

ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO SAFELY PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

NOVEMBER 2025

VOL.18, NO. 11

UTILITY EASEMENTS

Why they are necessary.
pg. 6

**2025 LINEMAN'S
SAFETY RODEO**

Photos & Recap
pg. 8

HOME LIGHTING 101

Helpful Guide
pgs. 10-11

NOVEMBER CALENDAR



November is Military Family Month

Nov. 2: Daylight Saving Time: Fall Back

Nov. 11: Office Closed - Veterans Day

Nov. 20: Rural Health Day

Nov. 27 & 28: Office Closed

UPCOMING

Dec. 24 & 25: Office Closed

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1: Office Closed

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



THE SEASON OF GIVING



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



As the holiday season approaches and the air turns crisp, we're reminded that this truly is the season of giving. It's a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another—and at MJM, that's something we take to heart year-round.

You've probably heard us talk about our concern for community. It's not just a nice phrase—it's one of the core principles that makes electric cooperatives like ours different from other utilities. We're not just here to keep the lights on (though of course, we're always working hard to do that). We're here to make life better for the people we serve—our members, our neighbors and our friends.

Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our co-op family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, to keep our community strong and to build something better for the future. That spirit of generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season.

Take our Operation Round-Up program, for example. Thanks to the generosity of members like you who round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar, we're able to provide real help to local families who are struggling to make ends meet. Every little bit adds up—and it makes a big difference.

We're also proud to support local students through the Youth Tour program, where we send some of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., to see democracy in action and dream big about their futures. That's giving in the most meaningful way—by investing in tomorrow's leaders. In addition, MJM and Illinois Electric Cooperatives offer annual scholarships to graduating seniors. See pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter for details and application information for the Class of 2026.



And because we care deeply about safety, we also spend time visiting schools throughout the communities we serve, holding demonstrations and teaching folks of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We believe knowledge is a gift too—and we love sharing it.

You'll also find our team out in the community beyond work—coaching youth sports, volunteering at local events, serving on non-profit boards, and partnering with our Chamber of Commerce to keep our local economy strong. Because when you're part of a co-op, giving back isn't a requirement—it's just what you do.

While the holiday season is a festive time, we understand these can be tough times for many. If you need advice on saving energy to reduce your energy bills, want to explore payment plan options, or you simply have questions—please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help, not just during the holiday season, but all year long.

At MJM, we believe concern for community is more than a value—it's the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we're especially grateful to be part of such a caring, generous community.

From all of us at MJM, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.



ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative
www.mjmec.coop

18300 SHIPMAN ROAD, PO Box 80
CARLINVILLE, 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: Todd Stewart.....	District 8
VICE CHAIRMAN: Charles Huebener.....	District 3
SECRETARY: Marcie Tonsor.....	District 9
TREASURER: Tyler Heyen.....	District 6
Dwayne Milner.....	District 2
Frank Welling.....	District 5
James Niemann.....	District 7
(Vacant).....	District 1
(Vacant).....	District 4

STAFF

Joe Heyen.....	President/CEO
Brian Gunning.....	Finance and Accounting Manager
Jennifer Peterson.....	Office Manager
Matt Eisenmenger.....	Operations Manager
Martin Hinton.....	Engineering Manager
Bob Brandon.....	Right of Way Manager

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, Carlinville, Illinois 62626. Second-class postage paid at Carlinville, IL. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to MJM Along the Lines, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

IN THIS ISSUE

4

Scholarship Reminder

Class of 2026 can apply by December 31st, 2025.

8

Utility Easements

How they are critical to the grid.

10

Home Lighting Guide

Lumen and wattage recommendations.

MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Large 2-story red barn, you tear down and haul away, \$1,200. A 1960 Ford tractor, 2000 Series, new tires & battery, good paint, \$5,800. Call: 618-376-4006

FOR SALE: A 60" Bell Mower, John Deere 3320, works good, \$500. Speeco quick hitch CAT1, \$75. Rear weight box, 3pt, 500lbs, \$250. Litchfield area. Call: 217-324-3627

FOR SALE: Large grass hay bales in the Litchfield area, \$35 each. Call: 217-324-2869

FOR SALE: Vintage soda, peanut butter jars, and canning jars. Call: 618-494-8099

FOR SALE: Commercial grade elliptical machine. Purchased from Fitness for All. \$500 OBO Text: 217-691-1492

FOR SALE: A 7x24ft aluminum Wilson livestock trailer. 3 compartment, 14-ply tires. Very good condition. Carlinville. Call: 217-473-5868

FOR SALE: Antique RR Crossing Signs. Cast Iron, 4ft long, 9in wide, 3/4in thick, very heavy. One is painted, one is not. Serious offers please. Call: 217-371-1102 (leave message)

FOR SALE: 5-acres of land with spring-fed creek at a dead end road, 20k/acre. Great for a camping or building site. 2 leather motorcycle jackets, new, never worn, XL & M, \$100 for both. Leather gaming chair, \$100. 6ft Landpride Brushhog \$1,200. A 2015 Kia Sportage, red, 144k miles, \$6,500 (OBO). John Deere S725 54in mower deck out front, runs good, \$3,000. Call: 618-376-5121

To list your free ad, email info@mjmec.coop, call 217-707-6156, or mail the ad to MJM Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 80, Carlinville, IL 62626.

Each ad will run for one month. Some restriction may apply.
No Ads in May edition/Annual Meeting Booklet

POWERING YOUR FUTURE

17 SCHOLARSHIPS \$3,000 EACH



2025 MJM Scholarship recipients Olivia Reid, Macie Wright, and Addison Strohbeck with MJM President/CEO, Joe Heyen

At MJM, we believe the key to a brighter future lies in empowering the next generation. That's why electric cooperatives across Illinois are committed to investing in youth through scholarships that honor the legacy of our cooperative family while fueling the dreams and goals of tomorrow's leaders.

In 2026, the electric cooperatives of Illinois will award 17 scholarships of \$3,000 each to outstanding students as part of the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

"This program is about more than financial aid — it's about empowering students," said Eric Cooper, the scholarship program representative at MJM. "While honoring those who came before us, we are investing in the future. Illinois'

electric cooperatives are always looking for ways to spark positive change in our communities, and supporting youth through scholarships is one of the most impactful ways we can help shape tomorrow."

The general scholarship application deadline is Dec. 31, 2025, and the lineworker scholarship is due by April 30, 2026. For more information, contact Eric Cooper at 217-707-6156 or visit aiec.coop. Information has also been shared with area high school guidance counselors.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the next wave of bright minds in our co-op communities," said Joe Heyen, President/CEO of MJM. "These scholarships ensure that our future is powered by knowledge, service and a shared commitment to excellence. Together, we can light the way to a brighter tomorrow."



2025 IEC Scholarship Recipients at the AIEC Annual Meeting

2026 SCHOLARSHIPS INFORMATION

This year, the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program will award \$3,000 scholarships to 17 deserving Illinois students in the “electric cooperative family” to assist them with their educational costs. MJM also awards two \$1,000 scholarships, chosen by a review committee at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives from these applications:

10 scholarships are awarded to high school students who are the child of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.
(Deadline to apply **Dec. 31, 2025**).

5 scholarships are reserved for high school students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the child of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees, or directors.
(Deadline to apply **Dec. 31, 2025**).

1 scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a high school student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.
(Deadline to apply **Dec. 31, 2025**).

1 scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, is awarded to a student to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL.
(Deadline to apply **Apr. 30, 2026**).

For more information about the IEC Memorial Scholarships, please contact: MJM Communications & Member Service Coordinator, Eric Cooper at 217-707-6156.

Application Links:
www.mjmec.coop/scholarships

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers will try anything to pressure customers into providing their personal information. If you are ever asked to pay your utility bill through a third-party transaction app, such as Cash App or Venmo, it's a scam. Remember, utilities will never request a payment through a third-party app. Always use authorized payment methods when paying your utility bills.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

With the holiday season approaching and more time spent in the kitchen, consider ways to save energy in the heart of your home. When possible, cook meals with smaller, energy efficient appliances, such as toaster ovens, slow cookers and air fryers. When using the range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean so they reflect heat more efficiently. After your holiday meals are complete, load the dishwasher fully before starting the wash cycle.

