

M MANAGER'S Messages



Central Missouri Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Brian Jacobi, P.E.

Each month, our cooperative general manager, Brian Jacobi, writes an insightful, timely and informative message to CMEC member-owners.

These messages are published in our personal CMEC monthly pages in the Rural Missouri magazine, which is distributed free of charge to all Missouri cooperative members.

Following are the messages to date, beginning with the most recent.

Enjoy learning about **your** cooperative!

August 2021

Sold in a weekend, validated over a year

It wasn't long ago that my family and I spent a long hard weekend weighing the pros and cons of the career choice that would move me from your transmission cooperative in Jefferson City to your distribution cooperative here in Sedalia (CMEC). My work in Jefferson City was very satisfying as I managed the engineering department that daily supported CMEC's engineering needs as well as seven other cooperatives' needs. Yet I felt a strange pull to join the team here and give more to the employees and members of this Central Missouri cooperative serving Saline, Pettis, and northern Benton counties.

We entered that February 2020 weekend thinking I would decide to stay in Jefferson City for my career, but we committed to spend a weekend in the CMEC service area to more fully engage in the region, pray, and evaluate our final decision. Elizabeth, our three boys, and our oldest son's girlfriend crammed into our old blue, beat-up F150. We drove down several miles of CMEC's power lines and by substations where I told the family stories of how "I got to help Rance design that line," and "Mike's crew built that line – he's the one who texted me to help with his daughter's physics homework." As you can tell, family trips can be a little different when your dad is a utility engineer. There were jokes and other random stories in the mix. So much so that I barely noticed our youngest son, Ben, occasionally crowding into the driver's seat area while I steered our truck down the county roads.

The day was topped off with a meal in the railcar at Kehde's. By that point, I was 50-50 on my decision. Another day in the area, and I knew the decision to come to Sedalia for good was the right one.

The year-and-a-half that brought us to today has had its challenges and allowed me to learn the best part about this region that my family couldn't see in a weekend: most of us are committed to the future of this place we call home. Little did I know that participating in big-picture economic and electric grid actions to benefit the future for Pettis, Saline, and northern Benton would be even more satisfying than supporting just the engineering needs of its electric cooperative. I'm looking forward to the coming decades alongside you. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Until next time,
Brian



Jacobis at Kehdes

A quick preview of your annual meeting

Will you join us for your second drive-thru annual meeting in July at the Missouri State Fairgrounds? Participation in this event as a member will provide you a \$20 bill credit and the opportunity to play an active role in guiding the future of CMEC. At the 2021 annual meeting, cooperative employees will look to streamline your experience during your participation in this integral democratic cornerstone of CMEC. Let me start that streamlined process by providing you a brief overview of items on which you will have a chance to vote.

First, you will have the opportunity to vote for one director in each of three districts up for election this year. On May 12, those candidates were reviewed and recommended by the nominating committee, which was made up of one member from each board district.

Second, you will have the opportunity to approve or reject by-law changes submitted by the Board of Directors. You can find those recommended changes in the following pages of this Rural Missouri magazine.

While these amendments do not prescribe drive-thru or online voting options, their passage will allow your cooperative to offer them in future years when they are deemed best.

The proposed changes fix one grammatical error and provide for future flexibility in our annual meetings. We were afforded the freedom to have drive-thru annual meetings in 2020 and 2021 thanks to a waiver provided by Governor Parson. To hold drive-thru meetings in future years will require a bylaw change. While these amendments do not prescribe drive-thru or online voting options, their passage will allow your cooperative to offer them in

future years when they are deemed best.

Finally, you will have the opportunity to provide the directors with much-needed feedback on whether you prefer the drive-thru style meeting or historically practiced sit-down style meeting. We saw overwhelmingly positive feedback during last year's drive-thru annual meeting, but we would like some concrete feedback on your preference as we determine meeting options for future years.

If you have questions in the meantime, we would be glad to provide you answers when you drop by, call or email the office. You can find more information about meeting location and director candidates in this magazine or on your cooperative website annual meeting page, <https://cmecinc.com/annual-meeting>. Be sure to bring the cutout from

the back cover of this magazine to further streamline your annual meeting registration process. We look forward to seeing you July 20!

Until next time,
Brian



Lynda Bell, Billing Coordinator, registering members at 2020 CMEC drive-thru annual meeting



Four easy questions and one hard answer

Do you want your cooperative to do something today that will prevent a frigid day eight-hour power outage at your home a few years from now? Do you want your cooperative to reduce overtime costs in future years? Do you want your cooperative to greatly reduce storm and nighttime power restoration exposure risks to the linemen of your communities in the coming decade? Do you want your cooperative to reduce electrical risks to the children of our three-county region through the coming decade?

I venture a guess that your answer to these questions is "yes." Upon review of our electrical system and major storm outage data, the employees here understand it is possible to accomplish all of these things that you want. We also understand that the answer to achieve these things is very hard.

