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- Get ready for the 2017 Beat the Peak Energy Challenge! **page 3**
- Your cooperative offers several options for “going green” **pages 2-3**
- Be spring and summer storm ready **page 4**

## 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](http://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](http://www.mvec.net)**

# ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

April 2017

## Renewable energy is part of the mix

*Our Green issue in honor of Earth Day*

### Message from Ryan Hentges, General Manager

The energy business is going through a transition. Although the transition is impacting many aspects of our business, the most significant transition is how electricity is generated.

MVEC does not generate the electricity you use on a daily basis. Rather, we purchase electricity from three wholesale power providers that generate electricity and deliver it to MVEC. We in turn deliver the electricity to your home, farm, or business.

Over the years, our power providers have increasingly relied on renewable resources for generation.

**Currently, 17 percent of the power MVEC purchases comes from renewable resources. And this number will continue to grow.**

Renewable generation can be divided into two buckets: Utility Scale Generation and Distributed

Generation. Utility Scale Generation is the large wind generators and solar farms found in some rural areas. They are often owned by an investor, who sells the energy by contract to a utility. Utility Scale Generation can serve thousands of homes.

Distributed generation consists of smaller solar gardens and installations at residential or commercial locations. Distributed generation is usually owned by a utility, home owner, or business owner, and generally serves a single location with electricity.

MVEC purchases electricity from both Utility Scale Generators, and Distributed Generators.

**From a Utility Scale Generation perspective,** MVEC purchases 17 percent of its power from renewable resources. Recently, MVEC's Board approved a wind contract, which will produce approximately 18 million kWh of electricity per year.

**See GM column on page 2**

## Here's some green back to you \$1.179 million cash back to members!

As a member-owner of the cooperative, 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 \$1,179,000 in 2017.**

Capital Credits appeared on your March electric bill and were distributed to qualifying members based on past electric usage.

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 \$21 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](http://www.mvec.net) or call Darlene at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832.



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\$21 million  
to member-owners**

## MVEC's Sources of Energy:



## GM column

continued from page 1

That contract provides enough wind energy to power around 1,300 homes per year. The contract is very financially advantageous for MVEC and will help keep rates stable.

From a Distributed Generation perspective, there are currently 30 distributed generation installations in MVEC's service territory. These installations produce approximately 300,000 kWh annually, which is enough renewable energy to power around 23 homes per year.

We know some of our members would like more electricity generated from renewable resources. Our Wellspring program allows you to purchase wind energy. For \$.005/kWh, you may add enough wind energy to meet the needs of your entire home. Members with electric vehicles can participate in our Revolt program, which allows you to "fill" your vehicle with 100 percent wind energy.

In addition, MVEC's Energy Wise programs offer resources to conserve energy and reduce your bill at the same time.

Currently, over 40 percent of MVEC members participate in some type of Energy Wise program. This participation level helps control costs by reducing the need to buy high cost energy.

Your co-op is looking at additional ways to allow you to increase your mix of energy generated from renewable resources, if you desire. A variety of programs are being reviewed and developed.



We realize our members are a diverse group with different goals and interests. Our goal is to provide the right energy options so you may meet your individual needs, while not impacting costs for other members. We hope to finalize these options yet this year.

Thank you for being a member-owner of Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative.

## Are you ready to compete?

For a fifth year, MVEC's Beat the Peak Energy Challenge allows residential members to compete as individual households or as teams (you can do both!) to save energy and compete for cash prizes — over \$25,000 in total. The competition starts on Memorial Day and runs throughout the summer until Labor Day.

Sign-up at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net). You can compete as an individual and also choose to support local organizations. 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 email, text or automated phone notifications.

Each month, participants who reduce electric usage the most will win

What: summer energy challenge  
When: Memorial Day through Labor Day  
Who: all MVEC members  
Why: save energy and co-op w

## Electric Vehicle Charging Program

- 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.
- Call Mike O or Michael H at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832 for more information and to sign up.



While the electricity that is delivered to your home includes renewable energy, the Wellspring® Renewable Wind Energy program allows energy-conscious members the option of helping us do even more for the environment.

By making the choice to become a wind supporter, you not only help support wind energy development in Minnesota, but also help reduce our dependency on non-renewable energy sources, like coal and other fossil fuels.

Wind energy... per blo... Call M... details...

# Compete in the Beat the Peak Energy Challenge?

Join the energy-saving challenge

May 27 - Sept. 4, 2017

MVEC residential members

save energy for your household

while earning cash prizes

cash prizes, with team cash prizes awarded at summer's end.

Beat the Peak helps the co-op buy reliable power at the lowest cost – which translates into lower bills and a greener environment for everyone.

Last year, over 2,200 participating households saved 35.1 mega-watt

hours of energy during six Beat the Peak Energy Challenge reduction events in June, July and August.