Source: energy.gov



UTILITY EASEMENTS ARE CRITICAL TO THE GRID

Utility easements allow providers to install and maintain infrastructure—such as power lines, underground cables, or equipment—without needing to renegotiate access every time work is required. When utility easements are in place, workers can respond to outages and perform routine maintenance quickly and safely. Unclear easements can delay service restoration, increase costs, and pose safety risks. This increases the reliability of your electricity, saves time and money, and allows the electric distribution system to operate equitably for all members.

WHY ARE EASEMENTS NECESSARY?

They are implemented because it is more efficient and less expensive to run utility lines straight through neighborhoods than it is to run them around parcels of land. Having right-of-way access does not mean utilities can do whatever they want in your yard. It does mean they can use the area in a way that is advantageous to you, your neighbors and your community.

Utility lines that allow for electric, gas, telephone, cable, and fiber optic services cover a lot of area. Underground, there's more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman, and child in the United States. In total there are 100 billion feet of underground utilities in the U.S. according to data compiled by the Common Ground Alliance. Also massive in scope and range, overhead lines span millions of miles across the country.

SUPPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Easements are critical for expanding or upgrading utility networks. Your Co-op always works with property owners to collaboratively design new construction or upgrades.

An easement is a legal right to use someone else's land for a specific purpose. It doesn't transfer ownership — just the right to use the land in a certain way. Utility Easements allow utility companies (electric, water, gas, sewer, or telecommunications) to install and maintain infrastructure on private property.



PROTECTS PROPERTY OWNERS AND UTILITIES

A formal easement clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of both the property owner and the utility, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or unauthorized use. Documented easements simplify real estate transactions by clarifying land use rights for future buyers, lenders, and developers. There are different types of easements (driveway, utility, drainage, sidewalk, etc.), and each entity will need its own easement for your property.

Property boundaries change frequently as parcels are resized, bought, developed, and sold — however, easements remain. This is because they “run with the land,” meaning they remain in place even when property is sold.

TREE PLANTING AND RIGHT-OF-WAY CONSIDERATIONS

If you want to plant trees in your yard, think carefully about where you put them. Planting trees in the wrong spot can cause problems with power lines. This could cost a lot of money to fix, may cause power outages, and can be dangerous.

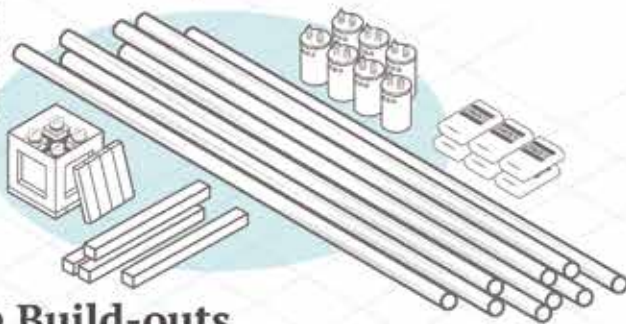
Don't plant trees right under power lines (or above underground lines), next to poles, or close to electrical equipment. The same rule goes for bushes, flowers, or any buildings. These things could block workers who need to fix or check the power lines, and could be removed or damaged in emergency or maintenance situation, so make sure to keep them out of the area marked for power lines.

Infrastructure Costs

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and for broadband providers, pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend. **Percent increase since 2020:**

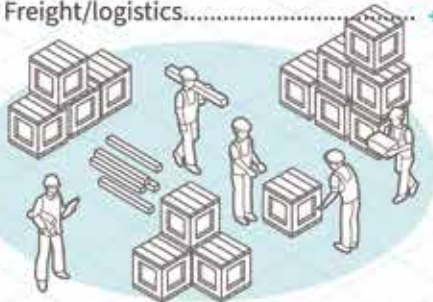
● Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood)	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper)	+30-50%
Transformers	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel	+80-100%
Oil/dielectric fluids	+25-40%
Copper wiring	+50%
Concrete	+25-35%
Smart meters	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers	+20-35%