What we have found is that the average member experienced two hours without power during and in the days following the January 1, 2020, ice storm. The January 13, 2019 snowstorm resulted in about four hours without power for the average member. As averages work,

Do you want your cooperative to do something today that will prevent a frigid day eight-hour power outage at your home a few years from now?

some of you experienced no outages in either storm, while others experienced 24 hours or more without power. Sixty percent of those 2021 outages were tree related. According to reports from the field, probably more than 60% were tree related during the 2019 storm.



Our historical goal of a seven year right-of-way tree clearing cycle has fallen behind, and we have fielded calls requesting trimming or removal of trees to prevent the possibility of tree contact with the line. In this, I think of my sons innocently climbing a tree near a high voltage power line. Hence the safety of our children question posed above.

So, why do I say the answer is hard? It is not because of the added cost to increase our right-of-way clearing efforts. It is because many of the trees that caused those outages were yard trees whose trunks

were within 15 feet of the power line. A big part of achieving your power reliability needs will require us to cut many trees that have been "looked over" in past right-of-way cycles. Many of those trees have stories and meaning. Many members don't want to see them go. Neither do any of the employees or the board of directors at your cooperative. Yet we find ourselves with the data saying we can't achieve your desired reliability and keep every single tree.



As we work through the present tree-clearing cycle, we will be investing more funds to achieve our seven year right-of-way goals to vastly improve your reliability. During this seven years, some of you will hear stories about the cooperative cutting trees that had meaning. Some of you have those trees with meaning. I share these things with you so you know this is not easy



for us, so you know that we care alongside you, and so you know that we are looking to do the right thing for every member as we move forward with this hard thing. I assume your lights are on as you read this. It's all about that staying the case more consistently for the coming years and in some of the most important times for you (through the cold and storms).

For information about your cooperative's right-of-way program, where best to plant trees, Missouri right-of-way statutes and more, I invite you to visit our right-of-way page: <https://cmecinc.com/right-way>.

Until next time,
Brian

Central Missouri area broadband update

The title of my letter to you this month will bring the response of “about time” from some and “the cooperative is looking to do what?” from others. What I’m about to share is bittersweet for us.

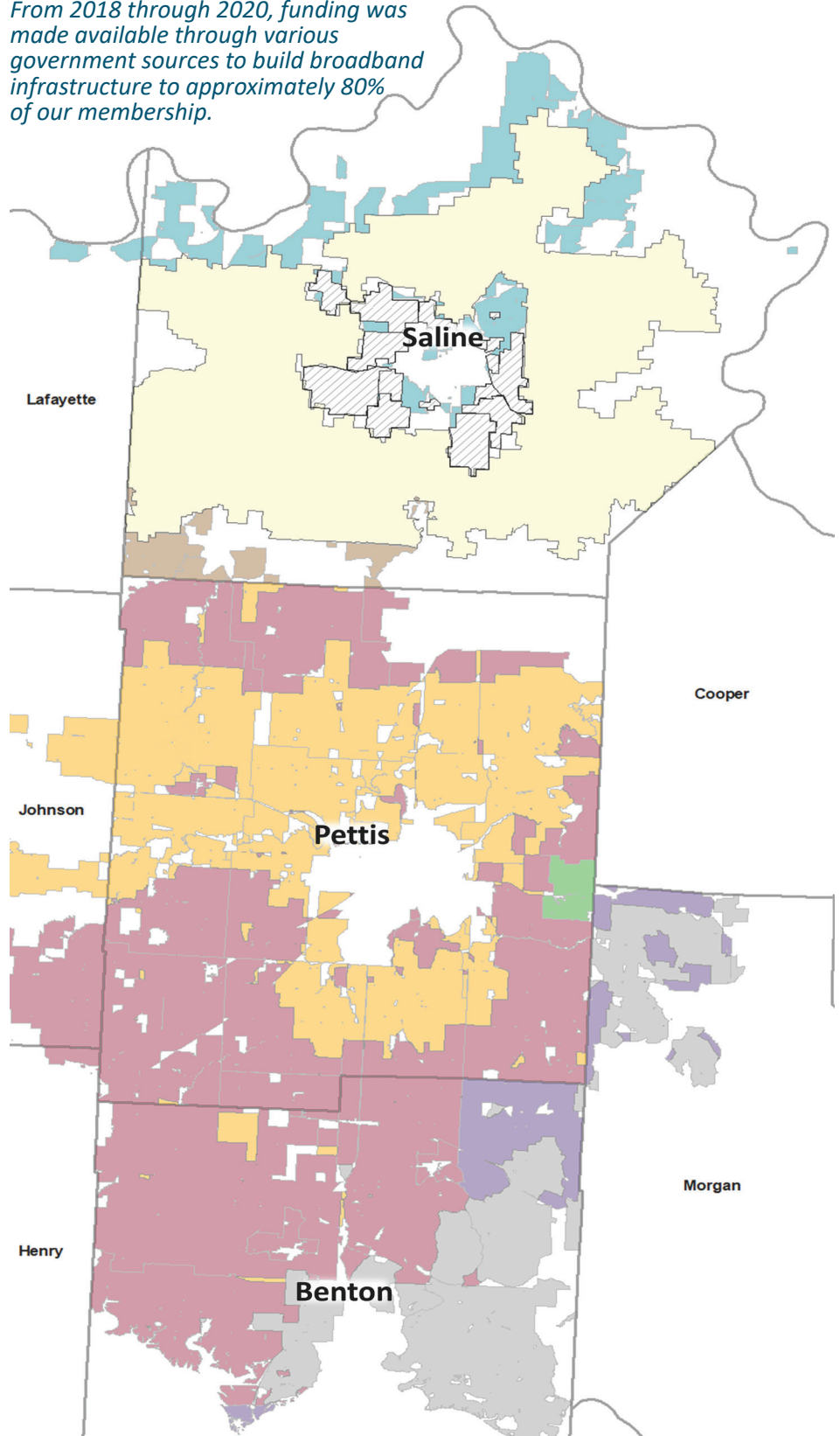
From 2018 through 2020, funding was made available through various government sources to build broadband infrastructure to approximately 80% of our membership. Through the storms and hardships of 2020, we aggressively sought a large portion of the funding to build that broadband network to the membership, but other companies won those funds.

