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### Reminders

#### COVID-19 Updates

• MVEC lobby is currently closed to the public.

• MVEC's Annual Meeting has been postponed to a later date TBD.

• For updates, visit [www.mvec.net/coronavirus-pandemic-update/](http://www.mvec.net/coronavirus-pandemic-update/)

#### Minnesota's Cold

**Weather Rule** was scheduled to end on April 15. In light of the pandemic situation, details of this state law may be subject to change. If you have concerns about your ability to pay your electric bill, contact MVEC or visit [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net) for a list of Minnesota energy assistance resources.

**Additional resources available 24/7 at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)**



# Electric eye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

April 2020

## CEO's Corner

By Ryan Hentges



### *Providing essential services during this challenging time*

Across the US, everyone is doing their part to help reduce the impact of COVID-19. More than ever, a reliable supply of electricity is essential to provide homes and businesses the power they depend on. At MVEC, we are focused on being part of the solution.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we want to reassure you the safety of our members, staff and community remains our highest priority.

Our business continuity team (myself, safety director, executive team and IT supervisor) meets several times a week by teleconference to continuously evaluate the readiness of our personnel, operations and supplies in order to perform our mission of safely providing reliable energy at cost.

As an essential service, we are highly aware of the importance of keeping our staff healthy. The vast majority of our office employees have transitioned to work remotely from home. Those who remain in the office are practicing social distancing, in some cases moving their desks to more isolated areas.

Our linemen, meter readers, substation technicians and locators have the advantage of working

outdoors. Still, we have put health-aware measures in place for these team members, as they are considered first responders of the utility world. We have staggered crew start times, limited the size of crews, and redirected their work to focus on maintenance-related items.

We ask if you see any field personnel on the job, that you maintain a safe distance to help us keep them healthy and ready to respond to outages and other system-related work.

We have temporarily closed our lobby to the public and postponed our Annual Meeting. Our energy specialists have put in-home visits with members on hold and will communicate via phone call, text or Skype. If a co-op employee needs to do work at your property, you will receive a phone call, but they will not be knocking on your door.

We thank you for your patience as we work in new ways to stay healthy and keep the power flowing to your home and business. Working together, we can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and continue to serve you now and beyond.

**Find MVEC'S  
COVID-19 updates at:  
[www.mvec.net/  
coronavirus-pandemic-update](http://www.mvec.net/coronavirus-pandemic-update)**

We send our sincere wishes for your welfare and safety during this challenging time.

# ORU makes 1st quarter donations of \$33,984

*Operation Round Up 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. Recipients in the first quarter of 2020 include:*

**Belle Plaine Backpacks** – \$500 for food  
**Belle Plaine Cyber Tigers** – \$500 for STEM  
**Belle Plaine Food Shelf** – \$500 for food  
**Brain Power in a Backpack of Burnsville** – \$500 for food  
**Burnsville Robotics** – \$500 to upgrade computers  
**Camp Fire MN** – \$2,000 for scholarships  
**Choose Not to Use** – \$2,000 for speaker in Jordan and New Prague  
**Community Giving Hope** – \$750 for Cancer Cruise  
**Green Isle Community Connect** – \$500 for food program  
**Green Isle Lions** – \$1,500 for winter wear  
**Harriet Bishop Elementary** – \$800 for community service day  
**Holy Cross Catholic School** – \$850 for traveling planetarium  
**Holy Redeemer School** – \$620 for mini course week  
**Jordan Food Shelf** – \$500 for food



***\$1.9 million back to local communities since 1995***

**Kingsway Retirement Living** – \$1,125 for lift chair  
**Le Center Firemans Relief Association** – \$2,000 for Nomax hoods  
**Le Sueur Food Shelf** – \$500 for food  
**LSH Backpacks** – \$500 for food  
**Le Sueur County Sheriff** – \$975 for DARE program goggles  
**Lonsdale Area Food Shelf** – \$500 for food  
**Lutheran Home Association** – \$750 for fishing program  
**Lutheran Social Services** – \$1,194 for insulated meal bags  
**New Options-Pro Act** – \$510 for equipment  
**New Prague Historical Society** – \$550 for

video equipment

**Peace Center** – \$500 for food  
**Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council** – \$1,000 for Harvey Kane One Man Band  
**RELATE** – \$500 for 24-hour crisis care line  
**SACS** – \$560 for camp transportation  
**Scott Carver CAP Agency** – \$2,000 for crisis nursery  
**Shakopee Band Boosters** – \$500 for marching baritone  
**Sibley County Agricultural Society** – \$2,000 for llama barn  
**Sibley FoodShare** – \$500 for food  
**Southern Valley Alliance for Battered Women** – \$2,000 for aid  
**St. Peter Hockey Association** – \$700 for Le Sueur weight room AED  
**Techno Tech Robotics** – \$500 for supplies and transportation  
**Tokata Learning Center** – \$1,000 for experiential learning  
**All Night Safe Parties** – \$100 each to high schools in Burnsville, Central Norwood-Young America, Chanhassen, New Prague, Shakopee, Tri-City United, Waconia, and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown.

**TOTAL 1st Quarter: \$33,984**

**Thanks to all who participate!**

**Want to add your change to good causes? Sign up for ORU at [www.mvec.net/our-community](http://www.mvec.net/our-community)**

## Capital Credits applied to March bills

If you were a member of the cooperative in 1995-96, you may be eligible for Capital Credits — the margins MVEC pays back after all expenses have been met. This year, the Board of Directors has authorized \$640,000 to be returned with an additional \$300,000 set aside for seniors over 70 and estates that wish to receive a discounted payment of their Capital Credit balance.

Since 1959, MVEC has returned **over \$26 million** in Capital Credits to its member-owners. Even if you move and are no longer an MVEC member, MVEC will forward future Capital Credit payments to you. For more information, visit [www.mvec.net/your-cooperative](http://www.mvec.net/your-cooperative) or call Tammi at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832.







# Programs help with summer savings

Summer cooling is not far away. Here are two Energy Wise programs to consider to help lower your summer energy bills. Contact us or sign up at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)

## Energy Wise Cooling

- Receive a 10% discount on all main meter usage from June-September.
- MVEC will install an energy management switch (free of charge) on your home near your central air conditioner.
- During peak system-wide electricity usage, the switch cycles your central air conditioner on and off. The furnace fan continues to circulate cool air.
- Receive a \$25 rebate for air conditioner and heat pump tune-ups. Unit must be three years or older and not have had a tune up in the last two years. The rebate application can be filled out online at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net).



## WiFi Thermostat

- Receive \$50 for enrolling and 10% discount on all main meter usage June-September.
- Control WiFi thermostats from your computer or smart phone.
- Set it and forget it! Manage optimal temperature settings when you're at home or away. You'll automatically lower your energy costs, as well as help MVEC ensure lower rates for everyone.
- Visit [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net) to see qualifying Nest and Honeywell WiFi thermostats. Wireless internet network required.



# COVID-19 may influence your home energy usage

The kids are home all day - doing school online and, once the virtual school bell rings, off to TV or video games. Adults are working from home due to business need changes or you may have a college student who is living at home again and has to conduct online learning, too.



The daily activity in your once-quiet home is now changing due to recent world events. There are more people in the house which can create increased:

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Laundry (about \$1.50 a load with hot water)
- Showers and water usage
- Gaming activities
- Plugged in electronics of all kinds (iPad, iPhone, laptops, monitors, etc.)
- Use of a space heater in a cooler part of the home (this can add another \$1.44 per eight-hour day - or an extra \$43 a month).

Keep in mind the electric bills you receive in March and April reflect usage during colder time periods. Your electric bill normally

reflects usage from the past 30 days.

### Tips to help you monitor energy usage:



- Monitor your usage with SmartHub, MVEC's free tool for account management. SmartHub can help you take control of your MVEC account and give you the chance to focus on smart energy choices for your household.

- Check out all the various features to manage your account. You can schedule payments, set up alerts, recurring payments, view billing history and see your current bill, along with statements from the previous month or even the previous summer, if you want to compare costs. You can view your actual usage by the hour, day,

month or year and see how your usage is trending over time, which will allow you to take steps to lower your bill.

### Access SmartHub at

[www.mvec.net/residential/pay-my-bill/smarthub](http://www.mvec.net/residential/pay-my-bill/smarthub) or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple iTunes Store or Google Play Marketplace. Smarthub can be easily accessed on your computer, phone or tablet.

### Other payment options to consider:

- **Budget Billing** – Pay a determined average amount each month (recalculated twice a year) to help predict and manage your electric bills.
- **Pay as you Go** – This prepay program allows you to pay when you want, in the amount you want.

**We care.** MVEC will work with a member if they have a special circumstance. We all know that life can throw some curve balls at times. Contact MVEC's Member Service Department if you feel you are unable to pay your bill. It is best to make payments to avoid a large balance accumulating, and we can work with you to make a customized payment arrangement. Call 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832 or email [info@mvec.net](mailto:info@mvec.net)

Create your FREE and secure SmartHub account at: <https://mvec.smarthub.coop/>

# Time-of-use rate provides EV charging ease

"The car is a piece of cake," said Jeff Prouty of his electric Tesla Model X. "I drive past the gas station and think, I'll never have to stop for that again. It's so easy."

The ease that the Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative member is referencing is the ability to fuel his vehicle, on his own terms, from his own Eden Prairie garage with clean, odorless electricity. And without taking the time to stand in any inclement elements at the pump.

He also went electric for environmental reasons. "I believe in Elon Musk and what he's doing," said Prouty, who has been to the Tesla factory in Claremont, CA. A shareholder even before he bought the Tesla two years ago, he said he has a sense of pride toward the company that is "changing the world, making it a better place."

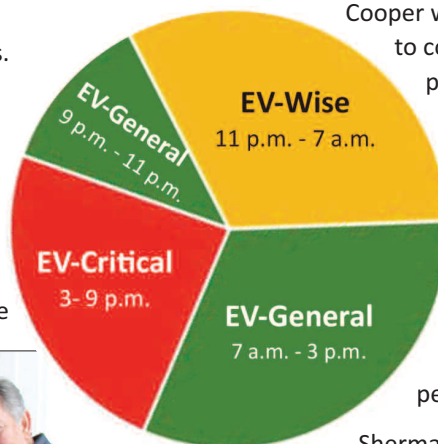
Prouty participates in MVEC's EV24 charging program, which allows charging according to time of use rates. So far, Prouty hasn't needed to charge during the day, but is glad to have the option, even if it would cost more.

Electric vehicles can be programmed to charge at set times. Prouty charges 11 p.m. when MVEC's overnight rate is 5.2 cents to 6.9 cents/kWh, depending on the time the year. General and critical-time rates range from 11.7 cents to 39.7 cents/kWh.

Before the Tesla, Prouty (founder of the Prouty Project, a strategic planning and leadership training company) drove a Mini Cooper. He said he was nudged toward replacing the



**MVEC member Jeff Prouty and his Tesla Model X. Prouty participates in the cooperative's time of use program for electric vehicles.**



Cooper with a Tesla by his daughter who goes to college in California, where EVs are popular and make a lot of sense.

Despite the EV battery reputation, Prouty said it's not just a warm-weather car. "I've driven it through everything and anything. Year-round, in snow and ice." His wife Mary also has taken it for the occasional spin, and she said she likes the smooth and zippy performance.

Sherman Electric installed the special meter and charging station in his garage. Charging the vehicle has averaged \$18 a month – when charging at the low, overnight rate. If not on the EV24 rate, charging would cost about \$40 a month. Prouty estimates the bill for a gasoline-fueled vehicle commuting to his office on Old Shady Oak Road would average over \$50 a month.

"When I have a vehicle, I usually drive them until they rust out," said Prouty. "The salesman said this one won't rust out, so I would love to be here 30 years from now, plugging in this same car. It will be a leading-edge vehicle for years."



**Jeff Prouty "fuels" his electric vehicle from the comfort of his garage.**