

## Back to school Safety Check

It's back to school time, which means the return of plugging in to nightly homework, early morning routines and fall outdoor activities. Everyone can benefit from a refresher class on safety:

- DON'T plug a bunch of items into one outlet or extension cord. It could damage the electrical system in your house or even cause a fire.
- DO make sure all electric cords are tucked away, neat and tidy. Pets might chew on electrical cords, and people might trip and fall.
- DON'T use appliances or electronics near water like bathtubs, sinks or pools.
- DON'T ever climb the fence around an electrical substation. If a ball or pet gets inside the fence, call MVEC at 952.492.8255. Expert workers provide assistance.
- DON'T yank an electrical cord from the wall. Pulling on a cord can damage the appliance, the plug or the outlet.

Find additional resources and board meeting highlights at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)



# Electric Eye

August 2019

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

## Don't fall for phone scams

### SPOTTING A SCAM



**1.** Utility phone scams typically involve callers claiming to represent a utility company and attempting to trick you into paying them by threatening to turn off your power. If you believe a phone call is not legitimate, hang up immediately and call MVEC at 952.492.2313. **Do not use the phone number they give to you to verify your account status.**



**MVEC communicates with members in a variety of ways before a disconnection. A missed bill does not mean immediate disconnection.**

**2.** Never give out Social Security numbers, credit card or banking information to anyone who calls, no matter who they claim to represent. That's why instead of having a member service representative take this information over the phone, MVEC uses an automated phone system to take payments. MVEC will only ask for the last four digits of your social security number to confirm your identity before answering any of your account questions.

**3.** If your account is past due, we will send a Disconnection Notice by U.S. Mail before taking further action. If you believe you have been targeted for a scam, report it to your local police immediately.



## Cybersecurity: watching out for you

MVEC works every day to make sure your power is safe. We also work every day to make sure our system is safe from cyberattacks – both on the computer network that stores members' account information and on our complex electric system which is interconnected with power plants, transmission lines and distribution facilities.

All MVEC employees complete mandatory training to recognize phishing attempts and are tested periodically to avoid scam emails that could leave the cooperative vulnerable to a cyberattack.

MVEC's IT and security team also uses a web-based tool that monitors the cooperative's networks and systems for cybersecurity problems that could be exploited by hackers. This helps the cooperative fix problems before systems can be hacked.

**Keep your personal information secure. Here are tips to safeguard your computer:**

- Keep all software on internet-connected devices – including PCs, tablets and smartphones – up to date to reduce risk of malware infection.
- Create long passwords that only you will remember and change them every six months. A strong password is at least 12 characters long.
- Avoid the use of thumb drives and other shared, portable memory devices.
- Don't click on weblinks or attached files in emails when you don't know who the sender is.
- Keep pace with new ways to stay safe online. Check trusted websites for latest information. Encourage friends, family and colleagues to be web wise.

# A Full House of Energy Savings

## ATTIC

In many homes, attic insulation is one of the easiest, least expensive and most effective ways to reduce your energy use. In Minnesota, a properly insulated attic also reduces the chance of ice dams.

## DEN/OFFICE

Plug all electronic gadgets such as phone and laptop chargers, printers, gaming consoles and BluRay players into a power strip with an on/off switch. When not in use, turn the power strip off to eliminate all those energy vampires.



## BEDROOM

Ceiling fans can help save energy all year long. In the summer, fans should rotate counter-clockwise to push air down, creating a cooling flow. In the winter, fans should rotate clockwise to help draw cool air up toward the ceiling and push the warm air that naturally rises down to you and your family.



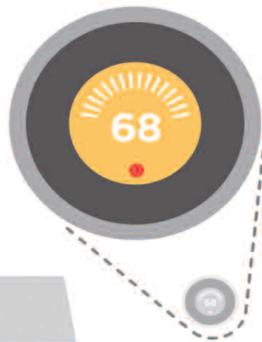
## BATHROOM

Take a short shower instead of a bath. Short showers use much less water, and you'll also save energy by not heating all that extra water a bath requires.



## LIVING ROOM

Smart thermostats learn how you and your family live and automatically adjust the temperature settings based on your lifestyle to keep you comfortable while saving you money. Receive a \$50 rebate and 10 percent off your electric bills June through September when you sign up for MVEC's Energy Wise WiFi thermostat program.



## KITCHEN

Make sure your burner isn't bigger than the pan and use flat-bottomed pans to maximize surface contact with the burner. Don't preheat the oven until you're ready to use it. Minimize the number of times you open and close the refrigerator or oven door.