Allow me to rewind the clock a bit that I may tell the story of how we arrived where we are today. Your cooperative reviewed the feasibility of a broadband rollout to the membership several years ago. We reviewed it again in 2019 through 2020 and found the same answer: a successful broadband business with marketable broadband rates would require a 20-30% residential and small commercial electric rate increase to subsidize buildout to the entirety of our membership. That rate increase would be on top of any other typical rate increases and would force several electric-only members to subsidize a service they did not use. We stood before a wall blocking our path forward, and that wall was low-meter density. We had between 2/3 and 1/2 the potential subscribers-per-mile when compared with multiple electric cooperatives who had successfully rolled out a Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) network to their membership.

We desired to find a way over that wall. For many months of 2020, several employees alongside some of the broadband industry’s most experienced consultants burned the candle at both ends, so-to-speak, to evaluate and prep for the possibility of a major FTTH project constructed by CMEC. Your elected CMEC board of directors led and played an active role in spurring us on as we looked to stretch the cooperative’s resources and business model well beyond prior norms.

Continued...

From 2018 through 2020, funding was made available through various government sources to build broadband infrastructure to approximately 80% of our membership.



In late October 2020, we participated in the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction. With tens of millions of dollars potentially available, we attempted to win sufficient government funding to financially subsidize a large-scale FTTH project while still keeping your electric rates reasonably low. Ultimately, we did not win funds because other companies participating in the RDOF auction implemented bidding strategies that drove available funds below 30% of full-award values – well below the cooperative's minimum threshold.

Your elected CMEC board of directors led and played an active role in spurring us on as we looked to stretch the cooperative's resources and business model well beyond prior norms.










Is this a loss for the members? That is a loaded and polarizing question. Many people would simply avoid it, but I'll do my best to answer it to our more than 8,600 members who have diverse needs, diverse means and diverse opinions. If the companies that won funding do not build a sufficiently fast and reliable broadband network to our members in funded areas in a reasonable timeframe, it is a loss to our members. If those companies do build a sufficiently fast and reliable broadband network to our members in a reasonable timeframe without detrimental financial impacts to existing infrastructure, it is a win to our members and most residents in our region.

As a reference and tool to you, we have concentrated regional broadband funding data into the map and fact table that you find on these pages. They give me hope, and perhaps they will provide the same to you. **Cautious hope.**

While we must close the door on FTTH construction and business planning at the moment, we keep our eyes open, particularly watching for these recently funded companies to keep their word in providing broadband services to our members.

Until next time,
Brian

While we must close the door on FTTH construction and business planning at the moment, we keep our eyes open, particularly watching for these recently funded companies to keep their word in providing broadband services to our members.

Broadband Map Legend	
<u>RDOF Winners</u>	
	CCO Holdings, LLC (Spectrum Parent Co.)
	LTD Broadband LLC
	Mercury Wireless, Inc.
	NexTier Consortium
	Rural Electric Cooperative Consortium
<u>CAF-II Winners</u>	
	Wisper ISP, Inc
	Rural Electric Cooperative Consortium
<u>ReConnect Winner</u>	
	Marshall Municipal (First Award)
	Marshall Municipal (Second Award)

Map Data Sources:

RDOF-<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/rdof-phase-i-dec-2020/>
 CAF-II-<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/caf2-auction903-results/>
 ReConnect-<https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/eligibility-area-map-datasets>

CMEC Region Government Funded Broadband Facts

CAF-2 - 2018: Wisper ISP, Inc won FCC funding to supply broadband to a minimum of 2,298 CMEC meter locations; Co-Mo Connect won FCC funding to supply broadband to 40 CMEC meter locations.

ReConnect - 2020: Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU) won USDA grants and/or loans to supply a minimum of 1,098 CMEC meter locations.

RDOF - Late 2020: Charter, NexTier, and other providers won FCC funding to supply broadband to a minimum of 5,387 CMEC meter locations.

