

ALONG THE LINES



DEDICATED TO SAFELY PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

SEPTEMBER 2025

VOL.18, NO. 9

EFFICIENCY BENEFITS
ALL MJM MEMBERS

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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR



September is National Preparedness Month

Sept. 1: Office Closed-Labor Day

Sept. 11: National Day of Service/Patriot
Day/Remembrance Day 9/11/01

Sept. 16: IT Professionals Day

Sept. 21-27: Farm Safety & Health Week

Sept. 22: First Day of Autumn

Sept. 23: Voter Registration Day

UPCOMING

Nov. 11: Office Closed-Veterans Day

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.



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

WWW.MJMEC.COOP



HOW ENERGY EFFICIENCY BENEFITS ALL



BY MJM PRESIDENT/CEO, JOE HEYEN



Conserving electricity during peak energy use times can benefit our entire community.

“Peak times” refer to periods of the day when the demand for electricity is highest. Think early mornings when people are getting ready for work or school and evenings when families

return home, cook dinner and unwind with electronics. When everyone uses energy at once, it adds pressure on the electric grid.

MJM works around the clock to ensure that electricity flows to your home whenever you need it. Behind the scenes, an enormous and intricate system is at work—one of the most complex machines in the world: the U.S. power grid. The grid is made up of three major interconnections that span the country, each managing supply and demand through regional authorities to keep the lights on and our economy running smoothly.

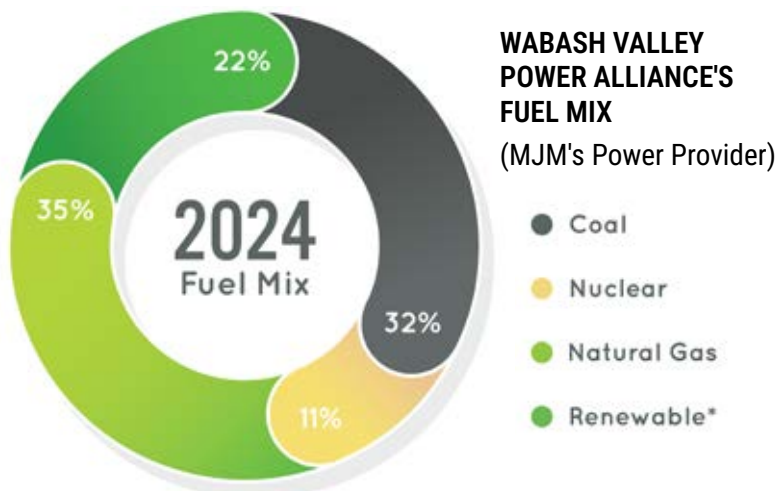
Electricity comes from a diverse mix of sources—hydropower, natural gas, coal, solar, wind and more. Some power plants can respond quickly to spikes in demand, while others are less flexible. Once energy is generated, it travels through high-voltage transmission lines to local utilities, like MJM, which then delivers it to your home or business through distribution power lines.



When the need for electricity surges during peak times, it's more expensive to generate or purchase power. If supply can't keep up, the risk of outages increases. That's why using less energy during peak hours is more important than ever. It not only eases strain on the grid but also helps you save money.

So how can you help “beat the regional peak?” Start by adjusting your thermostat a few degrees during peak hours (4p-7p). Smart thermostats can automate this for you. Delay using energy-hungry appliances like ovens, clothes washers and dishwashers until later in the evening. Charging your electric vehicle overnight instead of right after you get home can also help.

Small actions taken by many households can lead to big results. When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, we protect our power grid, help control costs and ensure reliable electricity for our communities.



ALONGTHELINES

by MJM Electric Cooperative
www.mjmec.coop

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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.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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MEMBER TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Split Seasoned Fire Wood, pickup truck bed loads \$120 or call for delivery price. Old barn boards, metal roof, and beams, free to anyone that will tear down old barn and clean up the rubble. Call Leroy @ 618-972-4658

FOR SALE: A 2015 Kia Sportage, red, 144k miles, \$6,500 (OBO). A 6ft, 3-point plow chisel, \$800. 72in land pride brush hog, \$1,500. Call: 618-376-5121

FOR SALE: New bike rack with anti-theft lock, fits four bikes. Still in original box. \$75. Call: 619-246-5216

FOR SALE: Dusty Strings-Handcrafted Hammered Dulcimer musical instrument. Looks like new. Extras include: case for instrument, hammers for playing, tuning fork, two different stands for instrument, music stand that connects to instrument, numerous hammer dulcimer music books. Asking \$450.00 for everything, (OBO). Litchfield area. Call or Text: 217-556-9573.