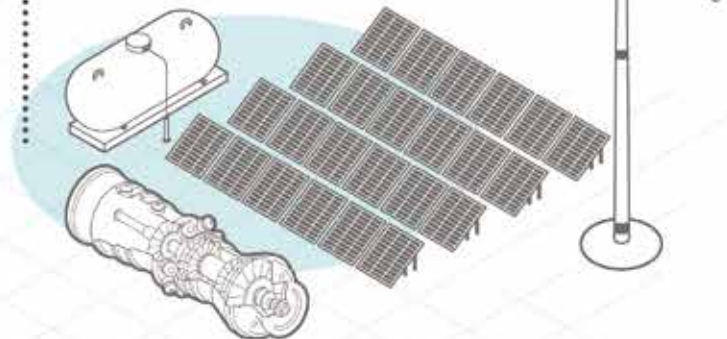
● Build-outs

Utility construction labor	+20-40%
Freight/logistics	+30-60%



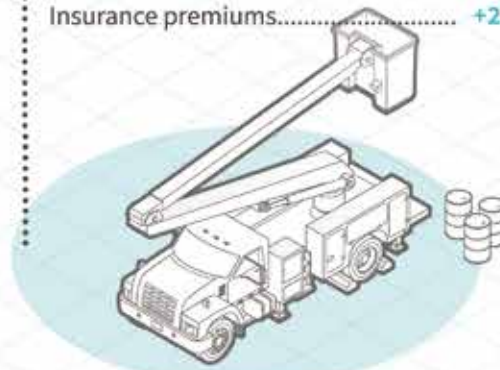
● Generation

Diesel gensets	+20-40%
Gas turbines	+20-30%
Solar PV systems	+25-35%
Wind turbines	+25-35%
Hydropower components	+20-30%
Battery storage	+25-40%
SCADA/EMS systems	+20-30%
Inverters	+20-30%
Relays & switchgear	+25-40%
Natural Gas	+20-120%
Coal	+30-60%
Diesel/fuel oil	+40-70%



● Fleets

Light trucks	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel)	+20-30%
Maintenance	+15-25%
Insurance premiums	+20%



The cumulative rate of inflation in the United States between 2020 and 2025, as measured by the standard Consumer Price Index (CPI), was approximately 25.18%, meaning a dollar in 2025 buys what \$0.75 could buy in 2020. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

We understand the cost for essentially everything is rising, and that puts a strain on everyone. As MJM navigates rising industry costs, we are actively exploring ways to control costs for our members.

Sources: BLS; energynews.com; Reuters; Wood Mackenzie; NREL; IEA

2025 LINEMAN'S SAFETY RODEO

M.J.M. ELECTRIC LINE PERSONNEL COMPETE IN LINEMAN'S SAFETY RODEO

SPRINGFIELD – Line personnel from M.J.M. Electric Cooperative participated in the annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo coordinated by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) on Thursday, Sept. 25. Eighteen teams from 13 electric co-ops and two municipal electric utilities participated in the friendly competition. Ten competed individually. The event was held at the LLCC Line School yard in Springfield.

M.J.M. Electric Cooperative personnel Zach Porter, Tyler Strack and Andrew Wieseman competed as a team at the rodeo. They competed against other teams from across Illinois in events using skills that focus on agility, speed and accuracy. While these skills are part of the judging criteria, above all, participants are judged on safe work practices.

Line personnel competed in an armor rod install, cutout change, hurt man rescue, 40-foot transition climb and transition climbing challenge.

Scores for each event are based on completion time, proper execution of the task and safety. Deductions were made to a team or individual's overall performance score due to mistakes such as slipping when climbing poles, dropping tools or executing inappropriate procedures or methods. Congratulations to our lineworkers on their team and individual efforts.



SMARTHUB

NOTIFICATIONS & PAYMENTS MADE EASY



Sign up for a number of different notifications using our SmartHub app. Pick and choose the ones that you want to receive! Planned outages, regular outages, billing changes, payment due, payment confirmations, auto pay, and many more you can choose from.

