were taken after McKenzie Tree Services cleared this seven-pole span of line off of Hagan Road west of Carlinville?

The stretch of line was well-known among linemen as a difficult place to

make repairs. In the case of an outage, they would have to walk through the dense foliage and go about the difficult task of finding the electric line amongst the thick trees and shrubs. Outages were also common in the area as the line frequently came into contact with nearby trees.

With the line cleared, outages will occur less often and when they do, repairs will take place quicker. MJM Electric Cooperative has experienced a significant decline in the number of outages in areas where tree trimming has been completed.

## Series of storms hits cooperative

A series of May storms brought high winds that caused a number of outages throughout the MJM territory.

On Monday, May 23, the first outages were reported around noon with power being fully restored by approximately 9:15 p.m. Repairs were made throughout the day, but storms continued to cause problems, including breaking seven poles. Nearly 2,000 members throughout Montgomery, Jersey, and Macoupin counties were without power at some point during the day.

Storms returned early in the evening on Wednesday, May 25. Unlike Monday's storm, the damage was located primarily in the area northwest of Medora and west of Carlinville. Eleven poles were damaged and approximately 850 members were without power throughout the night. The first outages were reported at 5 p.m. Final repairs were made at 5:30 a.m. the next day.

MJM Electric Cooperative's line crews worked throughout both days and nights to restore power as soon as possible. The fact that these two storms occurred within mere days of each other was unusual.

The staff at MJM thanks cooperative members for their patience.



*Linemen make repairs to a section of line on Hagan Road off of Highway 108 west of Carlinville.*

## Energy display on hand at Hillsboro Conservation Day

Fifth grade students spent Wednesday, May 11, at the University of Illinois Extension's Conservation Day in Hillsboro. They visited 13 different exhibits, including one operated by MJM Electric Cooperative on energy efficiency. Former member service director Charles Peterson and current director Bronson Borowiak talked about the need to use more efficient lighting, heating and insulation.

Students from Beckemeyer, Raymond, Nokomis, Farmersville and Zion Lutheran were split into chaperoned groups and took turns visiting each exhibit.

Each time a new group took their seats at the energy exhibit, Peterson held a light switch above his head. "Does anyone know what this is?" he asked. "This is the world's most effective energy conservation device."

He went on to explain that the surest method of conserving electricity and reducing cost is to simply turn the power off. Students then learned about ways to be more efficient with the energy that they do use.

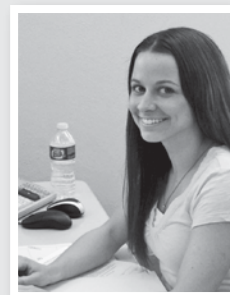
"We want these students to start thinking about how they use electricity now," Borowiak said. "Although they don't make big decisions right now, like choosing to install an efficient heat pump, there are things they can do to help reduce the usage at their home." Turning off lights when not in the room, turning off gaming consoles not in use, and closing the windows when the air conditioning is running were a few examples given of no-cost ways to reduce energy usage.

## MJM hires new office assistant

Office assistant Jen Peterson is MJM Electric Cooperative's newest employee. She started work in May.

A graduate of Lewis and Clark Community College, Jen previously worked at Carlinville National Bank for four years as the E-Banking Coordinator. Her duties involved maintaining the online banking system. Originally from Godfrey, she now lives in Carlinville with her husband, Luke.

Jen is an active member of Cross Church in Carlinville and sings in the choir. She is also a member of TAILS, the non-profit group dedicated to supporting Macoupin County Animal Control. When she's not working, Jen enjoys spending time outdoors with friends.



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# Your thermostat and wallet can co-exist during the summer cooling season.

**I**t can be as early as June or as late as September, but likely some afternoon in July or August will record the greatest demand for electricity because everyone wants to escape the summer heat by turning down the air conditioner. But there are ways you can increase your efficiency and reduce your energy budget.

“If you haven’t already, replace incandescent bulbs with cooler, more efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs),” says Molly Hall, Energy Education Council Executive Director. “Traditional light bulbs waste 95 percent of their energy in heat!”

