

# ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

**APRIL 2024**  
VOL.17, NO. 4

**THANK A  
LINeworker**  
Appreciation article. p.2

**AMI METERS**  
Features & benefits of the  
new AMI meters. p.5

**SAFE DIGGING MONTH**  
Call JULIE at 811 before you  
dig. p.6-7

## APRIL CALENDAR



April is Safe Digging Month

**Apr. 18: National Lineworker Day**

Apr. 22: Earth Day

Apr. 26: Arbor Day

## SAVE THE DATE! June 6th, 2024

**MJM's 85th Annual Meeting in  
Carlinville, IL**

### HOLIDAYS OBSERVED:

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day,  
Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day following  
Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.



OFFICE: 217-707-6156  
FAX: 217-854-3918

18300 SHIPMAN ROAD (PO BOX 80)  
CARLINVILLE, IL 62626

WWW.MJMEC.COOP



# THANK A LINEWORKER: LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY - APRIL 18TH



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



At any time of day or night, an electric lineworker walks out the door to go to an unusual job in hazardous work conditions. Although not the only high stakes profession out there, often the public does not realize the potential hazards in the job of a lineworker.

Electric lineworkers often do their job in extreme or rugged conditions. Many love the excitement and variety of their job and take great pride in their work. But imagine for a minute doing your work outdoors in a hydraulic-powered bucket 40 feet up (or in some locations line workers must physically climb the poles). Add to that extreme weather conditions: for example, your sweat is freezing, and your feet are numb while making precise repairs to an electric line that when live, has thousands of volts of electricity running through it.

Electric Lineworkers cannot take their job lightly or rush through one task to get to the next. A bad day at the office may mean a lost document or a boss' wrath, but a bad day for an electric line worker could mean serious injury or even death. There's a lot of satisfaction in the job, but it's also a potentially hazardous profession that consistently makes "most dangerous jobs" lists based on U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics.

Many may not realize it, but lineworkers undergo years of training before they can officially be called a lineworker. They typically start as a groundperson, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then they transition to apprentice status, which typically spans four years. After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training, they transition to journeyman lineworker status--that's when they're considered officially trained in the lineworker field. But the education is ongoing. Lineworkers continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

Whether a power outage is due to extreme weather conditions like an ice storm or caused by a hungry critter who chomped its way through a power line, it does happen. Because we live in a society where a microwave or the internet can seem to take forever, we sometimes expect power to be restored instantly, but that's not always possible.



Andrew Weiseman (L) and Tanner Mullen (R) participating in the 2023 Lineworker Safety Rodeo

Restoration time depends on the source and complexity of the issue causing the outage. Although prompt restoration is the goal, safety of our workers is priority number one.

Among other safety requirements, electric lineworkers must always:

- Stay aware of their surroundings
- Use their tools appropriately
- Work in teams
- Take their time and work methodically, even in high-pressure situations; many accidents happen when workers try to rush a job
- Wear proper safety equipment

We work hard to create and maintain a culture of safety that helps prevent injuries and fatalities. Electricity has long been recognized as a serious workplace hazard, exposing employees to electric shock, electrocution, burns, fires, and explosions.

Next time the power goes out, remember that electric lineworkers are working as efficiently and safely as possible to get all of us back to business as usual. No one knows that better than their families, because behind every lineworker, there is a family waiting for them to come home safe.



# ALONG THE LINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative  
www.mjmec.coop

**18300 Shipman Road (PO Box 80)  
Carlinsville, IL 62626**

Office: 1-217-707-6156

**Office Hours:**  
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

## HOW TO REPORT AN OUTAGE:

Call 217-707-6156 or use your **SmartHub app**.

- 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.