Log into your SmartHub account and navigate to the notification screen to manage your notifications. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call us during regular business hours at 217-707-6156 and press option #2. You can also find helpful videos on our website: mjmec.coop/smarthub-help



Billing Notifications – Bill Available, Credit Card Expiration, Delinquent Notices, Declined Auto Pay, Payment Confirmation, Payment Posted, Payment Reminders, Scheduled Payment Notifications.



Service – Planned Power Outages, Power Outage, Power Outage Restored



Miscellaneous – Auto Pay, Login Credentials Change, Personal Info Change

To set up the specific notifications that you want, simply log in to SmartHub and go to:
"Settings > Manage Notifications."

- **PAY BILLS ONLINE**
- **TRACK YOUR DAILY USAGE**
- **REPORT OUTAGES**
- **GET NOTIFICATIONS**



WE VALUE YOUR INPUT

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Participate in our Member Survey

You – our cooperative members – are our guiding force. In late fall, we are conducting an online survey to gather your input, and shape our services and vision for the future.

MJM members who had an email address linked to their MJM account as of the end of September may receive an invitation via email in **November or December** to participate in this survey. Your responses will help ensure that we are serving our community effectively, planning to meet local needs, and responsive to opportunities to improve how we serve you.

As a member-owned electric cooperative, our members are our purpose. We exist to serve you, and we are committed to providing the highest level of service now and into the future. Thank you for your membership and your input!

If you have any questions about the survey, please call the MJM office at: 217-707-6156.

THANK YOU MJM MEMBERS!

HOME LIGHTING 101



Lighting is something most of us don't think much about—until it's wrong. Maybe the living room feels too dim for reading, or the kitchen lights cast an odd yellow glow. We often grab whatever bulb or fixture looks good without considering how it will actually perform in the space. But with a little planning, you can make your home brighter, cozier and more energy efficient.

WATTS VS. LUMENS

When you're shopping for lightbulbs, it's easy to focus on watts, but watts only measure how much energy a bulb uses. When it comes to brightness, what really matters is the lumen count. Lumens measure the actual light output. For example, an 800-lumen bulb gives off about the same amount of light as an old-fashioned 60-watt incandescent bulb. (You've likely replaced all incandescent bulbs with long-lasting, energy efficient LEDs, but if not—it's time to make the switch!)

A helpful rule of thumb: higher lumens mean brighter light, while lower watts mean less energy consumed. Remember to check wattage ratings for fixtures and only install bulbs that meet the fixture's wattage safety requirements.

COLOR TEMPERATURE AND CONSISTENCY

Light bulbs also vary in color temperature, which ranges from warm yellow to cool white or even bluish tones. This detail often gets overlooked—until you replace one bulb and notice the new light doesn't quite match the others. If mismatched tones drive you crazy, consider buying and installing bulbs of the same brand and wattage in a room at the same time. That way, the look stays consistent, and you won't be stuck hunting for a perfect match later.

DIMMERS AND SWITCHES

Installing dimmers instead of standard on/off switches can be a game changer. Dimmers give you more control over brightness, help save energy and create a more comfortable atmosphere. Not all bulbs are dimmable, so double check labels before buying.

While you're thinking about switches, consider whether you have enough of them—and in the right places. A light you can only turn off from one end of a hallway quickly becomes annoying. For new installations or upgrades, it's best to hire a licensed electrician to ensure everything is wired safely and efficiently.

FIXTURES: FORM MEETS FUNCTION

Bulbs are only part of the equation—fixtures matter too. Each type serves a purpose. Ambient lighting, like sconces or glass-covered ceiling fixtures, provides general illumination. Task lighting, like pendants, desk lamps or track lighting, focuses light where you need it most.

When choosing a fixture, think beyond looks. Ask yourself: does this light provide the right amount of brightness for the space? A beautiful chandelier might look perfect over the dining table but leave the rest of the room too dim. Alternatively, an oversized fixture could flood the room with more light than you need, wasting both energy and money.

