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Reminders

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule ends on April 15. Members on payment plans with past-due balances may be subject to disconnection. Contact MVEC at 952.492.2313 to prevent a disconnect situation or visit www.mvec.net for a list of Minnesota energy assistance resources.

Thinking about spring landscape projects?

Call before you dig! If your project includes planting trees or making an addition to your property, remember to call **Gopher State One Call at 811**. Within two business days, your project area will be marked for free, allowing you to safely begin digging.

Additional resources available 24/7 at www.mvec.net



ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

April 2018

GreenSource: Renewable options for you

MVEC is exploring member interest in expanding our renewable energy options, specifically building a community solar array. MVEC's overall renewable energy program will be known as GreenSource.

"Currently, MVEC purchases around 17 percent of our energy from renewable sources," said General Manager Ryan Hentges. "We understand some members want more, but we also understand other members don't wish to pay for additional renewable sources."

See Renewable Energy on page 2



\$1.4 million in Capital Credits paid back to members for 1994-95 usage

As a cooperative member-owner you share in its financial success. After paying all expenses involved in providing safe and reliable electric service, MVEC returns margins back to members as Capital Credits.

MVEC's Board of Directors is pleased to announce a Capital Credit return of \$1,400,000 in 2018.

Capital Credits appeared on your March electric bill and were distributed to qualifying members based on past electric usage in the years 1994 and 1995.

An additional \$300,000 is available for member estates or seniors age 70 or older who wish to apply for their Capital Credit balance at a discount.

Since 1959, MVEC has returned over \$22 million in

Capital Credits to its member-owners.

If you move and are no longer an MVEC member, be sure to keep your contact information up-to-date so the co-op can forward future Capital Credit payments to you.

Questions about Capital Credits? Visit www.mvec.net or call Darlene at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832.



Renewable Energy

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You may have been emailed a survey regarding renewable energy. MVEC is currently working with the University of Minnesota in compiling feasibility data.

The Green Source program will give individual members the option of purchasing wind renewable energy credits and solar renewable energy credits.

If enough interest is shown, a new solar array built in the MVEC service territory could be an option. A commitment from approximately 300 members with a 10-year contract would be needed.

The Community Solar option is expected to add a few cents per kilowatt hour to participating member rates if a household participates in an MVEC Energy Wise program. They will receive a reduced rate for the community solar program. Exact costs are still being studied.

“We’ve tried to find a happy medium that will allow members who wish to increase their renewable sourced power to accomplish their goals, and not pass those costs onto other members wishing not to participate,” said Hentges.

What are RECs?

- Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) can be purchased by people regardless of where they live. The RECs are managed and maintained by MVEC.
- RECs indirectly promote development of renewable energy. The electricity is not produced locally.
- Only subscribers pay the costs of RECs. Members who do not participate do not pay for them.
- A typical MVEC residential member could purchase credits worth 50 percent of total average electricity usage from:

Wind RECs for roughly \$2.75 extra per month and **Solar RECs** for roughly \$6.88 per month added to the monthly bill.

Renewable option FAQs:

MVEC Community Solar Array

Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

Do I need to install equipment at my residence/property?	No MVEC would build the array on a piece of vacant land.	No No equipment is installed by you or MVEC
Is the electricity produced locally in MVEC's territory?	Yes The array would be installed and produce electricity locally. MVEC members could visit the array.	No RECs are used to incentivize investment in renewable energy regionally.
Will this increase the cost of electricity for everyone?	No The costs are paid for entirely by subscribers	No The costs are paid for entirely by subscribers
How much will it cost?	Subscribers can choose how much they would like. With Energy Wise, 50% of a typical home electricity use would be about \$10-\$20 extra per month.	Wind RECs worth 50% of a typical home electricity use would be about \$2.75 extra per month. Solar RECs worth 50% of a typical home electricity use would be about \$6.88 extra per month.

**Exact pricing is still being determined. Watch future issues of the Electric Eye for further details.*



MVEC's current Wellspring® Renewable Wind Energy program will now adopt the GreenSource name and will fall under the Wind RECs category. With this option, wind energy is sold at a rate of 50 cents per block, which is added to your monthly electric bill.

By choosing Wind RECs, you not only help support wind energy development in Minnesota, but also help reduce dependency on non-renewable energy sources, like coal and other fossil fuels. Call MVEC at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832 for more details. Members who already participate will remain on the program as long as they wish, and need to take no further action at this time.

It's time for Beat the Peak Energy Challenge

What: summer energy-saving challenge

When: May 28 - Sept. 3

Who: all MVEC residential members

Why: save energy while earning cash

Back for a sixth year, MVEC's Beat the Peak Energy Challenge is a summer program for residential members to save energy and compete for cash prizes — over \$25,000 in total. The competition starts on Memorial Day and runs until Labor Day.

