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Reminders

Help keep line workers safe - don't attach objects or signs to utility poles
A power pole might seem to be a convenient option when placing signs, bird houses, planters or other objects. However, this is a hazard for MVEC linemen who may need to climb that utility pole for power restoration or maintenance work. Nails, tacks, screws and staples in the pole can tear or damage the insulated gloves and clothing which protect line workers from the high voltage hazards involved with their work. Please avoid tampering with utility poles.

April Board Highlights are online at www.mvec.net/your-cooperative/

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



ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

May 2017

Energy Wise + heat pump = efficient savings



The Shoenecker family of New Prague enjoyed efficient heat and Energy Wise savings this past winter with their air source heat pump. Now that same unit will switch to cooling mode for the summer months.

Jeff Schoenecker of New Prague figures his electric bills over the past months were at least \$1,000 less than what they could have been, thanks to MVEC's money-saving Energy Wise programs.

"I was just looking over the bills, and I'm guessing we saved at least \$1,000 over the winter," said Schoenecker.

When Jeff and his wife Jen built their home in 2014 on Woodlands Court in New Prague, they wanted to include as many energy-efficient features as possible. This included in-floor heat, an electric water heater and an air source heat pump, which not only will cool their home in the upcoming

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Incumbents re-elected; bylaw changes approved

Over 500 people, representing 352 households and businesses attended Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative's 80th Annual Meeting at Shepherd of the Lake Church in Prior Lake on April 4.

All three incumbents were returned to the Board of Directors for three-year terms.

In District I, (the only race) Brent Lawrence of Credit River Township received 643 votes, while challenger Barbara Marschall of Prior Lake received 339 votes.

In Districts II and III, Michelle Morrison of Faxon Township and Fran Barten of New Prague were unopposed with 1,003 and 1,581 votes respectively.



MVEC's Board of Directors are, seated from left: Tom Wolf, Michelle Morrison and Brent Lawrence. Standing from left: Deb Erickson, Gary Haberman, Jim Connelly, Kevin Gibbs, Fran Barten and Bill Heinlein.

Lawrence and Morrison retained their positions on the board as president and secretary/treasurer, while Kevin Gibbs of Le Center will remain as vice president.

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MVEC's 80th Annual Meeting continued from page 1

Revisions to MVEC's Articles and Bylaws were approved overwhelmingly with 3,060 yes and 288 no votes cast. Changes include approving the cost-saving measure of not sending and mailing ballots for uncontested elections, allowing the option for electronic voting, and other items that bring the Articles and Bylaws current and in compliance with electric cooperative standards and Minnesota statutes.

General Manager Ryan Hentges gave a presentation on An Industry and Cooperative in Transition, which focused on changes in technology and the evolving energy market, which is seeing an increase in wind generation and natural gas, as well as a reduction in coal generation.

Hentges said the co-op's Board of Directors and employees continue to focus on four key areas: safety, reliability, financial strength and member satisfaction. New green energy options are being developed and will be announced to members later this year.

Gerry Mareck, vice president of finance, gave a 2016



Members and guests filled Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake for MVEC's 80th Annual Meeting.



Members had the opportunity to vote onsite for board directors and bylaw changes, which received 94 percent approval.

financial review and concluded the co-op had another solid year while maintaining competitive rates within the area and ranking 13 percent below the national average for electric cooperatives.

The co-op has kept local spending flat and at the same time has returned over one million dollars in Capital Credits to members for three years in a row.

The annual meeting also featured scholarship presentations, funded by MVEC's unclaimed Capital Credits. In all, 15 \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to area high school seniors. MVEC's wholesale power provider, Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. Winners will be featured in the June issue of the *Electric Eye*.

Prior to the meeting, MVEC members had the opportunity to tour two additional facilities at Shepherd of the Lake's campus: McKenna Crossing Senior Living and the River Valley YMCA. All three facilities are MVEC business members.

Energy-efficient upgrades available for income-eligible members

To help members with limited financial resources, MVEC partners with the Community Action Partnership of Scott, Carver and Dakota counties (CAP), Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC), the Scott County Community Development Agency (CDA) and local food shelves, among others.

Assistance includes free energy education consultations and central air conditioner tune-ups. Appliances eligible for upgrades include refrigerators, clothes washers, A/C units, dishwashers, microwaves, dehumidifiers and certain sizes of upright or chest freezers. Weatherization measures may also qualify.

