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Reminders

New year, new look for www.mvec.net

MVEC's newly-redesigned website debuted early last month. Have you had a chance to explore? Be sure to update any favorite web pages you frequent and any bookmarks you use at www.mvec.net.

Board approves 2017 budgets and electric rates

MVEC's Board of Directors approved the cooperative's 2017 budgets and electric rates at the December 2016 board meeting. Members will not see an increase on their electric rates in 2017.

January Board Meeting highlights are online at www.mvec.net/your-cooperative

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

MVEC

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Electric Eye

February 2017

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

Celebrating 80 years in 2017

On March 6, 1937, three electric organizations from Scott, Carver and Le Sueur counties – too small to make it on their own – voted to band together as Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative.

Only the most affluent farmers and those near towns could get "the electric" in the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation changed that by helping farmers organize and bring electricity to rural areas.

Eighty years later, MVEC provides electric service to over 41,000 members across a 968-square-mile service area, covering nine counties: Blue Earth, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Le Sueur, Rice, Scott, Sibley, and Waseca.

From our first "electrified" farm near Prior Lake to the acquisition of 3,500 members in the cities of Montgomery and Le Center on a single day in 2015, MVEC makes its mission to create exceptional member experiences while safely providing reliable energy at cost.



80th Annual Meeting will be April 4 at Shepherd of the Lake

MVEC's 80th Annual Meeting will be held 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 4, at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m.

The business meeting will feature cooperative updates from general manager Ryan Hentges, and Gerry Mareck, vice president of finance, who will give the 2016 financial report.

All three districts have a seat open on the Board of Directors. In District I, incumbent Brent Lawrence of Credit River faces competition from Barbara Marschall of Prior Lake. Incumbents Michelle Morrison of Faxon Township in District II and Fran Barten of New Prague in District III are running unopposed.

Members in attendance will receive:



Tours of the adjacent facilities

on the church campus, River Valley YMCA and McKenna Crossing Senior Living, will be offered prior to the Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

See sample ballots on page 2

Annual Meeting

continued from page 1

2017 Board of Director Election

District I

Vote for one (three-year term)

- Brent Lawrence, Credit River Twp (*incumbent*)
- Barbara Marschall, Prior Lake

2017 Board of Director Election

District II

Vote for one (three-year term)

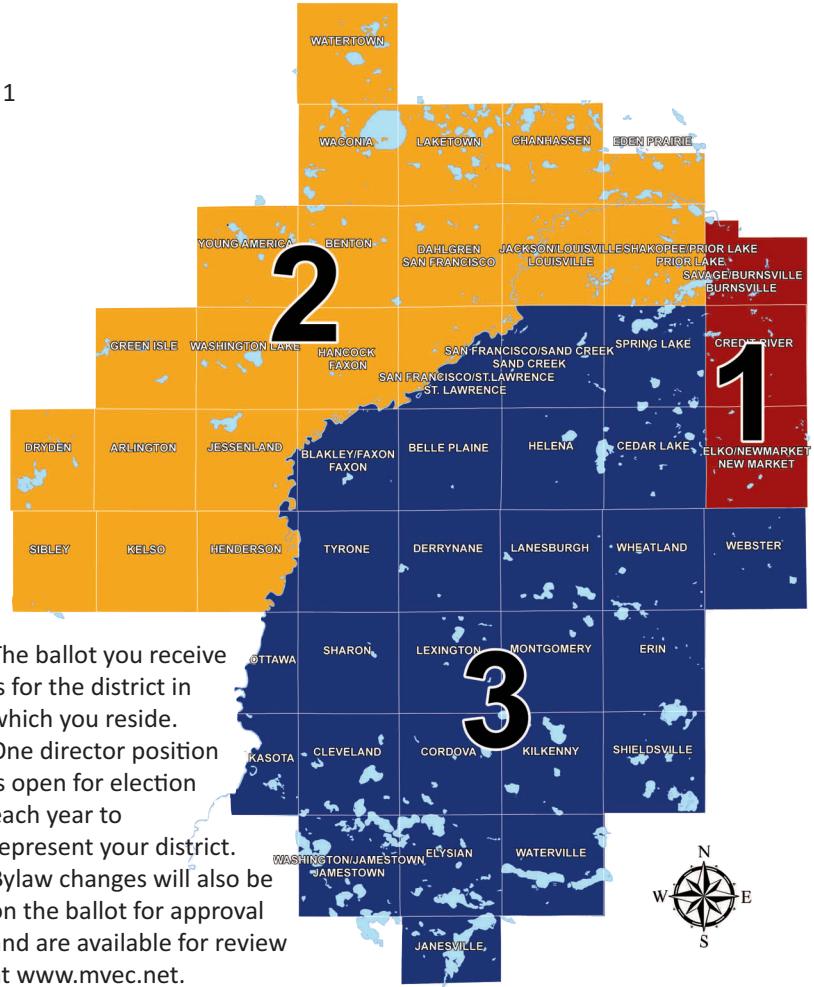
- Michelle Morrison, Faxon Twp (*incumbent*)