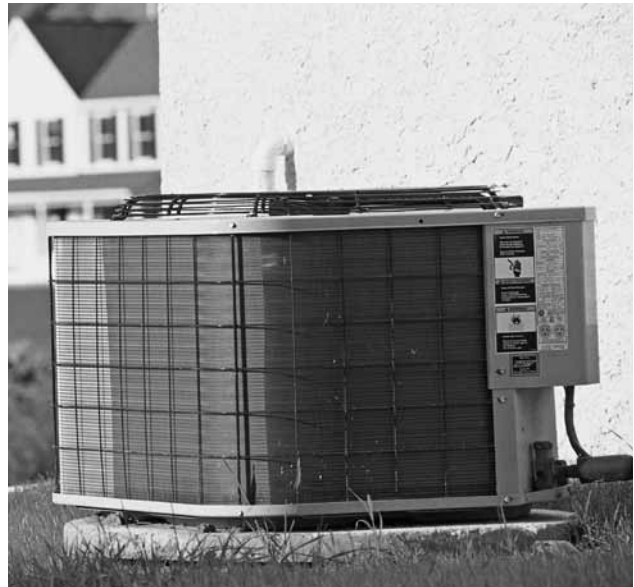
Your attic gets hot in the summer, and to prevent that heat from filtering into your home, you need to upgrade your attic with insulation and ventilation. R-30 insulation is recommended and insulation can be added on top of what is there, but don’t block any vents. Vents will allow hot air to escape the attic, which can sometimes reach 140° in the summer. The use of attic fans can prevent heat from building up.

It’s not too late to make sure your air conditioner is operating efficiently. Clean out the dirt and debris from air conditioning units that hamper the necessary heat exchange, and be sure to install clean air filters. Consider installing a programmable thermostat to automatically adjust the indoor air temperature to more energy efficient levels

while you are away from home. Window awnings and interior blinds will help keep your home cooler by reducing sunlight infiltration. And ceiling fans will move the air in a way that helps you remain cool, even at higher thermostat settings.

The behavior of your family will also determine how much you spend or save on those hot days that are costly to keep cool:

- Keep windows closed on hot days to retain cooler air in the house and prevent the exchange with hot air.
  - Reduce your trips in and out of the house to reduce the number of times your door is opened, which allows cool air to escape and hot air to enter.
  - Close blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day.
  - Use the microwave rather than stove or oven.
  - Use heat-producing appliances like dishwasher, washer and dryer during the cooler evening hours.
- Keep electrical appliances away from the air conditioner and the thermostat. Lamps and many electrical appliances emit heat, and your thermostat is fooled into thinking it is hotter in the house than it really is; consequently it may call for your air conditioner to work harder than needed.



Minor activities such as these can save significant dollars on your energy bill, particularly at a time when energy costs are higher because of increased demand for electricity.

## Member survey mailing in August

**A** member survey conducted by the Illinois Association of Electric Cooperatives will be mailed to a pool of randomly selected MJM members in August. Member input is very important and the results of the survey will help the cooperative identify strengths and weaknesses. Such information is valuable as the cooperative seeks to not only meet but to exceed member expectations. Similar surveys were conducted in 2007 and 2009.

In 2009, over 1,230 surveys were mailed with 397 being filled out and returned. If you receive a survey, we strongly encourage you to take the time to complete and return it.

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# Wabash Valley Power To Acquire Peaking Resources

Natural gas-fired generating plant will add 80 MW to G&T's assets



Wabash Valley Power (WVP), a wholesale power supplier for 28 electric cooperatives in five states, including MJM Electric Cooperative, has announced plans to purchase additional output from a natural gas-fired generating unit at the Vermillion Generating Station in Vermillion County, Indiana.

Wabash Valley Power currently owns the equivalent of two of the station's eight 80 MW units, with Duke Energy Ohio owning the equivalent of the other six. Upon approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), WVP will grow its ownership to 240 MW at the facility. Duke Energy Indiana, if granted similar approvals, will purchase the remaining output.

Peaking plants are typically used

on days when the temperatures reach extreme highs or lows. Because they run on natural gas, peaking plants are not an economical option to run every day, but they are unique among power plants for being able to start up with little lead time, making them an excellent resource when additional power is needed. Natural gas is considered a clean fuel source for the production of electricity.

"We recognized this as an excellent opportunity from the perspective of both economics and long-term power supply," explained Lee Wilmes, Vice President of Power Supply, WVP. "We have enjoyed our ownership relationship with Duke Energy Ohio, and given our long history of working closely with Duke Energy Indiana, we look forward to the solid partnership that will result

from this new arrangement."