In 2018-2020, RDOF + CAF-2 + ReConnect (FCC & USDA) financial sources committed support to various telecom companies (not to CMEC) for expansion of high-speed broadband service to a minimum of 8,783 CMEC meter locations. That is **79.8%** of CMEC meters.

According to FCC data, the remainder of CMEC meter locations not covered by RDOF, ReConnect, or CAF-II, either already have high speed broadband access (10/1 Mbps minimum) or have companies who were awarded other government funds to provide such service in the near future. In other words, if everyone who has been awarded funding builds, **100%** of CMEC meters are covered with high speed broadband in the short to mid-term future.

All RDOF winners in the region committed to provide Gigabit service.

Wisper ISP, Inc committed to provide 100/20 Mbps speeds in CAF-2.

We kept the power on, now what?

Because of the February Texas energy crisis and the regional rolling blackouts outside our cooperative family, I've fielded more questions about the power industry from friends and family this month than in the prior five years combined. Even so, I'm thinking more about the questions I've heard from YOU this month. Questions like Susan's "Can I do my laundry now?" which came at the end of our members' four-day energy conservation efforts. Questions like Anthony's "If this cold snap was a problem, how will you still be able to keep the power on at my barns to keep my livestock alive when a bunch of electric cars are charging at the same time five years from now?" Your system performed well through the cold, but you still deserve some answers regarding what happened, how it affected you, and what your electric cooperative does in the future.

What happened?

Your power stayed on at cooperative-served meters, and many of you conserved electricity which greatly helped accomplish this. The distribution and transmission lines that get power from generation sources to your home or business performed relatively flawlessly. They were designed for this. However, the generation sources in some regions came up short. To give you the facts, I'll have to use words that have sadly become politically charged. Words like solar, coal, wind, gas, hydro, and nuclear.

During the coldest days of 2021, the Midwest, all the way down to Texas, experienced several days with limited gas supply for power generation, limited sunlight for solar generation, and limited wind for wind generation. There were a handful of other Midwest power sources affected through these cold days (coal, nuclear, and hydro), but unplanned problems with those sources were rare. Though wind provided about 16% of your annual cooperative energy needs last year, the minimal wind and sun we experienced on these cold days is common, so systems were mostly prepared for their lack of useful generation. The gas shortages were far more unforeseen and mostly due to unwinterized infrastructure in the south, freezing due to the cold.

How does this affect you?

Future Costs. Due to the diversity of our generation mix, our jointly-owned generation cooperative, AECl, kept the power flowing to us all week. That is unlike multiple other providers in the Midwest. Without our operating coal plants which often have 30+ days of fuel on-site, many of our members would have experienced power loss. AECl still had to purchase expensive gas and some externally-sourced energy to keep the power flowing to you. This will ultimately trickle down to all members through rates. I expect this situation is common to all electric utilities in the Midwest, whether they share that fact or not. Your board of directors will be working through how that looks in coming weeks and months.

Now what?

I'll share some of my opinion with the facts in this section.

The CMEC team is reviewing these events along with our jointly-owned transmission and generation cooperatives to make sure this is a historical blip and not a future expectation. It may be reasonable to ask members to try and move some power usage by a few hours to conserve but asking them to move power usage and live uncomfortably for days is not. In my humble opinion, you deserve better.



Lost Creek Wind Farm

25% of your cooperative energy was provided by renewable generation last year (16% wind & 9% hydro). While our wind and solar generation resources might grow through coming years, they provide little-to-no part in a realistic solution to the Midwest's annual multi-day low-sun, low-wind, bone-chilling weeks. Modern grid and home battery storage options only provide minutes or hours of large-scale power support, not days. Due to gas infrastructure (not electric), we presently find gas generation less dependable than almost anyone thought just a few weeks ago. I say the following with politics set aside so that reality, YOU, and YOUR CHILDREN can be at the forefront: while renewables grow in our portfolio, generation and rate designs must maintain sufficient reliable-on-demand generation (presently coal and nuclear-based) at least into our Midwest short- and mid-term future.

In closing, let me thank you again for your efforts in energy conservation on that cold February week. All who participated were active contributors to our cooperative's success.

Until next time,
Brian



Thomas Hill Energy Center

A check under the hood

Our assistant manager, Rance Walters, was late getting in today due to a truck breakdown. It turned out that his truck abruptly lost most of its oil while driving down the road. We're thinking a lot about the condition of that engine right now, but we seldom thought about it before it stopped working. Likewise, you probably seldom think about this electric cooperative that you own, except when the power goes out. Since it's good to do a checkup from time-to-time, I'll share a short update on some things going on under the hood to ensure the good health of YOUR electrical system and business.

Despite the hardships we faced with COVID last year, we were blessed to be able to maintain costs low enough that rates have now stayed unchanged for nearly three years. Along with typical annual cost increases, we face more significant increased costs for pole replacements and Right-of-Way clearing in the coming year. Right-of-Way clearing cost increases will mostly stem from bumping our crews' clearing output for the sake of decreased future outages. Over the past several months, Rance and Gary's teams have been working through plans to accomplish these tasks as efficiently as possible without significant impacts to your rates.