**Please do not report outages on Facebook/Social Media.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIRMAN:** W. Kay Schultz..... Godfrey  
**VICE CHAIRMAN:** Charles Huebener..... Brighton  
**SECRETARY:** Marcie Tonsor..... Jerseyville  
**TREASURER:** Robert Moore..... Medora  
 Robert Lehmann..... Girard  
 Tyler Heyen..... Raymond  
 Dwayne Milner..... Piasa  
 James Niemann..... Litchfield  
 Todd Stewart..... Nokomis

## STAFF

Joe Heyen.....President/CEO  
 Jeremy Pattillo.....Director of Finance and Accounting  
 Jennifer Peterson.....Executive Administrator  
 Matt Eisenmenger.....Director of Operations  
 Bob Brandon.....Director of Engineering

## EDITOR

Eric Cooper.....Communications &  
 Member Services Coordinator

MJM Along the Lines (USPS 854-620) is published monthly for \$4.75 per year, per member by MJM Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 80, Carlinsville, Illinois 62626. Second-class postage paid at Carlinsville, IL. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to MJM Along the Lines, P.O. Box 80, Carlinsville, IL 62626.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# IN THIS ISSUE

## 4 EARTH DAY 2024

A few simple actions can make a big difference.

## 5 AMI 2.0

Discover the features and benefits of the new AMI meters.

## 6-7 WHAT LURKS UNDER THE DIRT?

April is Safe Digging Month, call 811 before you dig.

# MEMBER TRADING POST

**FOR SALE:** 2-8X10 New Insulated White Garage Doors & Openers, ordered through Lowe's, Wayne Dalton Doors \$1000, OBO call 618-791-7464

**FOR SALE:** Firewood seasoned & Split, 6' Pickup Bed \$100, can deliver for a bit more. Call Leroy 618-972-4658

**FOR SALE:** Washburn dreadnought acoustic guitar, full size, with hard shell case, great sound, good condition \$200 217-320-1011

**FOR SALE:** Oak Kitchen Table with 3 chairs and bench. Table is approximately 5 feet long and comes with several table coverings. Cash Only. Phone 618-973-9338.

**WANTING TO BUY:** Vintage John Deere tractors and dozers. Hand-crank or electric start, running or not, Bunker Hill area. Call: 618-402-4420

To list your free ad, email [info@mjmec.coop](mailto:info@mjmec.coop), call 217-707-6156, or mail the ad to MJM Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 80, Carlinsville, IL 62626.

Each ad will run for one month. Some restriction may apply.



# EARTH DAY 2024

by Eric Cooper, MJM Communications & Member Services Coordinator



Earth Day is considered one of the world's largest civic events, and on April 22, we can all be part of this global movement to help the environment.

There are many ways we as individuals can help the environment, and some are easier than you'd think. Here are a few simple actions you can take now to reduce your energy use.

## AUDIT YOUR LIGHT BULBS

Swapping out any remaining incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency, and it's one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bill.

## MAINTAIN YOUR HVAC SYSTEM

Replace your home air filters to allow your HVAC system to run more efficiently. Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Changing the filters makes your unit run more efficiently – keeping your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

## EXAMINE YOUR SMART OR PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT.

Make sure it is programmed for the current season and family schedule. This is one of the best tools at your fingertips, however, you can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly

and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

## SEAL WINDOW AND DOORS.

Seal leaks with weather stripping and caulk to keep cool air indoors during warm months and prevent cold air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and increase efficiency.

While these suggestions may not be glamorous actions worthy of a press release or event, they do make a difference. And we're always here to help if you want more information on how you can save energy. Stop by our office, email us, or give us a call.

As we celebrate Earth Day this April, let's continue to work together and make a positive impact on our local community – and our beautiful planet.



## REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

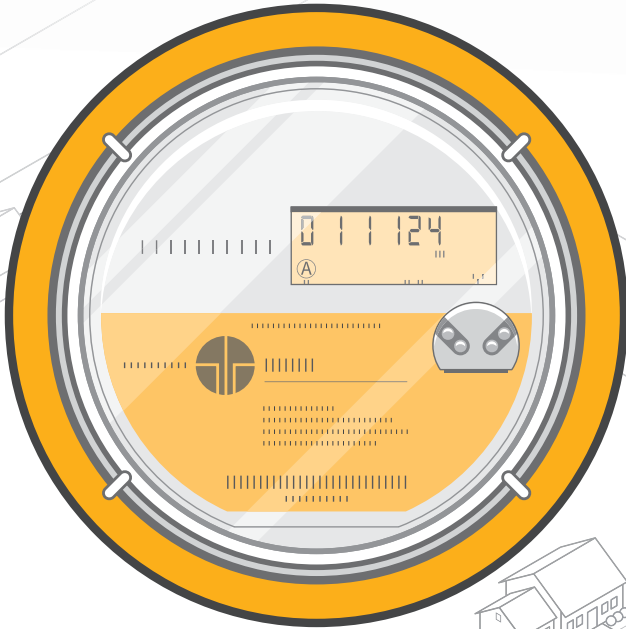
If you have a passion for helping your local communities & non-profit organization and are currently participating in MJM's Operation Round Up program, you are a great fit for our Grant Review Committee! If you are interested, please contact the MJM office at **217-707-6156** or email [info@mjmec.coop](mailto:info@mjmec.coop).

