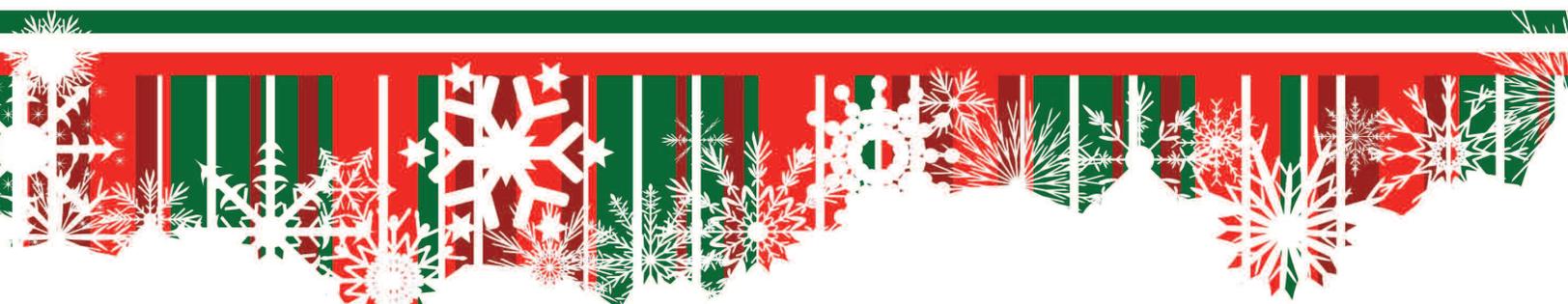


*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!*  
from the staff at Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative



Minnesota Valley  
Electric Cooperative

# Electric **Eye**

December 2019

## Coloring contest winners

Thank you for over 110 entries.  
Congratulations to Braydon VonBank, left,  
and Samantha Odenthal, right, who were the  
first place winners of \$100 Target gift cards.

Cailyn Christensen and Evan Dispigno were  
the \$50 gift card winners. The \$25 gift card  
winners were Grayson Boecker, Jaxson  
Wetzel, Kristi Abraham and Lacey  
Samuelson. Great job, everyone!



# \$1,000 scholarships available

The deadline to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship is Friday, Feb. 21, 2020. Graduating high school seniors attending public, private or home school are eligible to apply. Five recipients from each of MVEC's three districts will be randomly selected. The only requirement is to be a member of Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative with a wish to further your education.

**Applications are available** at [www.mvec.net/our-community](http://www.mvec.net/our-community).

Winners will be recognized at MVEC's 82nd Annual Meeting on April 7, 2020, at the Arlington Community Center, 204 Shamrock Drive. MVEC scholarships are funded through unclaimed Capital Credits — money that would otherwise be claimed by the state of Minnesota.

## Basin Scholarship

Basin Electric, one of our wholesale power providers, has one \$1,000 scholarship available. An essay and an outside appraisal are required. The Basin scholarship deadline is also Friday, Feb. 21. The recipient is chosen by Basin Electric in April.



**Best wishes to our 2019 scholarship winners as they finish their first semester at college and tech school. 2020 applications can be found at [www.mvec.net/our-community](http://www.mvec.net/our-community)**

# Youth Tour applications now open for free D.C. trip

Do you know a high school sophomore or junior in MVEC's service area who is interested in a trip to Washington D.C.?

One representative, whose parent or guardian is an MVEC member, will be selected to participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour June 20-25, 2020.

A 300- to 500-word essay is due with the application by Friday, March 20, 2020.

An alternate will also be selected and will

receive a \$200 cash prize.

The winner will travel with approximately 40 Minnesota teens sponsored by other rural electric co-ops and be one of 1,500 national delegates.

### Trip highlights include:

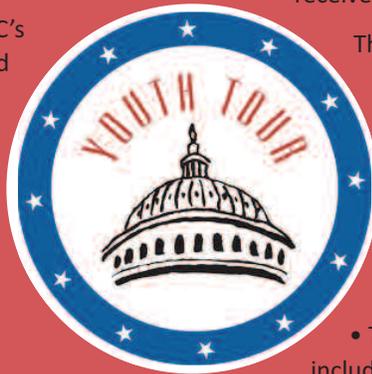
- Touring historical sites, including Arlington National Cemetery, Capitol Hill, the Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon, the Smithsonian Institution, the U.S. Supreme Court, the

Washington National Cathedral and more.

- Meeting local political representatives and learning more about government.
- Creating lifelong friendships with students from all around the country.

MVEC is sponsoring the trip as a commitment to education and learning the role electric cooperatives play in developing strong rural communities in America.

**The application and more information can be found at [www.mvec.net/our-community](http://www.mvec.net/our-community).**



**Sam Meeker of Green Isle represented MVEC in 2018.**



**Natalie Thoms of Savage represented the co-op in 2019.**





Since 1995, Operation Round Up members have collectively donated **\$1,878,550** in pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters



The average yearly donation to round up your bill is just \$6.

Sign up to add your monthly change at [www.mvec.net/our-community](http://www.mvec.net/our-community)

**A big THANK YOU to those (over 50% of MVEC's members) who participate in this community-based program.**

Through the generosity of MVEC members who round up their monthly electric bills, the Operation Round Up Trust Board gifted \$33,971 for the fourth quarter of 2019 to the following organizations:

- Arlington Ambulance - \$2,222 for two AED devices
- Arlington Chamber of Commerce - \$1,000 for Arlidazzle Parade
- Belle Plaine Backpack Program - \$500 for food
- Belle Plaine Food Shelf - \$500 for food
- Belle Plaine Oak Crest Elementary - \$900 for 5th grade field trip transportation
- Brainpower in a Backpack of Burnsville - \$500 for food
- Can Do Canines of Golden Valley- \$3,000 for dog training needs for clients in MVEC service area
- Carver County Historical Society - \$3,000 for Smithsonian traveling exhibit
- Distinguished Young Women of MN of Savage- \$1,000 for state competition materials
- Green Isle Community Connect - \$500 for food
- Green Isle Community School - \$180 for student transportation to environmental camp
- Hamburg Fire Department - \$1,500 for breathing unit
- Henderson Food Share - \$500 for food
- Henderson Hilltop Elementary - \$1,500 for Youth Frontiers Kindness Retreat
- Henderson Hilltop Elementary - \$232 for wobble stools
- Holy Redeemer School of Montgomery - \$670 for roller skate and safety equipment rental
- Jordan Area Food Shelf - \$500 for food



### Supporting those who serve our communities

The Cologne Fire Department (above) received a \$3,534 ORU grant to purchase gas monitors and calibration stations, which help detect gas leaks and monitor polluted air. Hamburg Fire & Rescue (below) received a \$2,400 grant to replace outdated air masks and a \$1,500 grant for a breathing device.



- Legacy Hero Hunt of Le Sueur - \$2,000 for veterans hunting day
- Le Sueur County Adopt-A-Family Christmas - \$500 for clothing and gifts for the needy
- Le Sueur Food Shelf - \$500 for food
- Le Sueur County Santa Anonymous - \$500 for toys, gifts and clothing
- Lonsdale Food Shelf - \$500 for food
- Lutheran Home Hope of Belle Plaine - \$1,800 for summer camp
- Montgomery Sportsman Club - \$1,500 toward building trap shooting range
- New Options of Shakopee - \$575 for coffee maker, work cart and art cart
- People Reaching Out to People of Eden Prairie - \$500 for summer food program
- Scott-Carver CAP Agency - \$3,000 for crisis nursery
- Sibley County FoodShare - \$500 for food
- True Friends of Eden Prairie - \$3,392 for Gaga ball pit

**4th quarter total: \$33,971**

# January 28 is deadline to file for 1 of 3 Board of Director seats

Interested in serving on MVEC's Board of Directors?

The filing period is now open with a deadline of Tuesday, Jan. 28, 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 residing 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](mailto:cheril@mvec.net).

**November Board Meeting highlights are online at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)**



## CEO's Corner / Ryan Hentges

In previous months, I discussed the need for a balanced approach to energy production.

I've discussed how

MVEC has made cost-effective investments in renewable generation on behalf of our member-owners, yet has firm resources to ensure the flow of electricity 24/7.

A balanced approach is not only necessary in the generation of electricity, a balanced approach is necessary for investing in our local electric grid.

MVEC owns and operates a distribution grid that covers 900 square miles. We deliver electricity through the service area on 4,000 miles of overhead and underground lines. In total, the lines, poles, substations, technology and other necessary equipment equates over \$190,000,000 in capital investments.

It's important that we make prudent investments over time, such as annual construction and maintenance to ensure the highest reliability financially feasible.

In 2019, MVEC will spend over \$10 million in new line construction, upgrading existing line, replacing poles, and building and upgrading substations. The engineering and construction staff at MVEC work hard to plan these enhancements in a methodical and purposeful manner. Multi-year plans are developed, and then revised as necessary. The goal is to make investments over time, which helps manage the labor and financial impacts of the investments.

MVEC also actively inspects and maintains its distribution equipment. Distribution equipment is inspected on a rotational basis to proactively resolve issues prior to outages occurring. One of the main causes of outages is trees that fall onto the lines

during storms. MVEC actively addresses tree growth across the distribution system and spends \$1.7 million per year to clear trees that are too close to the power lines.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this column, balance is important. We make prudent investments in our distribution system, but we also closely watch the bottom line. To that end, our MVEC general service rate has not increased since 2016, and our average rate is currently 10 percent below Xcel Energy.

Over the coming years, we'll continue to make investments in our plant to ensure safe and reliable electric service. That said, we'll always seek a balanced approach to manage our rates and maintain affordable electricity.

Thanks for being a member-owner of MVEC and for the opportunity to serve you.