Why?

The Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) requires Minnesota electric and gas

utilities to set aside funds to help eligible members make affordable energy efficiency upgrades at reduced or no cost.

The Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 established the energy-saving goals, and the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources oversees CIP to ensure that ratepayer dollars are used effectively.

Since 2010, Minnesota electric and gas utilities are required to save at least 1.5 percent of average retail

sales by spending dedicated CIP funds on low income customers and members.

Qualifications

To qualify for the CIP program, members must be homeowners, not renters.

You must first apply for the Energy Assistance Program with one of the agencies (not MVEC) and meet the income eligibility guidelines. If approved, a home energy auditor will visit your home and determine what appliances need to be upgraded to more energy-efficient units.

For more info, contact:

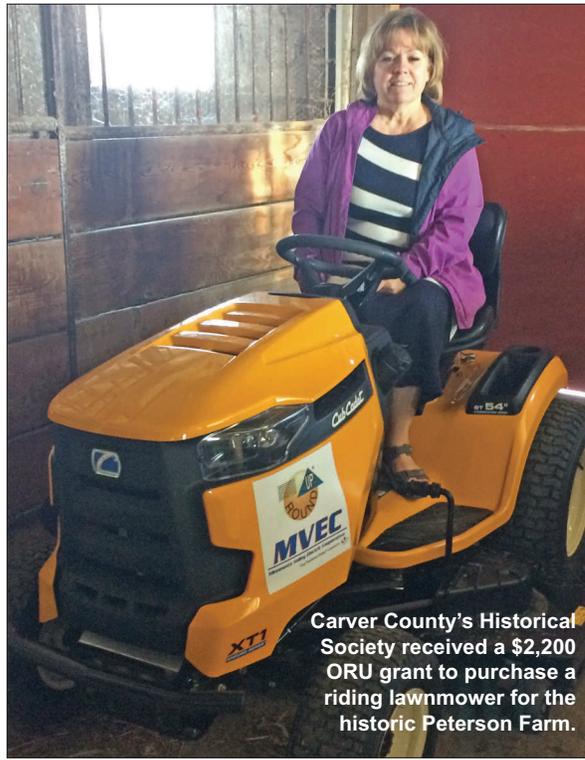
- Michelle Franke at CAP: 651.322.3518
- Kris Perendy at MVAC: 507.345.2434
- Julie Siegert at CDA: 952.402.9022

Income Guidelines	
Number in Household	Annual Income
1	\$24,541
2	\$32,092
3	\$39,643
4	\$47,194
5	\$54,745
6	\$62,296
7	\$63,712
8	\$65,128

Based on 200% of Federal Poverty guidelines

ORU makes 1st quarter donations of \$34,473

Operation Round Up (ORU) is a voluntary program where MVEC members pool excess pennies together to benefit local organizations. If your bill is \$75.56, it is rounded up to \$76.00, and the extra 44¢ goes to ORU. Multiply all that extra change by the thousands of generous MVEC members who participate and it makes a BIG difference. Here is a partial listing of groups that received donations in the first quarter of 2017:



Carver County's Historical Society received a \$2,200 ORU grant to purchase a riding lawnmower for the historic Peterson Farm.

- Boessling Village Apartments (Bicycle Storage Unit) Belle Plaine - \$2,300
- Campfire USA (Camp scholarships) - \$2,000
- Choose Not To Use (Education) Scott Co - \$3,000
- Cologne Academy (Transportation) - \$1,008
- Green Isle Lions (Coat Drive) - \$1,500
- Harriet Bishop Elementary (Service Projects) Savage - \$600
- HAVE (Children's Theatre Tickets) Le Sueur - \$645
- Holy Redeemer School (Montgomery) Transportation - \$950
- Jordan Techno Robotics Team (Supplies) - \$2,000
- Le Center Area Fire Dept (Extraction Equipment) - \$2,000
- Le Sueur Backpack Nutrition (Food) - \$500
- LSH Youth Opportunities (Computer) Le Sueur - \$1,070
- Lutheran Home Hope (Camp scholarships) Belle Plaine - \$2,000
- New Options (Music/Dog Therapy) Shakopee - \$1,800
- Prior Lake Robotics (Rolling Tool Chest) - \$1,000
- SACS (Camp Widjiwagen) Shakopee - \$650
- Scott-Carver CAP Agency (Crisis Nursery) Shakopee - \$2,000
- Scott Co Historical Society (Digital Scanner) Shakopee - \$750
- Shakopee Band Boosters (Intermediate Clarinet) - \$1,200
- High School All Night Party (Norwood-Young America, Cleveland, Le Sueur Henderson, Burnsville, New Prague, Shakopee, Tri-City United, Waterville Elysian Morristown) - \$100 each