Speaking of Right-of-Way, about 60% of the outage minutes experienced by our members after the January 1 ice storm were caused by trees. This statistic, coupled with what we saw in the field during restoration (see the ice storm pictures on the following pages), validates our plan for increased Right-of-Way clearing through 2021 and future years.

During the storm, the operations team experienced a huge

improvement in outage tracking and call handling as compared to major storm restoration efforts prior to our new Outage Management System (OMS).

As mentioned in my June article to you, your investment in that OMS is paying off. Even so, we saw room for improvement. Some of you may have experienced a few glitches with the automated phone system tied to the OMS during that storm. Those are some items the team here is working to fix under the hood, as well.

With this and a number of ongoing projects, such as Geographic Information System (GIS) rollout and electronic workflow management, we recently added a sort of "technology mechanic" to our CMEC family. Chance Anderson, a Pettis County local, is now coordinating and leading many of these tech-heavy efforts.



Chance Anderson
IT Coordinator

Speaking of which, I'll close out my thoughts to you so I can head over to the new website development meeting with Chance and Kerrie. That's another forthcoming upgrade we're working on under the CMEC hood. I suspect those two won't let me talk them into Red and Gold for our website color palette, but I'll try.

Go Chiefs!

Until next time,
Brian

Our best defense

This past weekend, I received a text message from a sister electric cooperative manager letting me know they had a member who barely avoided being scammed. A scammer called that member and demanded payment, indicating power would be disconnected in 30 minutes if they did not pay. The member was convinced enough that he dropped a check in the night box. Fortunately, the member did not trust the scammer on the line enough to give payment information over the phone.



If you watch or read much news, you know that scammers are often looking to make a quick buck off of you and me. At one time, phone scams were the most common approach, but today, text and email "phishing" scams have become common as well. In order to help our employees approach emails with caution, our IT department occasionally sends these phishing emails to the workers. If an employee clicks the link from the fake phishing email, they are contacted by IT and re-trained on how to identify and properly handle phishing emails from scammers.

You should always be cautious of emails and texts claiming to be from the cooperative and telling you to click on or follow a link to make a payment or update information. It is generally best not to follow such links. Rather, call the office, check your account status through our website portal or check it through your SmartHub app.

Continued...

In order to help protect you from scammers, Kerrie Casey, our Communications Coordinator, designs educational outreach through radio, Facebook and the Rural Missouri. You might occasionally get an automated message from us, because we know you appreciate knowing when utility work is occurring in your area or if you happen to be running a little late on your payment. But it is important to note that you will not get a phone call, email or text from us indicating we are disconnecting your power in 30 minutes if you don't make immediate payment. Threats like this are your first indicator that the caller or writer of the message is not legitimate.

Your best response when receiving such a call is to let the caller know you will call the cooperative back and end the phone call. Then you can call the cooperative's office number and one of our member service representatives will assure you of the status of your account. If you do not keep a magnet or a sticky note around with our phone number,

you can always visit our website or Facebook page to look it up. Additionally, rest assured that if you get a payment-request phone call from the cooperative outside of our standard weekday hours of 7 AM to 4 PM, the call is not legitimate. Even so, you can still call the cooperative 24-7 and speak to an operator to verify that the call was fake.

Finally, can I ask for one thing this month from you? Share this cautionary advice with a neighbor and/or family member. Our best defense against scammers is knowledge, and you are the best defensive player we have.

Until next time,
Brian

CMEC Office: 660-826-2900
CMEC Website: www.cmecinc.com
CMEC Facebook: www.facebook.com/cmec.coop

January 2021

Times they are a-changin'

Which is better: faster response times to member requests and phone calls, or later hours of operation? Which is better: an additional two hours for personal and family time at the end of each workday, or a third day off each week? Evaluating answers to these questions was a side-project of CMEC employees over the past several months. We studied the details of our members' highest engagement hours, and we held employee roundtables to review work-life balance. In the end, we found different member patterns and employee preferences than those that existed decades ago when our office personnel moved to the 7 AM to 6 PM workday.

Many changes in times-of-member-engagement and preferences were driven by technological conveniences added in the past decade. While the studies showed we still received in-person payments and other phone calls between 4 PM and 6 PM, those payments and calls were in lower quantities than in earlier hours of the day. The conveniences of automated phone and online pay-

ments, SmartHub app payments, and direct deposit options have reduced our members' usage of certain personal-interface services, particularly during these hours.

The changes in employee needs and preferences probably had more to do with family than anything else. As some of you can attest, it's not always easy to find a daycare provider that will keep your child past 6 PM. Fixing a meal and helping the kids with homework before getting them to bed can be tough to fit in a time-window that begins after 6 PM, too.

In the end, our study and employee roundtables revealed the average member would experience more benefit from a higher percentage of us being available to them and each other during a shorter workday than the alternative longer workday with fewer employees in the office. How is that? In order to achieve longer open-hours, our office employees rotated days-off separate from one another. So, the office operated at 67% capacity on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This led to longer lead-times for

members during our busiest hours, and a 20% chance that the employee a member called to talk with was not at the office on the day the member called.