FOR SALE: Player Piano Rolls, 68 rolls in original boxes and 11 without boxes, plus documentation for many and catalogs, plus some roll "sealers, all for \$75, Bunker Hill area. Call: 618-585-4824.

FOR SALE: Ducks Unlimited Framed Prints – numbered, Porcelain dolls/collectables, Precious Moments figurines; Precious Moments child's birthday set, Denim Kids/Days (Home Interiors) figurines, Cherished Teddies – child's birthday figurine set; Avon Steins with original box. Call 618-791-2766

FOR SALE: Eastlake Victorian vintage settee/sofa, \$295. Duncan Pfyfe vintage green painted drop leaf table, \$225. Antique "Smiley Pig" cookie jar, \$275. Litchfield area. Call: 217-710-5614

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

AI TOOLS FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

by The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. AI is a hot topic—sometimes exciting, sometimes a little scary. It has the potential to bring many opportunities—and a few challenges—to the electric utility sector. But machine learning takes time, and we're still in the process of determining how AI can really be utilized.

Many electric cooperatives are already exploring emerging technologies like AI, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Most of AI's current applications are task-specific—like using chatbots to answer common questions from co-op members or analyzing data to better understand members' needs.

Contrary to what Hollywood would have you believe, AI can't think for itself. Its abilities depend on how it's programmed, the quality of its training and the data it receives. AI is essentially about learning from patterns and making decisions based on that input—not about having thoughts or opinions of its own.

Because AI interacts with both internal systems and external networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As MJM looks to adopt tools powered by AI and other tech, we will ensure our systems are safe from potential cyber threats. Strong digital defenses are essential to using any new technology safely.

As we consider emerging AI tools, our focus won't be so much on the technology itself as on solving real problems. If AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for our members, it's worth considering. As the technology evolves, AI may eventually be built into smart meters to help members track their energy use more effectively. It could even help our staff better manage the local grid or predict storm damage to deploy crews more efficiently.

Another exciting area is AR and VR. Many electric utilities are currently testing AR for training, giving lineworkers a hands-on experience to prepare for dangerous situations before facing them in real life. In the future, smart glasses may help crews instantly identify and troubleshoot equipment in the field.

Ultimately, AI, AR and VR are tools that can help utilities like MJM serve their communities better—making energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.



SIDEBAR: The Challenges AI Brings

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence, particularly energy-intensive technologies like generative AI and large language models, is presenting several challenges for electric utilities. One of the biggest concerns is the dramatic increase in energy demand. AI relies heavily on data centers, which require massive amounts of electricity to operate. As these technologies expand, power consumption is expected to rise significantly.

This growing demand is also creating a strain on our nation's electric grid, which can lead to instability and a higher risk of outages, especially in areas that are already dealing with high energy use or aging infrastructure.

While AI tools offer great potential in improving utility operations, these challenges highlight the growing tension between AI advancement and the long-term capability of the grid.



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Solar energy is rising in popularity, and so are solar scams. If a salesperson knocks on your door promising free solar panels at zero cost or that you'll never have to pay your energy bill again, it's likely a scam. If you're interested in solar panels for your home, do your research, get multiple quotes from licensed providers who are reputable, and most importantly, take your time to ensure a smooth process.

Source: Federal Trade Commission



LOOKING AHEAD: WINTER SAVINGS & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Winter months often bring the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy before winter is here, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.

Find and seal leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes, gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings. Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows.

Air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Cover drafty windows. Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.

During winter, open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home. Close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows. Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.

Adjust the temperature. When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. Regularly schedule service for your heating system. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 5° to 10° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A smart or programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature.

Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.

Pro Tip: ALL space heaters are energy hogs and are only designed for small rooms/spaces. They will each use roughly 1,500 watts (1.5kWh) of energy per hour! That's almost an additional \$4.00/day or \$120.00/month if used 24 hours a day, and increase your Demand (kW).

ELECTRIC HEAT DISCOUNT UPDATE



Please note, starting this heating season, the electric heat discount will no longer be in effect. As of May 1, 2025, kWh usage greater than 1,100 is automatically charged at a discounted rate. This benefit is not limited to certain months like the electric heat discount. Instead, the Power Supplier Energy discount is automatically applied each month.

If you are interested in the Levelized Billing option, please reach out to us during regular business hours by calling 217-707-6156 and press option 2 for the billing department. This change will affect approximately 11% of MJM's active services.

For more info on the current rates, go to:
www.mjmec.coop/mjm-electric-rates

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.