2017 Board of Director Election

District III

Vote for one (three-year term)

- Fran Barten, New Prague (*incumbent*)



The ballot you receive is for the district in which you reside. One director position is open for election each year to represent your district. Bylaw changes will also be on the ballot for approval and are available for review at www.mvec.net.

Ways winter electric usage can affect your bill

Members sometimes call us with concerns about their electric bills – especially in January and February. Keep in mind, the bill you open in January reflects your December holiday usage and perhaps even Thanksgiving usage, depending on your usage period. And your February bill is impacted by any below zero cold spells in December and January.

Winter conditions — Shorter days and longer nights mean lights are on twice as long as in summer months. More time is spent indoors, families watch more hours of television, water takes longer to heat and so on. Even if your heating systems is gas, it still needs electricity for operating the fan and the air exchanger.

The holidays — The holidays are fun, but a month later when you open your electric bill, the warm and fuzzy memories fade away. Consider the extra baking and cooking, entertaining guests, your

Avoid surprises before your bill arrives.

Monitor your usage with SmartHub at www.mvec.net



Christmas lights and other holiday activities that are reflected on your January bill. If you have kids, they were home for winter break – and how many X-Boxes do you have?

Dirty furnace filter — A clogged filter makes it difficult for your furnace to run efficiently, which causes higher costs and can lead to other problems. Change your furnace filter on a regular basis.

Space heaters — Electric heaters are a big culprit of very high electricity use. A small heater can cost you \$110 or more per month if used continuously. Though it requires investment, electric in-wall, cove

and baseboard heaters are more efficient, and they qualify for a lower Energy Wise electric rate and cash back rebates. Make sure any qualified equipment you already own – heat pumps, water heaters, etc. – is installed to a money-saving

Energy Wise program.

Vehicle block heaters — Many electric block heaters are 1,500-watts and use as much electricity as fifteen 100-watt light bulbs, another \$110 a month. Use a timer to schedule specific running time.

Days in the billing cycle — Your bill may reflect 28 days of electricity usage or 32. Four days' difference can be as much as \$25 or more. Be sure to look at the usage period listed on your electric bill.

Any of these culprits aren't dramatic on their own, but together they add up and can contribute to a higher winter bill.

Member service, new programs key in 2017

Each year, MVEC's executive team and the Board of Directors work together to prioritize various projects for each department of the cooperative to focus on during the coming year, in addition to usual day-to-day responsibilities. Some key work plans for 2017 include:

Utilize engineering & operations software

Technology helps the cooperative work smart and efficiently. A fully-integrated engineering and operations work process will be implemented in order to employ a seamless and paperless way to manage projects.

Optimize demand response portfolio

Demand response is how MVEC helps members manage energy consumption through residential Energy Wise programs and commercial account generator programs, allowing the cooperative to purchase less wholesale power. Current methods will be enhanced and new opportunities will be explored to maximize energy savings for both the members and the cooperative as a whole.

Enhance MVEC's safety culture

Safety First is more than a motto at MVEC – it's a way of life. From line crews working directly with electricity to office staff conducting repetitive tasks, an increased emphasis will be made to ensure safe working processes are engrained in all employees.

Implement renewable energy options

Whether wind or solar, electric co-ops are becoming increasingly involved in renewable energy programs. MVEC is assessing options and is in the planning stages of a solar project, which could serve as a model for future options for members.