In a transition with benefits outweighing the costs for today's and tomorrow's member's, CMEC will shift to new office operating hours in January, 2021. Our new hours of operation will be 7 AM to 4 PM. We will still take and address outage calls and notifications 24-7. Our night drop-box, beside the lobby entrance, will continue to be available for payment drop-off 24-7.

This shift will ultimately make us more responsive to member needs. That was paramount to our decision. Even so, it sure was nice that it also resulted in a number of smiling kids when mom or dad showed up two hours early throughout the coming year.

We look forward to serving you even better through this new year of 2021.

Until next time,
Brian

Local impactful responsibilities

Our communications coordinator tells me screenshots from Facebook don't always print well, but I had to share my favorite from October.

As I write this, we're a week from election day. As you read this, it is at least three weeks in your rearview. What happened that day mattered. Your vote mattered, regardless of who won. Now we have a responsibility that is even more important than that vote. Our forerunners laid a path for the blessings we now enjoy, and we wish to ensure that future generations are provided these good things and more.

This responsibility looks different for each of us. If you are like me, in this globally connected world, you sometimes forget that our opportunities for positive impacts on today and the future are accomplished close to home and in accordance with the proverbial golden rule. Regularly engaging with my sons and driving a beat-up old car so I can save to help them take their first steps into adult life with their future families is on my list of impactful responsibilities. Likewise, making wise decisions with your investments into your local electric cooperative to keep costs low so you can save for today and the future is on our accounting department's responsibilities list. Investing the right amount into your electric infrastructure to maintain reliability into future decades is on our engineering and operations departments' responsibilities list.

Like Garrett fixing the flag in the picture to the right, we work to serve a greater purpose for bigger reasons and for all, regardless of how any one of our members voted. We are grateful for what we have, and we are grateful to get to serve you now and into the future.

Until next time,
Brian

Central Missouri Electric Cooperative, Inc.
October 13 at 6:02 AM · 🌐

Our crews won't just pass by a flag twisted by the wind. They stop and fix it! God bless America! Anyone recognize the lineman in these photos?
#ThankALineworker

👍❤️👍 118 13 Comments 21 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share



Cooperating even when it's hard

Many of you may know that cooperatives operate under seven primary principles, one of which is cooperation among cooperatives. In a year unlike any of us has ever faced, working together to meet the needs of others could not be more vital. Yet in the midst of these great needs, working together is a lot more complicated than it was in 2019. We find ourselves in an environment that fights against cooperation: an environment of social distancing, quarantining, changing messages and recommendations, and an

environment that encourages picking sides over finding common ground. But these challenges have not stopped us, and we have taken advantage of them as opportunities for growth and service.

I am pleased to report that your cooperative has worked hand-in-hand with other Missouri cooperatives to support the rebuild efforts of the electric



CMEC crews working in Louisiana

grid around Beauregard Electric Cooperative of Louisiana – an area ravaged by Hurricane Laura. There was red tape. There were unknowns. But there was also resolve to do the right thing. As I write this in late September, Central



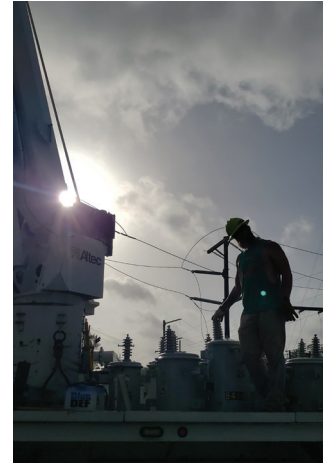
Getting the lights back on in Louisiana

Missouri Electric Cooperative has had 1/3 of our linemen in Louisiana for about 20 days. They have been an active part in restoration efforts that started with no power to the nearly 43,000 meter Louisiana cooperative. As of this writing, power has been restored to 91% of those locations.

These efforts of service have cost some of our linemen personal and family time. With 1/3 of our outside crews out-of-state, these efforts of service have cost our whole cooperative by slowing some of our local construction and outage restoration. Seeing as how this is YOUR cooperative, that means you experience some of these costs. We believe, and I think you will agree, they were worth paying. Through assisting in the restoration of power, we have been helping to meet the needs and begin the rebuilding and healing process now ongoing in Louisiana.

Few of us look back with pride on the things that cost us nothing. It is due to the efforts of our forebearers that we have the reliability of power and quality of life we enjoy today. We look to honor that legacy in providing the same and better for our children and grandchildren, regardless of the challenges that push against us.

Until next time,
Brian



Needed load of transformers



Cooperation among cooperatives. Hurricane Laura assistance

All photos by: JR Kenyon, Line Foreman

It doesn't start here

Hello friends and member-owners. In this month's Rural Missouri, you will find the third of a four-part series of articles provided by our power provider, Associated Electric Cooperative.

I hope you have had the opportunity to read some of those articles and learn a little more about the power portfolio of YOUR cooperative. I say YOUR cooperative, because, as member-owner of Central Missouri, you are part-owner of Associated Electric.

