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Reminders

Three quick tips to keep your personal info safe:

October is National Cyber-security Awareness Month. Technology breaches have become more commonplace. MVEC has data safeguards in place, and there are things you can do to protect your personal data.

- Keep your computer updated with the latest software and web browser. This ensures security patches block the latest security threats.
- Create a strong password and keep it private – it can take up to two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more!
- Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to get to secure data. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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



ElectricEye

October 2018

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

It's Co-op Month!



Dramatic changes are transforming all aspects of the energy industry. Interest in renewable energy is at an all-time high, and ultimately consumers want greater control over their energy use and payment methods. The prevalence of smart-phone apps and smart technology for the home is increasing, and consumers and businesses are showing greater interest in electric vehicles.

There's no denying it: electric utilities will have to make changes to the way they provide energy to accommodate these trends. Luckily, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative is uniquely positioned to meet these changing energy needs because we are a cooperative.

Co-ops are community led

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique.

Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives belong to the communities they serve. This heightened community focus allows MVEC to quickly adapt to evolving member expectations. Closeness to the community ensures a better response to these needs because we are led by the people that we serve.

Co-ops are a catalyst for good

Electric co-ops like MVEC are a catalyst for good in their communities. Co-ops engage their consumer-members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like 81 years ago when



Our receptionist Kristi couldn't resist taking a photo of this young visitor to our office. He giggled and giggled over the yellow utility helmet she gave him.

MVEC brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible. Today, it means supporting area youth through our scholarship program, Youth Tour and safety demonstrations, as well as the community as a whole through Operation RoundUp, energy-saving programs like Energy Wise, and internet and app-based account management and payment options through SmartHub for today's busy households.

“Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever-striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of consumer-members.”

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local

See Co-op Month on page 2



Co-op Month continued from page 1

community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op.

The co-op business model is unique. It is pragmatic, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned that trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members' best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those

living and working in the communities they serve—now and in the future.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

Interns sharpen skills, learn about co-op job opportunities

It's a win-win situation for everyone. College students gain valuable career experience, and the co-op gains summer help for everyday tasks and special projects. MVEC has employed lineworker apprentices for the past five years, and in 2018 MVEC expanded its summer program to include office interns.

The summer lineworkers learned the ins and outs of overhead and underground line construction, maintenance and other system work. The office interns conducted a variety of tasks including: **Human Resources** – recruiting and onboarding new employees, coordinating wellness programs, updating employee handbook; **Communications** – designing marketing materials, social media postings, filming and editing informational videos; **IT** – rebuilding computers, installing software, creating internal websites and forms, writing specialized programming, day-to-day employee computer support; **Engineering** – inspecting underground transformers, GIS mapping, staking new projects.



MVEC's summer **office interns** were (above from left,) Andre Prawira (IT) and Daniel Gardner (engineering) both from Minnesota State University; Sarah Lardy (communications) from the U of M-Twin Cities; and Katharine Mallack (human resources) from the University of St. Thomas.



MVEC has had an intern program for **seasonal line workers** for the past five years. This year's crew includes (from left) Brady O'Neill, Grant Friendshuh, Alec Jensen, Lane Ristamaki, Andrew Koenig and Cole Hanson. Missing from the photo: Dan Pecoraro. They receive on-the-job training by assisting MVEC's line crews in daily tasks.

Today's youth are tomorrow's community leaders, workers and co-op members

That's why MVEC has programs that support youth and their families.

COOPERATIVES
SEE

THE FUTURE



In the past six years, MVEC has awarded \$93,000 in **high school scholarships** to area seniors who have plans to further their education at trade schools, community colleges and universities. Recipients are recognized at the co-op's Annual Meeting each April.



Operation RoundUp, is a program that benefits a wide variety of organizations that serve MVEC youth and their families, including programs and equipment for local schools, backpack food programs, local police and sheriff departments, family housing, ambulance and medical equipment, libraries, camp opportunities, special training and events, programs for drug intervention and much more. At left is a group from TreeHouse of Chaska who serve youth at risk. Since 1995, MVEC members who round up their monthly electric bills have donated nearly \$1.8 million back to the local communities.



In 2018, MVEC reintroduced **Youth Tour**, a program where electric cooperatives from across the country send youth delegates to Washington, D.C. to learn about government and the role electric cooperatives play in their local communities. Sam Meeker of Green Isle, a senior at Central High School, was MVEC's representative this year.



Color this page for chance to win prizes!

In honor of National Co-op Month, MVEC is holding a coloring contest for kids 12 and under!

- Boys' first place prize: \$100 Target gift card
- Girls' first place prize: \$100 Target gift card
- 2 second place prizes: \$50 Target gift card
- 4 third place prizes: \$25 Target gift card

Go to www.mvec.net/coloring-contest

Download and print out this sheet.

Color and return to MVEC by Nov. 15, 2018. Entries will be judged by MVEC staff on neatness and originality. Child must live in an MVEC member household to enter.



Keeping our members and employees safe is important to us. MVEC linemen and staff conduct **safety demonstrations** for school classes and summer safety camps to teach kids good safety habits and make them aware of the dangers of electrical equipment. You can find safety tips and videos at www.mvec.net/stay-informed

A special visit Henry's dad was a lineman in Oregon and Minnesota who died when Henry was 3. Henry's mom, an MVEC member in Chanhassen, asked if Henry, now a 7th grader, could come see what linemen do. MVEC was happy to oblige. Beginning with warm-up stretches in the lunchroom, Henry was an honorary crew member for a morning and rode with lineman Bret in a utility truck, learned how to spit sunflower seeds properly, made a radio call with location number back to dispatch and put on a safety harness to take a bucket ride.