This committee meets four times a year to determine which organizations within the MJM service area are funded through the Operation Round Up Program.



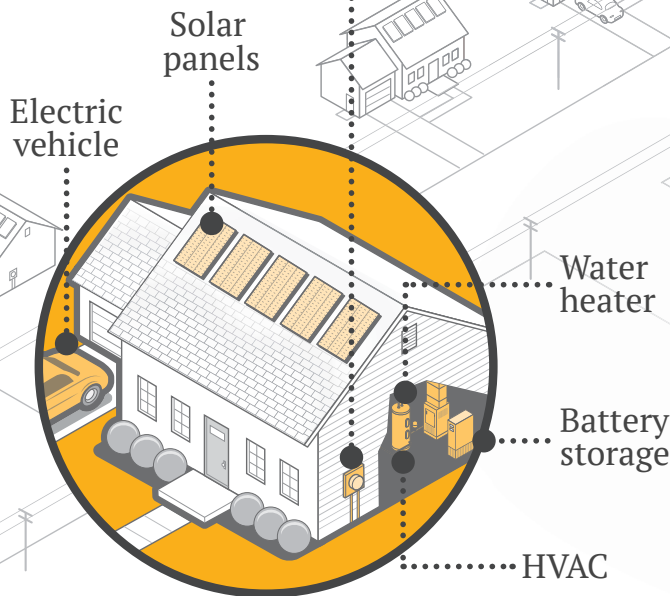
# AMI 2.0

Advanced metering infrastructure or AMI has been the state of the art for utilities for the past 20 years, and electric cooperatives have been among its earliest and most aggressive adopters. Now, as those first-generation meters begin to age out, highly advanced AMI 2.0 systems are set to revolutionize the industry, with new edge-computing and data collection and analysis capabilities that promise to enable multiple new applications and improve the reliability and flexibility of the grid. Here are some of the benefits of AMI 2.0.



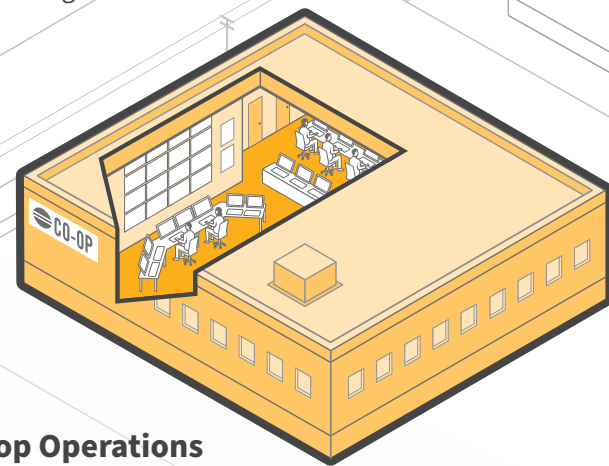
## Meter Features

- Faster, more accurate readings.
- More frequent transmissions.
- Enable greater control of energy-producing and consuming devices.
- Sample voltage and amperages on demand.
- Independently detect anomalous conditions.
- Applications pushed to meters to meet new needs.
- Faster processor.
- Increased memory.
- Longer-lasting batteries.



## Member Benefits

- Better integration of distributed energy resources.
- Ability to combine a standard meter and a net meter into a single unit.
- Improved customer awareness of consumption, pricing.
- Real-time home energy management, load control and outage/usage alerts.