Increase presence in the community

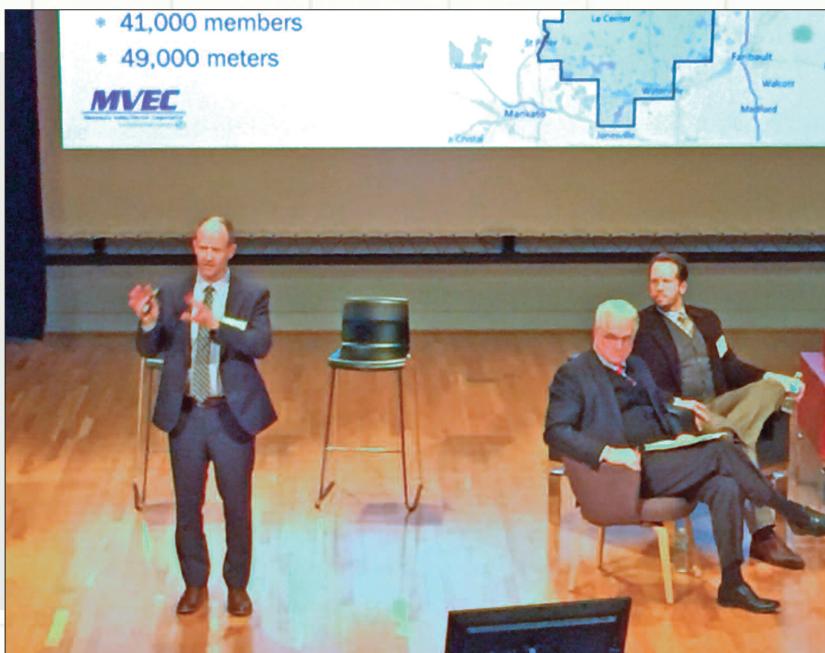
The seventh guiding principle for all cooperatives is Concern for Community. Cooperatives work to make their communities healthy and prosperous. MVEC employees are encouraged to be involved and volunteer. New ideas will be developed and implemented to increase MVEC's presence in the communities we serve.

Develop employee wellness program

Studies have shown when an organization has a formal wellness program, it can result in reduced health care and absenteeism costs. A wellness program will be implemented to help increase employee health awareness, in order to decrease overall benefit costs.



Read about the 2017 construction and reliability work plan on page 4.



Telling the co-op story

Last month, MVEC's General Manager Ryan Hentges was one of five state energy experts invited to discuss the topic of "Electric Co-ops Lead Minnesota Innovation." The event was held at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul and moderated by Chris Farrell of Minnesota Public Radio.

\$10 million in reliability projects planned in 2017

With a construction budget just over \$10 million, MVEC line crews will be busy increasing reliability and power quality all throughout the co-op's nine-county service area, serving 41,500+ members. Here are some of the larger projects:

1. 4.3 miles of power lines will be relocated underground due to road reconstruction along Flying Cloud Drive in Carver/Hennepin counties.

2. 5 miles of line will be relocated in the Prior Lake-Savage area due to road construction and age of the line.