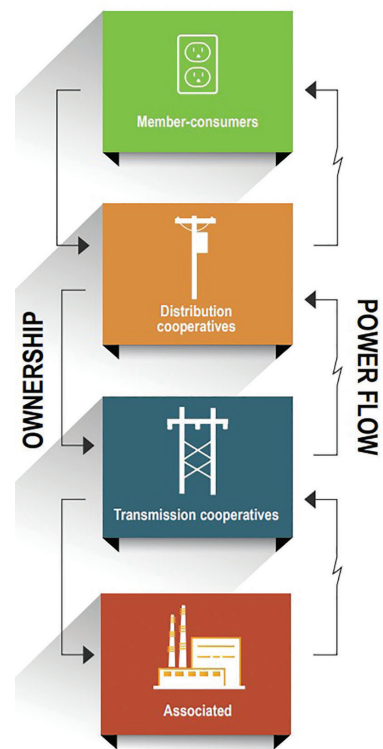
If you've read a few of my articles, you might have noticed that I have a passion for the future of your electric cooperative and the reliability of your power. That passion is common here at Central Missouri Electric Cooperative is the third part of the system that delivers power to you. I'm pleased to report that our transmission cooperative, Central Electric Power, and our generation cooperative, Associated Electric, provide a well-engineered

and well-built backbone to source the power your cooperative distributes to you. Those articles I mentioned do a great job of backing up my point.

In the articles from Associated Electric, you might have noticed the picture to the right. It does a much better job of explaining the ownership and the flow of power than can I, so I'll let it do the rest of the talking.

Until next time,
Brian

*Our three-tiered system is pictured to the right.



Graphic courtesy of AMEC.

You are us & we are you

I write this just after our July 14, 2020, annual meeting was completed. What a success! It was so good to talk with some of you and to see so many of you engaging in the democratic process that underpins the direction of our cooperative. A record 1,097 of you attended the meeting to vote, interact with the employees and directors in a brand-new way, and receive a bill credit.

Let me pause here and give a shout out to Phyllis, who dropped by the Q&A tent to raise a concern and idea from the floor. Phyllis, your thoughts were shared with and welcomed by your board of directors.

I digress. Speaking of those directors, did you ever stop to think that this company, "our" cooperative, is not just owned by, but run by the very people purchasing the power? Four directors living and purchasing power in Saline County, four in Pettis, and one in northern Benton. Each year,

candidates from three board districts are nominated by a committee made of up members in all districts. We include those committee members' names in the Rural Missouri prior to their nominating meeting, and you can reach out to them in order to discuss director candidates. The nominating committee then submits candidate names, and at the annual meeting, you select those candidates. Those directors are you – **you are us.**

Let me pause here and give a shout out to those tellers, also members, who served as ballot box witnesses and even jumped in to help the employees when you submitted ballots at this year's annual meeting.

I digress once more. Did you know that a majority of employees here are also cooperative members? After saying that, I suspect the legal team would want me to add fine print pointing out that we are an equal opportunity employer and membership does not play

a role in determination of employee selection. It just so happens that when you are locally-owned, operated and directed, like Central Missouri Electric Cooperative, you'll naturally have several employee-members. Furthermore, most everyone here desires to live on a cooperative meter because we believe in what this company does and its values. **We are you.**

What does this cooperative value? To name a few: safety, accountability, integrity, affordability, quality of life, member-focus, employee-value, performance-excellence and community citizenship. I'm pretty sure our values align with yours, because **you are us, and we are you.**

Until next time,
Brian

Maintaining for the future

Perhaps, like me, you have received a phone call from the Central Missouri office stating, "This is a courtesy call from Central Missouri Electric Cooperative. The cooperative has retained the services of [a trusted contractor] to control brush and trees in our electric line easement. Certified and licensed applicators will begin work in your area in the near future." Or perhaps you've received a similar call regarding a brief planned outage in your area. Those, specifically, often tie back to pole and hardware replacement needed to maintain a reliable, storm-hardened system. This is all part of the continuous process of your cooperative future-proofing the electrical grid you own.

A couple of months ago, I shared that we had recently rolled out an outage management system. We need this system to efficiently handle outages in the present. However, we would prefer to fix the issues causing an

outage before they even happen. That is why the cooperative works to maintain a seven-year cycle of tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance. Trees are one of the biggest culprits of power outages on the electric system. Many future outages are prevented through proper trimming and care of the electric right-of-way.

With the same goal of preventing outages of the future, we work with partners to perform system-wide pole testing so we can identify and replace structures nearing the end of their useful life. Like the right-of-way maintenance, this inspection and as-needed replacement program is also on a seven-year cycle. With an ear to the present and an eye to the future, your board of directors recently approved implementation of a geographic information system (GIS) within which the office can more effectively plan and

track these system reliability efforts. Every one of us in the office and in the field will be touched by the GIS we plan to put in place sometime in 2021. We all look forward to better serving you and preventing even more future outages as this new tool comes online.