Source: energy.gov



PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

by SafeElectricity.org

Portable or permanently installed standby generators can come in handy during long-term power outages.

However, if you do not know how to use them properly, they can be dangerous. Contact a qualified vendor or electrician to help you determine what generator is best suited to your needs. Before using, read and follow manufacturer's instructions.



If you are installing a permanent generator, it must have a transfer switch. The transfer switch prevents energy from leaving your generator and going back onto the utility electrical equipment, when it could be dangerous to a lineman or others near downed power lines, a process known as "back feed." A qualified electrician should install your generator and transfer switch. Safe Electricity has the following tips to use portable generators safely:

- **Operate it outdoors** in an area with plenty of ventilation. Never run a generator in a home or garage. Generators give off deadly carbon monoxide.
- **Do not plug a generator into the wall** to avoid back feed. Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances to the outlets on the generator.
- **Turn the generator on before plugging appliances to it.** Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage; prioritize your needs.
- **Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions.** Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it.
- **Be sure the generator is turned off and cool before fueling it.**
- **Keep children and pets away from portable generators.** Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.



DON'T LET POWER LINES become part of the landscape

3 Types of Overhead Lines



Transmission
Lines



Distribution
Lines



Service Drop
Lines

Regardless of the type or voltage, any power line can kill if the path of the electrical current is disrupted.



Always look up and look out for power lines when working outdoors.

Be careful any time you go up, whether it be on a ladder, scissor lift or in a cherry picker.



Also look for power lines when:



Operating a
crane, concrete
pump truck



Raising a
truck bed



Using any long
tool or equipment
that extends

Learn more at:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**

FARM ELECTRICAL SAFETY: PREPARATION AND AWARENESS ARE KEY



Farming is among the more dangerous occupations for several reasons, including potential for encounters with electrical hazards.

Planting and harvest season can bring long hours, weather constraints, tight schedules, seasonal workers and increased stress. Because of that, Safe Electricity reminds farmers that it only takes a split second for someone to come into contact with electricity.

From your most seasoned worker to your least, your spouse, your kids or other family members, an ag-related provider dropping off a load or applying fertilizer — any person on your farm is at risk of becoming injured or killed due to electrical contact.

Before taking to the fields, farm workers should be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment and extensions far away from them.

“Review overhead power line locations and height clearance with anyone and everyone working on the farm or doing business there,” says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. “Although farm work is filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, making time for safety, including electrical safety, can save lives.”

Never assume that because someone grew up on the farm that they understand the potential of stray voltage or other electrical hazards. Share these electrical safety tips with farm families and workers to keep them safe from accidents year round:

- **Start each morning by planning your day's work and have a safety meeting.** Know what jobs will happen near power lines and discuss how to keep assigned workers safe. Emphasize safety above speed to everyone on the farm, especially during busy seasons.
- **Educate everyone that potential electrical hazards include both direct and indirect contact with an overhead power line or pole.** Indirect contact (coming too close to a power line or pole) could cause electricity to arc/jump. Both direct and indirect contact can change electricity's path to ground. Once that path changes, the stray voltage can energize anything in its path, such as a truck, a tractor, an extension, the ground or a person.



- **Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines at all times.** Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads.
- **Encourage drivers and operators to position grain augers in their lowest position or to lower truck bed boxes before moving.** Use a spotter to make certain you stay far away from power lines.
- **Be aware** of increased height when loading and transporting larger, modern tractors with higher antennas.
- **Do not to raise equipment, such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines.**
- **Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.** If power lines near your property have sagged over time, call your utility to repair them.
- **If you are on equipment that contacts a power line, do not exit the equipment.** When you step off the equipment, you become the electricity's path to ground and receive a potentially fatal shock. Wait until utility workers have de-energized the line and confirmed it is safe for you to exit. If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. Hop as far from the vehicle as you can with your feet together. Keep your feet together to prevent current flow through your body, which could be deadly.

Contact MJM about damaged or downed power lines or poles. Utility crews would much rather check out an issue than risk a potentially dangerous situation.

Learn more at:





NATIONAL *PREPAREDNESS MONTH*

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH –

Take a few simple steps to keep you and your loved ones safe in an emergency.

1. Make a plan. Talk with your family about where you will go and how you will stay in touch during an emergency.
2. Build an emergency supply kit. Gather supplies like water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, medications, and first-aid supplies. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.
3. Stay informed. Sign up for local weather alerts and other important updates.
4. If you use a standby generator, take proper safety precautions.
5. For information on when to save and when to throw out refrigerated food after a long power outage, go to **FoodSafety.gov**.