**Just how much energy is that?** The same as running the new 1.75-million-square-foot U.S. Bank Stadium during five hours of a Vikings game.

Registration is open for this year's challenge. When you sign up your household online, you will also see options for participating on teams.

**Sign Up Prizes!** Sign up your household by May 21, 2017, and your name will be put in a random drawing for one of two \$500 VISA gift cards.

**Monthly individual prizes** are based on either (1) total kilowatt hour (kWh) reduction or (2) percent reduction of the individual's electricity usage during the challenge times between May 27 and Sept. 4. The top five winners in each category will receive \$100 for reductions occurring in June, July and August.

**Team prizes:** \$250 to \$7,500 awarded in September.

**Don't miss out! Sign up today at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)**

## Energy Wise Cooling Program

- 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](http://www.mvec.net).



## Electric Water Heating Program

- MVEC offers a storage electric water heater program that draws electricity during times of low demand (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) – this is when electricity is less expensive to purchase.
- To join this Energy Wise program just call Mike O. or Michael, MVEC Energy Specialists at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832. We'll tell you how you can receive half-price electric rates on all your water heating, and we will guarantee you will not run out of hot water.
- MVEC sells Westinghouse brands and can help with financing and installation.

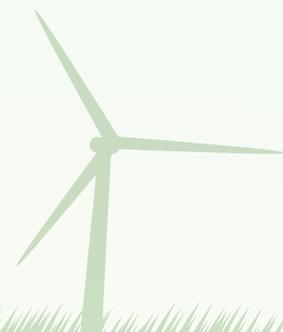
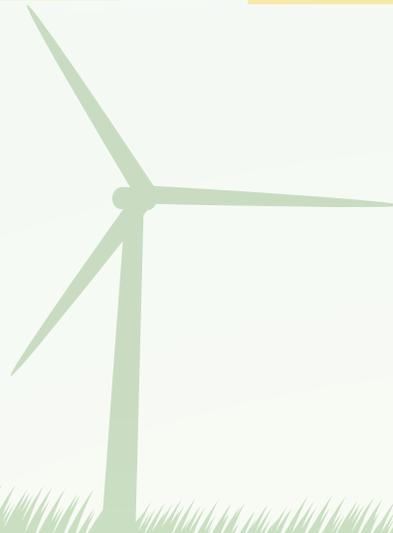
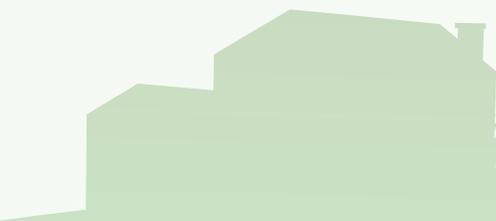


For more information:  
[www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)  
952.492.2313  
800.282.6832

## ENERGY

Energy options are sold in blocks at a rate of 50 cents per block, which is added to your monthly electric bill.

Contact MVEC at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832 for more information on this program.



# Trees: beautiful, but not around power lines

As we transition from winter months into spring, it is important to check for tree limbs on your property that may be too close to power lines. If you have a tree that interferes with an MVEC line, be safe and don't try to fix the situation yourself. Call MVEC at 952.492.8255 or 800.232.2328.

## Why

Tree trimming keeps your family (and our lineworkers) safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with power lines. Power lines are 100 times more powerful than your home's electrical outlet, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful of trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

Tree trimming is also critical to make sure we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power due to fallen trees.

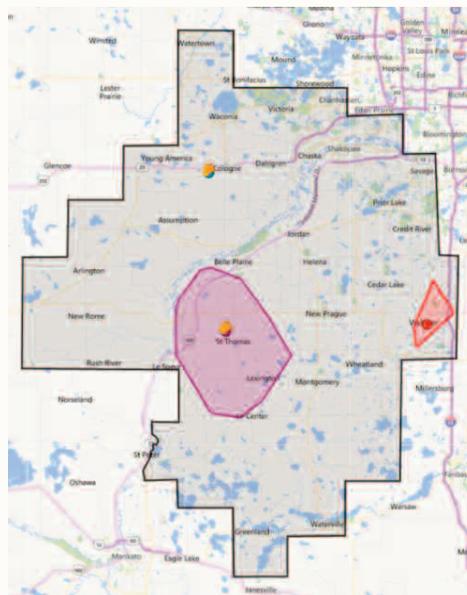
## How

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric co-op has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service.

A general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

If a tree grows into this danger zone, MVEC linemen or our contractor, Carr's Tree Service, will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods also can be used.

## If you do experience an outage . . .



Be sure to report your outage by calling **952.492.8255** or toll-free at **800.232.2328**.

When power outages affect 500 members or more, MVEC posts updates online at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net) and tracks outage restoration with a live outage map.

**Tree Trimming Guidelines:**  
15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole