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**HONORING ALL
 WHO SERVE**

Veterans
 - DAY 2019 -



Thank you for
 your service!



Notices

MVEC offices will be closed Nov. 28-29 for Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-25 for Christmas and Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

October Board Meeting highlights are online at www.mvec.net.

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



Electric Eye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

November 2019

Electricity powers Thor's Lefse grill

New Prague isn't exactly the Capitol of lefse-making, but don't tell that to Thor and Becky Erickson, who are in the midst of their busy season of making some 4,500 rounds of the Norwegian flat bread – or Norwegian tortillas as some describe it – for their hobby business, Thor's Lefse.

Thor Erickson (yes, that's his real name) grew up helping his grandparents make the traditional holiday bread. Grandpa Ed made lefse until he was in his 90s. Then Thor and Becky took over.

Thor is the expert at measuring out the dough and rolling it thin. (He's an accountant.) Becky has the patience to grill it just right. (She's a teacher for the Lakeville Schools.) "We each found what we do best," said Becky. Their three kids also help make lefse

"Lefse brings up memories, feelings of the past."



MVEC members Thor and Becky Erickson of New Prague are the bakers behind Thor's Lefse. Together Thor rolls the dough and Becky grills the Scandinavian specialty to precise perfection.

See Lefse on page 4



Three director positions up for 2020 election

Interested in serving on MVEC's Board of Directors?

The filing period is now open with a deadline of Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2020. The director seats held by Brent Lawrence of Credit River Township (District I), Michelle Morrison of Belle Plaine (District II) and Fran Barten of New Prague (District III) will be on the ballot.

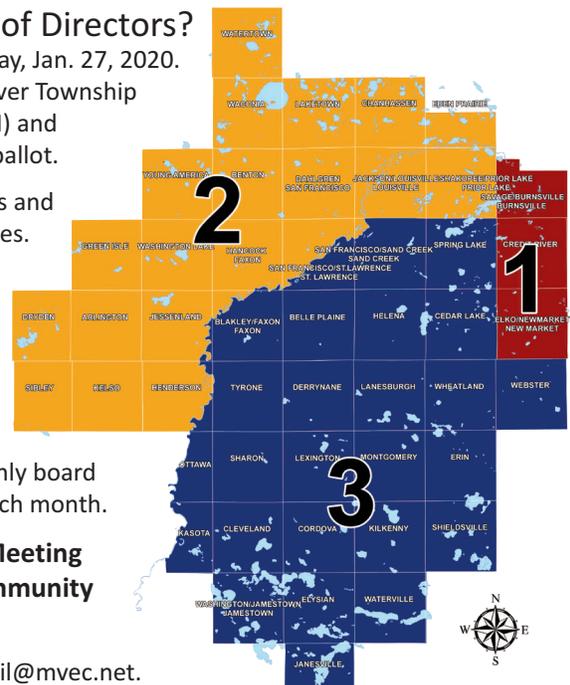
Directors represent the membership in co-op decisions and work to establish policies, develop budgets and set rates.

Qualifications

- Candidates must be members who reside within MVEC's service area.
- Candidates may not be employed by or financially involved with a competitor or business selling electric energy or supplies.
- If elected, directors must be able to attend monthly board meetings held at 8:30 a.m. the last Monday of each month.

Voting will take place by mail or at the Annual Meeting 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at Arlington Community Center, 204 Shamrock Drive, Arlington, MN

For more information, call 952.492.8242 or email cheril@mvec.net.





CEO's Corner

By Ryan Hentges

Providing reliable power to our members is a key focus of our Cooperative. Reliability is achieved through proper investment in plant, maintenance, tree trimming, and trained team members.

MVEC engineers review our grid on an ongoing basis to prioritize investments, maximize impact, and manage costs. Throughout the year, we make necessary investments in construction and maintenance to maximize reliability. In 2019, we have invested more than \$10 million dollars in our grid, and \$1.7 million to trim trees that get too close to power lines.