Until next time,
Brian



Maintained right of way

Words worth sharing

I have read results from studies showing men and women speak thousands of words per day. With social distancing up, it seems likely that average word-count is down a bit. Even so, I suppose I have listened to tens, if not hundreds of thousands of words from my co-workers here at Central Missouri Electric Cooperative. There have been many words of significance during this time, but I would like to share just 18 that are a clear indicator of who you are to the workers at your local REA.

"I would give my life for the members." Those words were spoken by a lineman as we discussed the unknowns our cooperative family and personal families faced just a few days into what we now call the Coronavirus pandemic. The line workers of this cooperative understand the risks they take and their sacrifice of personal and family time as they move into an

on-call night, weekend and holiday. Your quality of life, which is directly affected by power availability, is being protected by some of the best workers in our three county coverage area. This lineman's words were a reminder that they are dedicated to you.

"I just educated a member on the availability of unemployment." That was spoken by a member service representative as we discussed member needs and sentiment during the pandemic. When a member called in to share that they had limited resources to pay that month's power bill due to a recent layoff, the conversation grew from flexible payment options into the member being educated in the recent updates to unemployment during the pandemic. There are many phone call and lobby visit stories like that around here because we care about you.

As I write this, we are preparing to

return some of our operations to a semi-normal state, with the lobby re-opened and the linemen starting some mornings at the main office site. It will be good to have my daily listening word-count increase. I am proud to say that even through a time of decreased spoken words, the actions of service that also speak have sounded even louder than the words that were missing.

Until next time,
Brian



CMEC Employees

Your new outage management system has arrived

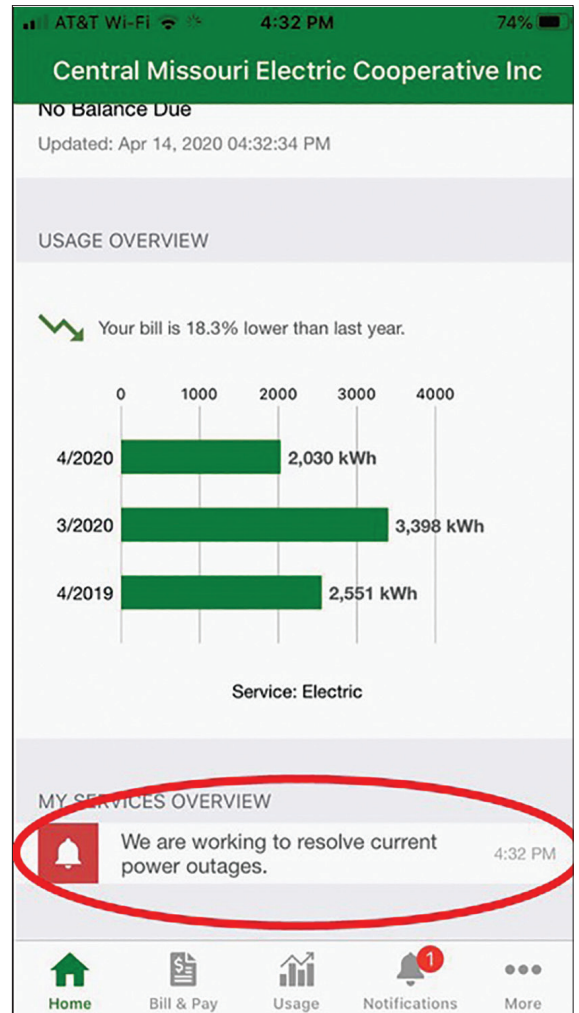
As I peer out the window of the cooperative office, north of Sedalia, I see a chain link fence to the left, the remainder of the cooperative office building and warehouse to the right and a transformer pole neatly placed near the center of the two, amid freshly mowed grass. The other employees here and I are keenly aware that each of you own a little bit of that pole, of that fence and of that warehouse.

Your ownership makes us uniquely considerate of every dollar we invest. “Will this improve the quality or reliability of our members’ power?” is often a question we ask when reviewing construction projects, tools, and software purchases for your system. I can safely answer that question with a “yes” for the outage management system (OMS) software we just rolled out. It allows you to notify us of an outage and view real-time outage information on your SmartHub app. It provides an automated phone system within which you can notify us of outages. It allows us to more quickly pinpoint outages and restore your power. It allowed us to immediately transition to paperless outage documentation during the COVID-19 epidemic. Those are just a few of the immediate advantages from this investment of your money.

In the coming months, years and decades, the data we log with each outage event will be used to identify equipment and lines more prone to failure. That will ultimately help us fine-tune your cooperative’s maintenance programs and line construction priorities, resulting in better system investment choices and higher reliability for all members.

Like the transformer pole out my window, you own a little part of this software, and we want to help you get your money’s worth out of it. If you have questions about using SmartHub online or the SmartHub app for logging outages, tracking power usage, or paying your bill, give us a call at 660.826.2900. Our member service representatives have enjoyed the operational improvements the OMS has brought in the office, and they would love to help you directly take advantage of it, too.

Until next time,
Brian



The SmartHub app on your phone can now be used to log outages and check the status of an active outage at your service location.