## Co-op Operations

- Better data acquisition and analytics at grid edge.
- Improved member engagement.
- Integration and tracking of DERs.
- Design innovative energy programs.
- Evaluate, measure and verify cost/energy savings.
- Improved power quality and resilience.
- Quicker outage restoration.
- AMI network self-healing capabilities.
- Load disaggregation functionality.
- Virtual power plants.





**CALL  
BEFORE  
YOU DIG**

**Are you planning an outdoor project that involves digging?**

Your property may contain buried utility lines. Call 811 before you break ground. Your local utility companies will visit your site and mark the location of any underground lines free of charge. Knowing where utility lines are buried will help you avoid injury, service outages and costly repairs.

**Each utility type is marked with a specific color:**

-  Electric
-  Gas
-  Communications
-  Water
-  Sewer



# WHAT LURKS UNDER THE DIRT: CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

by *SafeElectricity.org*

April is Safe Digging Month. The observance reminds anyone considering an outdoor project that breaks ground to get underground utilities marked in advance. Having them marked is free and easy to do; simply call 811 at least two full business days prior to starting a digging project. While state laws vary, utility companies generally have a few days to respond to your request.

If you don't take the time to call before you dig, you could become the person who digs in an unmarked yard and strikes an underground line every nine minutes. No one wants to be that person.



Underground utility lines could be anywhere, and they also shift over time. They should always be marked in advance because some can be found only a few inches below the surface.

The long version of the 1971 song American Pie is almost 9 minutes long. That means if the song was played in a loop with a pause in between, a person would hit an underground line each time the song replayed. Every nine minutes, a person would be saying (or singing), "Bye-bye (Miss American Pie)" to some hard-earned cash. Fines aside, digging without knowing what is below the dirt could cause serious injury or a power outage.

People are tempted to skip calling in advance because they think striking a buried line will not happen to them. They assume that they will 'not dig too deep' or that they will 'be careful.' However, underground lines are unyielding. Their path is unpredictable and hitting one can happen with one strike of a shovel or other tool.

"You might think you are just installing a mailbox or just using a post-hole digger or planting only a small flower bed" says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. "However, underground utility lines could be anywhere, and they also shift over time. They should always be marked in advance because some can be found only a few inches below the surface."

Kevin Chmura, director of public relations for Illinois' one-call notification service JULIE, Inc., agrees. "Protect yourself and your family. Striking a single buried utility line can cause injury, repair costs, penalties and inconvenient outages," he says. Every project, big or small, requires advance notification to 811. To start the underground utility marking process, call 811 or go to your state's own 811 center website.

According to Chmura, examples of projects that require utility location include putting up a fence, installing a mailbox post, building a deck or patio, and planting trees and shrubs; however, this is not an all-inclusive list. Any project that breaks ground requires that underground utilities be marked.

After submitting a request, underground lines will be marked by their respective utilities; however, locators do not mark private lines such as service to outbuildings, underground sprinkler systems or a gas line to a grill, for example. Private lines are the responsibility of the homeowner.

If you are only digging in a small area of your yard, you can outline the area in white spray paint or with white flags to ensure that only that part of your yard will be located and marked. (White flags are available at home improvement stores.)



### There are five steps to safer digging:

1. Pre-mark the proposed dig area with white paint or flags.
2. Call 811 or go online to submit your locate request before you dig. There is no charge for the service.
3. Wait the required amount of time (typically two business days).
4. Respect the marks and do not move any flags.
5. Dig with care. Avoid digging on top of or within 18–24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

For more information about 811, visit [call811.com](https://www.call811.com)

The logo for Safe Electricity.org, featuring a stylized white plug icon to the left of the text 'Safe Electricity.org' in white, all set against a dark green background.





## LINWORKER SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE



The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship helps pay for costs to attend lineworker school. The \$2,000 scholarship is awarded annually to an individual who is related to an Illinois rural electric cooperative employee or director; is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative member; is enrolled in the Lincoln Land lineworker's school; or has served or is currently serving in the U.S. armed forces or National Guard.

Awarded for the first time in 2011, the scholarship was endowed by LaVern and Nola McEntire to assist students attending lineworker's school at LLCC. LaVern served as a lineworker for more than 42 years at McDonough Power Cooperative.

The deadline to apply for this scholarship is **April 30, 2024**. Apply at: [aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship](https://aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship)

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: energy.gov