SMART LIGHTING: ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEETS CONVENIENCE

Smart lighting adds another layer of control for illuminating your home. But the real magic is convenience. With smart bulbs, you can adjust brightness, set schedules or even change colors—all from your phone or a voice assistant like Alexa or Google Assistant. Want the lights to dim automatically for movie night? Or to turn on before you get home? Smart bulbs make it easy.

Smart lighting also lets you personalize your space. You can go classic with warm white tones or experiment with colors to set the mood—anything from a soft glow for winding down to vibrant hues for a party. Remember, smart bulbs still rely on power from your wall switch, which needs to stay in the “on” position for remote controls to work. If you prefer using a physical switch, consider pairing smart bulbs with a smart light switch. Many of today's smart switches also come with motion detectors, adding another level of efficiency and convenience.

Good lighting doesn't just make your home look better—it makes it feel better too. With a little planning, you can create spaces that are welcoming, functional and energy efficient. Whether you stick to traditional bulbs and fixtures or explore the flexibility of smart lighting, thoughtful choices today will brighten your home for years to come.

Home Lighting Guide



The following information outlines recommendations for home lighting, however, additional options for bulbs, fixtures and spaces in your home may be available. Sources: Home Depot, Alcon Lighting

Room/Area	Recommended Lumens	Fixture Types	Smart Tips
 Living Room	15-30 per sq. ft. 150 sq. ft. room 2,250 - 4,500 lumens	Ceiling fixtures, can lighting, lamps/ accent lighting	Use smart bulbs to adjust color temp and control remotely.
 Kitchen	30-40 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Recessed ceiling lights or flush mounts	Smart switches can be used to control zones (dining vs. prep); undercabinet motion lights offer late-night illumination.
 Dining Room	10-20 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 1,000 - 2,000 lumens	Pendant or chandelier fixture	Smart, dimmable bulbs allow various levels of brightness for ambiance.
 Bedroom	10-20 per sq. ft. 120 sq. ft. room 1,200 - 2,400 lumens	Ceiling fixtures or recessed lighting	Motion sensors are great options for nighttime use.
 Bathroom	50-80 per sq. ft. 60 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Over-vanity fixtures and/or recessed lighting	Cool LED bulbs provide brighter light for shaving, applying makeup, etc.
 Porch/ Home Entry	100-200 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. entry 10,000 - 20,800 lumens	Wall lanterns, ceiling mount and/or floodlights	Motion-activated flood lights and/or smart outdoor bulbs are energy efficient and boost home security.

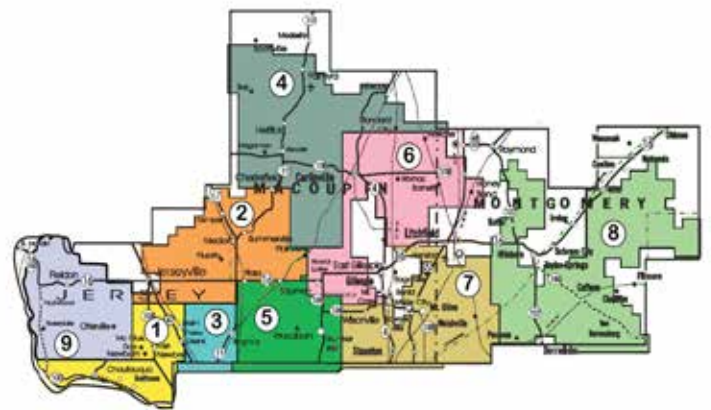


BOARD LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



MJM follows the basic principle of Democratic Member control: one Member, one vote. Did you know that as a Member of our Co-op, you are eligible to run for a Board of Director position?

The Board of Directors are your friends and neighbors. The decisions they make for your Cooperative affect their electric service the same as yours.



To know which Board of Director represents you, refer to the MJM bylaw booklet (Articles IV – Board of Directors; V – Meetings of Director; and VI – Officers, Misc.) available online at:

www.mjmec.coop/how-were-governed

For more details on how to participate, you can contact the MJM office at 217-707-6156 or email us at info@mjmec.coop.