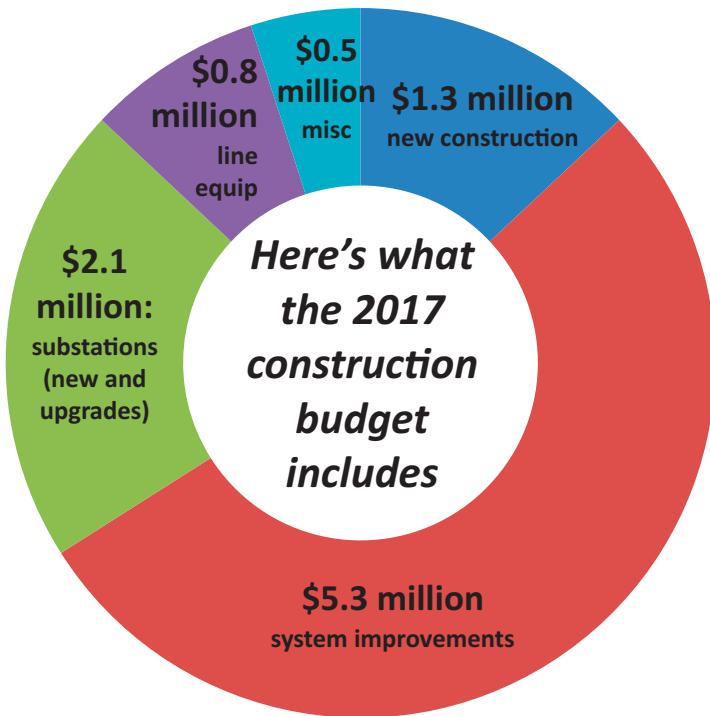
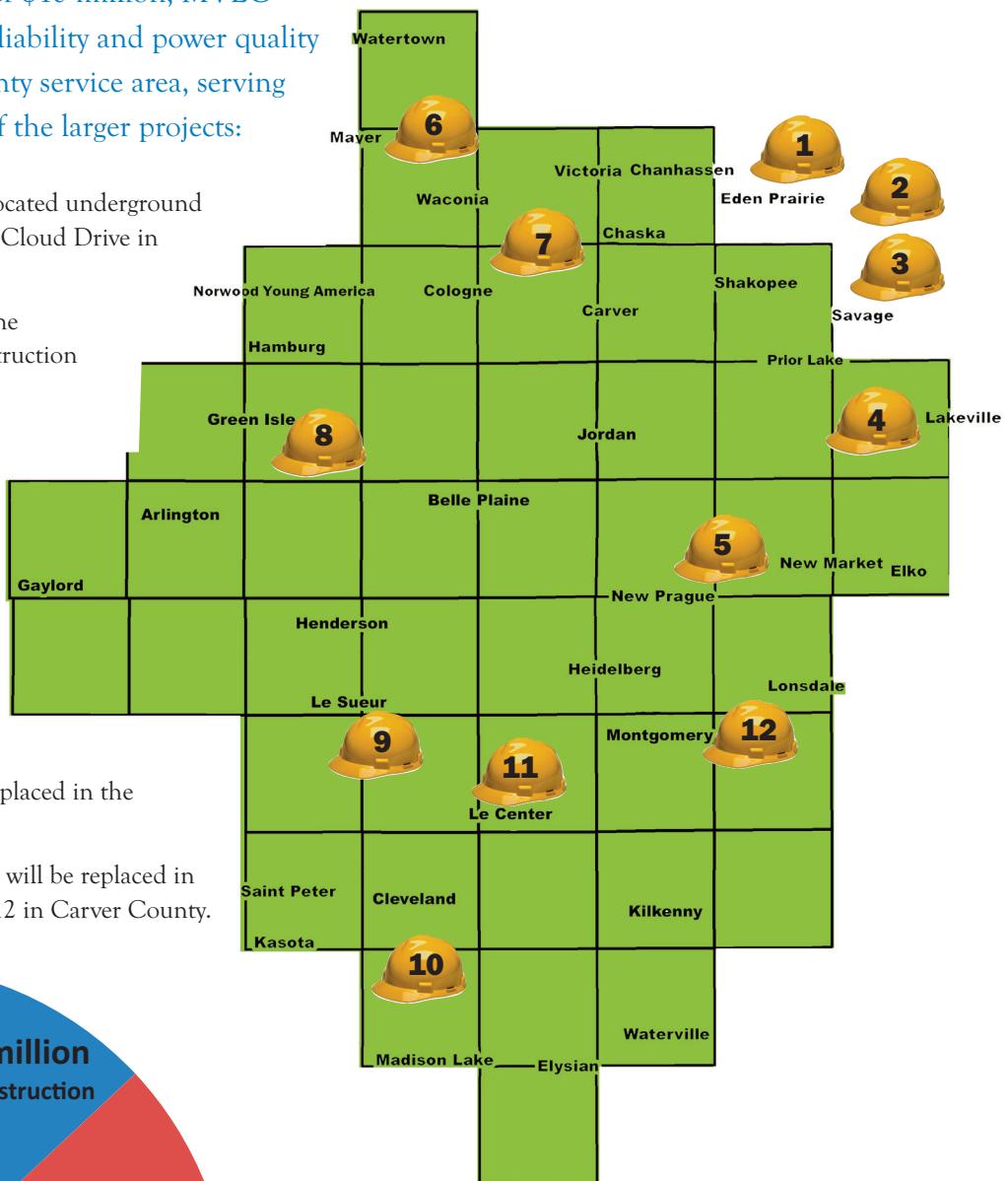
3. Land will be purchased and prepped for MVEC's 28th substation near Zinran Avenue in Savage.

4. Relocate half a mile of power line near Scott County roads 27 and 68 due to roundabout construction.

5. 1.3 miles of overhead power line will be upgraded east of New Prague.

6. 6 miles of aged power line will be replaced in the Mayer, Carver County area.

7. 5 miles of aged overhead power line will be replaced in Augusta Township, north of Highway 212 in Carver County.



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