If you participate, MVEC will notify you a day ahead of time on select summer days

when we need help reducing system-wide electric usage. You can choose to be notified by email, text or automated phone call.

In addition to competing as an individual household, you also can support local organizations. When you sign up online, you will see options for participating on teams or you can form your own team.

Beat the Peak helps MVEC buy reliable power at the lowest cost. This lowers MVEC's wholesale power bill and can translate into lower bills and a greener environment for everyone.

Monthly individual prizes are based on total kilo-watt hour (kWh) reduction or percent reduction of the individual's electricity usage between May 28 and Sept. 3. The top five winners in each category will receive \$100 for reductions occurring in June, July and August.

Team prizes of \$250 to \$7,500 are awarded in September.

Sign up at www.mvec.net by May 21, 2018. Your name will be put in a random drawing for one of two \$500 VISA gift cards. (If you participated last year, you're already in!)

These programs can help you Beat the Peak:

Energy Wise Cooling

- Receive a 10% discount on all main meter usage from June-September.
- MVEC will install an energy management switch (free of charge) on your home near your central air conditioner.
- During peak system-wide electricity usage, the switch cycles your central air conditioner on and off. The furnace fan continues to circulate cool air.
- Receive a \$25 rebate for air conditioner and heat pump tune-ups. Unit must be three years or older and not have had a tune up in the last two years. The rebate application can be filled out online at www.mvec.net.



WiFi Thermostat

- Receive \$50 for enrolling and 10% discount on all main meter usage from June-September.
- Control WiFi thermostats from your computer or smart phone.
- Set it and forget it! Manage optimal temperature settings when you're at home or away. You'll automatically lower your energy costs, as well as help MVEC ensure lower rates for everyone.
- Visit www.mvec.net to see qualifying Nest and Honeywell WiFi thermostats.
- Wireless internet network required.



Electric Water Heating

- Storage electric water heater program draws electricity during times of low demand (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) when electricity is less expensive to purchase.
- To join this Energy Wise program just call MVEC Energy Specialists Mike O. or Michael H. They can tell you how to receive half-price electric rates on all your water heating and guarantee you will not run out of hot water.
- Financing and installation options are available for Westinghouse electric water heaters.



Electric Vehicle Charging

- Plug in your EV to this green, low-cost program while you sleep and wake up to a charged vehicle with lower energy costs.
- When peak use periods are avoided, MVEC can reduce its wholesale electric bill, and members save with lower rates.
- Receive a \$150 EV charger rebate and pay half-price electric rates for vehicle charging time.
- Car charger is hooked up to an Energy Wise meter and placed on a storage program. Vehicle will charge for 8 hours per day, typically from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.



Learn more at www.mvec.net or call 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832

Why not install everything underground?

Cost, terrain are the biggest considerations

Power lines that carry electricity to your home are either overhead or underground. MVEC members sometimes ask why can't all power lines be installed underground.

Overhead line construction starts with the setting of utility poles. Poles can be set in nearly any type of terrain, even rocky. In the case of heavy rock, special equipment is used to auger out the hole. If

placement occurs in boggy or wet terrain, many techniques are available to set poles securely. Once the poles are in place, wires can be strung and then equipment – like transformers, fuses and reclosers – are installed. Power can now flow.

Underground line construction requires digging a trench that is deep enough to keep the lines well away from surface ac-

tivities. Where the terrain is extremely rocky, underground lines may not be an option. Next, wires are laid in the trench directly or placed in conduits for protection. The trench is filled in, and the surface is restored to its original condition. Padmount transformers and additional equipment are installed as needed, and now the system is ready to deliver electricity.

UNDERGROUND

PROS

- Not vulnerable to damage from tree branches
- Does not interfere with views
- No right of way (tree trimming) required
- Less susceptible to damage from vehicle collisions
- Not impacted by wind, ice and snow
- Less vulnerable to blinks when animals and branches contact lines

CONS

- More expensive to build
- Susceptible to flooding
- Difficult to locate faults
- Expensive to repair
- Fed by overhead lines at some point, making the lines vulnerable to outages and interruptions
- Limitations on voltages that can be buried underground
- Can be vulnerable to dig-ins

WARNING!
High Voltage
Stay away

Stay safe around green utility boxes

- Teach kids to never climb or play on transformer boxes, otherwise known as the green metal boxes in some yards or parks.
- Planting shrubs or trees too close to these boxes creates a hazard for linemen. If crews need quick access to unlock and open the cover, in the event of an emergency, any effort and time wasted in removing shrubs, fences or other obstructions around the transformer could result in further loss of property or even loss of life.

Contact our Dispatch Center at 952.492.8255 or 800.282.6832, if you:

- notice rust, holes or any other sign of deterioration
- hear loud pops or see sparks
- observe standing water around a transformer