Unfortunately, power outages still occur due to storms, car accidents, trees, construction, and animals. When outages occur, we rely upon a well-trained team to work safely and diligently to restore power. When restoring power, a variety of things determine success. **For MVEC, the first measure of success is the safety of our team members and the public.**

Working on high voltage power lines requires knowledge and focus to ensure the job can be completed safely. To complicate outage restoration, our crews often restore power in terrible conditions – wind, rain, heat, cold, dark - and doing it 30 to 60 feet in the air. To reduce the dangers of these situations, our crews utilize safety equipment, and follow safety procedures.

Sometimes outage restoration may take longer due to these safety procedures. Here are a few items I'd like to address:

- **When you see a truck pull up to restore an outage**, you may see the crew sit in the truck for a period of time, or stand around the truck talking. It may seem like they are wasting time, however, it's an important safety procedure. They are having a job briefing about safety issues they need to be aware of, such as electrical sources, traffic, dogs, weather conditions and so on. While some situations are straightforward, others can be complex and require communication with other crews.

- **Sometimes you may see a crew drive away from your outage.** Rest assured they are not giving up. Rather, they are likely patrolling the line to determine the issue or to ensure the line is cleared so they can safely restore power.

- **Sometimes it may seem that others are getting their power restored faster than you.** There can be a variety of reasons for this, but one of the safety reasons is we limit the number of crews working on a specific electrical circuit. This is done because we need to avoid a situation in which one crew restores an outage into an area where another crew is working.

Outage restoration can be complex. In any outage situation, we want to get your power restored as quickly as possible. However, our first goal, focus, and objective, is to ensure the safety of our team members and the public. After that, our dedicated team will continue to work diligently to restore your power.

Are you prepared?

The number one thing you can

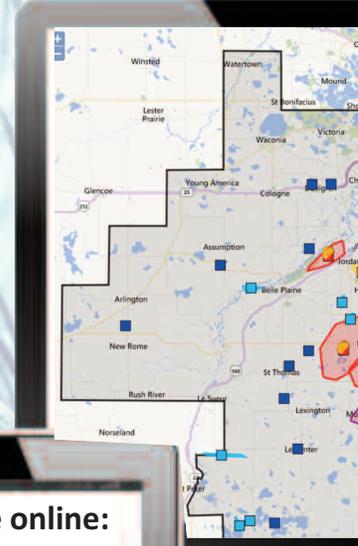


Update your

at 952.492.8333 or 1.866.492.8333

Why is it important?

If your two most-used phone numbers (landline and cell phone) are in MVEC's records, our automated phone system will be able to identify your location when you call in an outage. Your information is added to the other outage information that has been reported. This helps our dispatchers send crews to needed areas and speeds up power restoration.



Coming soon!

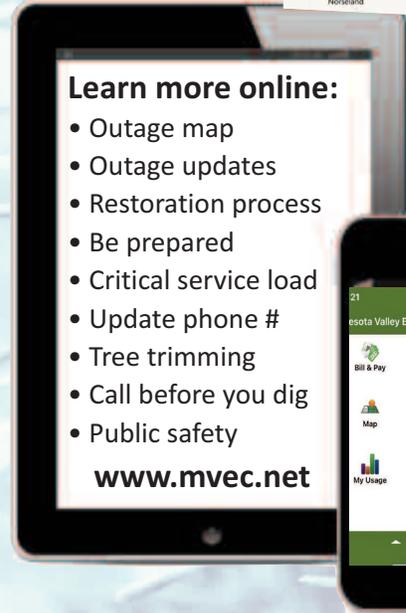
We are about to launch **Outage Texting** so members can report power outages by text.

Watch for information in next month's issue of the Electric Eye!

Learn more online:

- Outage map
- Outage updates
- Restoration process
- Be prepared
- Critical service load
- Update phone #
- Tree trimming
- Call before you dig
- Public safety

www.mvec.net



Be prepared and s

- Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.