Don't waste money on phantom loads

Get in the habit of turning electronics on and off via power strips when you're done using them. As electronics and appliances become more technologically savvy, they often draw power even while turned off. A good indicator of this - called "phantom load" - is to check the device for a light that stays on all the time.

Phantom load will add a few kilowatt-hours to energy consumption, but a few kilowatt-hours on each of your many electronic devices adds up. To avoid this silent power draw, unplug the device or invest in a "smart" power strip, which allows certain electronics - like a cable box, which takes time to reboot after it's been unplugged - to continue using electricity while others can be completely shut down.

Another way to keep track of your energy use is to set up a SmartHub account. In addition to paying your bill online, you can use SmartHub to compare bills from year to year or month to month and find out what day of the week or hour of the day you typically use the most electricity.

You may be able to track down unusual usage patterns.



Learn more about using SmartHub at www.mvec.net/residential/pay-my-bill/

Energy Wise continued from page 1

summer months, it also provides efficient heat during much of the rest of the year.

Though his Carrier air source heat pump system may have initially cost more than an air conditioner, Jeff said with rebates and half price Energy Wise electric rates, the difference paid for itself within a year.

And it kept his family of four (daughter Lily is 9, and Maizey is 7) comfortable all winter long. When temperatures dropped below 20 degrees, the system automatically switched to the home's gas furnace. "The thermostat takes care of everything," said Jeff.

Heated floors in the bathrooms, lower level and garage also contribute to the home's warmth - and at an economical cost, because they are also eligible for half price Energy Wise electric rates.

As an electrical engineer for Dakota Electric Association, Jeff is all about the benefits of cooperative membership, and the money-saving programs that are offered.

"I recommend anything Minnesota Valley cooperative members can do to save energy," said Jeff.

An air source heat pump might look like an air conditioner, but it does much more

Air source heat pumps (ASHP) provide the best of both worlds for heating and cooling.



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, an air source heat pump can reduce electricity use associated with home heating and cooling by up to 72 percent. Since heating and cooling account for more than half the total energy consumed in a typical household, members can realize tremendous savings by making the switch.

MVEC offers a \$500 rebate, 1/2 price electric rates and 4% financing for ASHPs.

5 things to know for Electrical Safety Month



Storm safety

- Always assume downed power lines are “live” and stay away. Do not attempt to remove anything in contact with a downed power line or drive across a downed power line.
- If your vehicle or tractor comes in contact with a downed power line, stay inside and use your cell phone to call for help.
- If someone is shocked by contact with a downed line, call 911 immediately and do not touch the person.



Correct phone number

Did you know your phone number helps us restore power more quickly? If you call in an outage using a phone number that we have on file, that number helps identify your location in our system.

Make sure we have your correct phone numbers on file by filling out a quick form at www.mvec.net/power-outages or call 952.492.8333 or 866.492.8333 toll-free and follow the prompts.



Call before you dig

Have a home or business project that involves digging? Avoid unnecessary surprises. At least 48 hours before you start, call **Gopher State One Call at 811**. It's absolutely free. They will ask the type of work planned, location, estimated time needed and description of the site. If underground lines exist in your project area, the utility will mark the location of their lines.



Farming safety

- When driving farm equipment around power lines, **always use a spotter**. If you are on the tractor, have someone direct you. If someone else is in the driver's seat, watch out for them.
- A safe clearance is at least 10 feet from power lines — in all directions, at all times. Lower extensions before moving loads.
- If you don't think equipment can safely pass under lines, never move a power line or raise it for clearance. Find another route.



Safety demos

MVEC has a simple, yet effective electrical safety demonstration called powerTown. This FREE safety presentation is available to school classrooms, Scout meetings and other youth events during business hours. Consideration is given to after-hour requests as schedules permit. **Learn more at www.mvec.net/community**