Wabash Valley Power owns a portion of Gibson Station Unit 5, the largest coal-fired power plant in the country. In addition, the G&T owns 13 landfill gas generation plants in the northern half of Indiana, and purchases electricity generated at two wind farms. The cooperative's remaining generating facilities run on either natural gas or synthetic natural gas.

Wabash Valley Power is a member-owned, not-for-profit generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative headquartered in Indianapolis. The G&T provides wholesale electricity to 28 electric distribution cooperatives in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. Collectively, they serve more than 360,000 homes, farms, businesses and industries.

## Co-op members save big on prescriptions!

MJM Electric Cooperative members saved over \$850 on their prescription medications in May by using the Co-op Connections® card at their pharmacy. Since the card was launched in December of 2008, members have saved over \$28,000!



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# Member Trading Post

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**For Sale:** 12 dog pen panels, American Kennel, 5x6, includes 2 doors. Buy 6 or all 12. Two years old, in excellent shape. \$40 per panel. Call 217-741-7001.

**Home for Sale:** 5 yr. old custom built, 3 bed/2.5 ba on 10 acres. Geothermal. Hillsboro schools. 2400 sq. ft.+ 1600 sq. ft. unfinished bsmt. 24 x 52 pole barn. Will consider rent w/option to buy. \$269,900. Call 217-246-2000.

**For Sale:** Reg. AKC Sheltie - \$200 each, house broke, parents on ground. One female born 1-11-11, one male born 3-16-10. Call 217-521-3350. One brown electric recliner - \$50. Call 217-521-3350.

**For Sale:** bow front aquarium, 27 gallons, with filter, light, and matching base cabinet. Used 5 months. \$150 for all. Grace no baste quilting frame - crib to king - never used. \$350. Call 618-585-4446.

**For Sale:** Pomeranian puppies, 6 weeks old, have had first shots, ready to go. Call 217-741-2314.

**For Sale:** 2007 Dodge Nitro, 34,000 miles, total electric, sun roof. Call 217-741-2314 between 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**For Sale:** Rectangular kitchen table with formica top and two leaves with 4 chairs. Call 618-372-7714.

**For Sale:** KFX 400 2003. Lots of after market parts - nice rims and tires. Good condition. \$2,500 OBO. Call 618-780-2717 or 618-836-7412. Briggs & Stratton 8 HP motor, vertical shaft.

**For Sale:** 2005 Cedar Creek 5th Wheel 34RLTS(35), GVW 14,000 loaded, 2 axles, 3 slides, excellent condition, many extras. \$25,000. Call for information at 618-946-2045 or 618-372-8471.

**For Sale:** Winchendon (Paul McCobb) blond birchwood drop leaf "modern" table. Very good, unfinished condition. Has production number/label underneath. An American collectible, from the 1950's. \$725. Details, 217-324-3869.

**For Sale:** Willett Buffet cabinet-Wildwood cherry dining table-solid Elswick cherry, six cane chairs. Will consider separating set. \$1,395. For details, contact mgowner79@yahoo.com or at 217-710-5614.

**For Sale:** 1930's era Four poster bedroom set, dresser/mirror, chest of drawers. Walnut. Very nice, excellent condition. \$2,200. For details, contact: mgowner79@yahoo.com or at 217-710-5614.

**For Sale:** Choice frontage property for homesite, located Route 16 between Hillsboro/Litchfield. Wooded, privacy. Nice area. Details at 217-324-3869.

**For Sale:** Men's Giant RS940 race/road bike. Mint condition. \$225. 217-324-3869.

**For Sale:** Home in Litchfield, 3 br/1ba; New tan siding, new windows, many updates. Hot tub and new deck, detached 24' x36' new garage, floor heated, central air, full basement, carpeted, asphalt driveway. \$93,500. More details: 217-851-4647.

**For Sale:** 1994 Hitchhiker 2m 30-foot fifth wheel camper with slide out and rear kitchen. Good condition. Awning, A/C, and more. \$8,500 obo. Call 618-979-6869 or 618-466-5147.

**For Sale:** Kimpor portable generator, 3,000 watts. Excellent condition. Used 10 hours. Electric and manual start. \$800 firm. Call 618-979-6869 or 618-466-5147.

**For Sale:** Water tanks, 100 gallon and 50 gallon, for cattle or horses. Call 217-835-2546.

**For Sale:** Jacuzzi water pump surface mount. \$99. Call 217-835-2546.

**For Sale:** Wood fence post 6', \$2; 6' feeder with hay rack, \$45. Call 217-835-2546.

**For Sale:** Craftsman lawnmower, 12 HP, 38" cut, 5 speed, good condition, new battery. \$200. Call 217-436-2275.

**For Sale:** Four cemetery lots, Roselawn Cemetery in Bethalto, selling for half price. Call 618-585-3482.

**For Sale:** 5 ft Rhino, 3 point rotary cutter, \$500. 13 ft John Deere pull type cutter. \$500. Call 217-533-4716.

**For Sale:** Green couch, chair, and ottoman. All matching green plaid. In good condition. \$200. Call 618-362-6535.

**For Sale:** Refinished antique oak ice box (Belding Hall Century), excellent condition, original hardware, 3 door. 40"x28"x16". \$850 firm. Call 217-854-9396.

## May Outage Summary

5/3 - 3:04 p.m.

Dorchester, OCR opened, off 1 hour.

5/3 - 3:04 p.m.

Mt. Olive, animal on line, off 3 hours.

5/11 - 10:05 a.m.

Polk, pole broke, off 2 hours.

5/11 - 8:22 p.m.

Gillespie, OCR opened, off 2 hours.

5/15 - 8:58 a.m.

Ruyle, OCR opened, off 4 hours.

5/15 - 3:57 p.m.

Hillyard, tree on line, off 2 hours.

5/15 - 8:47 p.m.

Staunton, tree on line, off 3 hours.

5/22 - 2:24 p.m.

Dorchester, tree on line, off 3 hours.

5/22 - 6:35 p.m.

North Hurricane, tree on line, off 5 hours.

5/22 - 9:19 p.m.

Barr, tree on line, off 3 hours.

5/22 - 9:56 p.m.

Shaws Point, OCR opened, off 4 hours.

5/23 - 12:44 p.m.

Macoupin, Jersey, Montgomery counties, storm outages due to high winds.

5/25 - 4:56 a.m.

Richwood, line down, off 5 hours.

5/25 - 5:02 a.m.

Richwood, broken pole, off 1 hour.

5/25 - 5:29 a.m.

Scottville, North Palmyra, South Palmyra, Barr, Ameren lost power to Palmyra substation, off 1 hour.

5/25 - 10:26 a.m.

Bunker Hill, tree on line, off 2 hours.

5/25 - 4:27 p.m.

Jerseyville, OCR opened, off 1 hour.

5/25 - 5:55 p.m.

Ruyle, pole broke, off 6 hours.

5/25 - 6:03 p.m.

Bird, bad lightning arrestor, off 5 hours.

5/25 - 6:10 p.m.

Chesterfield, OCR opened, off 5 hours.

5/25 - 6:31 p.m.

Jerseyville, OCR opened, off 1 hour.

5/25 - 8:56 p.m.

South Palmyra, South Otter, Carlinville, Shaws Point, tree on line, off 4 hours.

5/25 - 9:25 p.m.

Western Mound, OCR opened, off 8 hours.

5/26 - 2:34 a.m.

South Otter, tree on line, off 5 hours.

5/26 - 5:12 a.m.

Western Mound, tree on line, off 2 hours.

5/26 - 10:25 a.m.

South Litchfield, tree fell through line, off 4 hours.

5/28 - 2:53 p.m.

Butler, stinger wire came off line, off 2 hours.

5/29 - 3:22 p.m.

Nokomis, tree on line, off 3 hours.

## Stanton, Bouillon complete apprenticeship program



**D**irector of Operations Dale Gansz presented official certificates of completion of apprenticeship to linemen Jared Stanton (left) and Jason Bouillon on Monday, June 5. Both men have completed a five-year apprenticeship program and are now journeymen linemen.

As journeymen, Stanton and Bouillon have been recognized to have an

advanced understanding of electrical distribution and the work associated with installing and maintaining a distribution system. Both were required to complete an electric line installer repairer program developed by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and MJM Electric Cooperative. Additionally, the

cooperative requires its apprentices to complete a U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certification. In addition to on the job training, an apprentice must complete a significant amount of coursework and pass a series of written examinations.