- First Aid kit, blankets, matches, flashlight, battery-powered radio, fire extinguisher, shovel, rock salt, non-electric can opener and extra batteries.

- Take into consideration things that are specific to your home and family. Listening to weather

forecasts regularly days notice to allow you to ch stock-up on essen

- If an outage occ alternate heating heater or wood-b Fuel and wood-bu always be vented, and smoke detect

Lefse continued from page 1

for their family's personal consumption.

"Over the past 10 years, we get better and better," said Thor, who keeps it consistent in size by carefully mixing, dividing the dough and rolling out each lefse round.

During the busy season, two electric lefse grills are used — a far cry from Thor's grandparents who early on used a wood-burning stove. The wooden lefse sticks and rolling pins never go out of style.

"When I'm selling at craft shows, people will walk by and say, 'Oh, that reminds me of Grandma,'" said Becky. "Lefse brings up memories, feelings of the past."



Though Grandpa Ed's lefse grill conked out a couple years ago, Becky still uses it as a display for lefse when selling at local craft sales.

The lefse grills aren't the only items powered by electricity at the Erickson home. The garage heater keeps Thor and their Bernese Mountain dog Kota warm and happy in the winter; and in the summer, the Ericksons (who have been MVEC members for six years) enjoy 10 percent savings by participating in the

Energy Wise air conditioning program. "I was kind of leery — I love air conditioning in the summer," said Thor, "But I don't even notice it being cycled."

The Ericksons' Energy Wise participation has saved them \$600 in the past 12 months. "I would definitely recommend it," said Thor.

Follow Thor's Lefse on Facebook to learn more and find upcoming craft shows where Thor's Lefse is sold. Or contact the Ericksons at thorslefse@hotmail.com for local delivery options.

Are you a lefse purist?

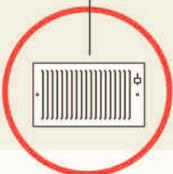
Butter alone or with brown sugar? Lingonberries? Depends on how Norwegian you are. **Riced, mashed or instant potatoes?** Thor uses Hungry Jack instant potatoes for feasibility and saving time (it is a part-time gig, after all.) The self-described lefse snob said in a side-by-side comparison, most people can't tell the difference.

Holiday Tree Safety Tips

Ensure a merry and bright holiday season by safely maintaining your tree with the following tips.

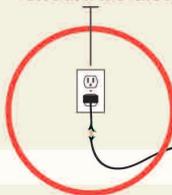
Keep away from heat:

Make sure your tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like an air duct, fireplace or space heater.



Examine cords:

Examine extension cords and lights for signs of damage. Frayed electric cords should be discarded.



Keep it watered:

Fill the water reservoir daily and check the condition of the trunk bark and branches for moisture. Shedding or dry needles could mean the tree is drying out, increasing overall fire risks.



Inspect lights:

Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and/or loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.

Trim the stump:

Trim the tree's stump by at least two inches on freshly cut trees. Allow it to absorb water for 24 hours before bringing it inside.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

Winterize home for energy savings

Your wallet will thank you for considering these energy-saving ideas:

- Replace worn weather stripping and caulk around doors and windows
- Install storm doors
- Replace older windows
- Make sure your home is insulated according to recommended levels for Minnesota winters.
- Seal gaps in attics, soffits and basement rim joints by stuffing in pieces of insulation.
- Use expandable caulk to seal around gaps in exterior plumbing and wiring access
- Have your furnace or boiler inspected and cleaned, including vents.
- Replace furnace filters throughout the year.



Energy Wise helps you save more

- Consider getting a WiFi and save energy and money by automatically adjusting temperatures according to your schedule. Regates and summer discounts apply if installed to MVEC's Energy Wise program.
- An Air Source Heat Pump provides inexpensive heat during most of the colder months, and you will also be ready for hot summer days next year, as it also can cool your home. Rebate and low rates also apply.
- Give energy specialists Michael H. or Mike O. a call at 952.492.2313 for a free consultation on home heating, cooling and electric water heating options.

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