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Easy ways to lower your electric bill

Join an Energy Wise® program for heating, cooling and electric water heating to get 10-50 percent savings on your electric rates.

Save 10 percent on your total electric usage June-September with the Wi-Fi thermostat program.

Monitor your usage daily, weekly or monthly with a free SmartHub account. Statistics show that a greater awareness of your household's real time usage can lead to lower electric bills.

April Board Highlights are online at www.mvec.net/your-cooperative/

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



ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

May 2020

2020 election results 83rd Annual Meeting postponed due to pandemic; election proceeds on schedule

Though Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting was postponed to a date yet to be determined, the election for board directors in two districts went ahead as scheduled. Results certified by independent election vendor Survey & Ballot Systems were announced on April 7 by MVEC attorney Paul Johnson.

A total of 2,985 votes (all by mail) were cast. This is 11.7% of 25,509 eligible MVEC voters in the two districts that had races.

All three incumbents were returned to the Board of Directors for three-year terms.

Brent Lawrence of Credit River Township was re-elected with 665 votes. Challenger Barbara Marshall of Prior Lake received 369 votes. Lawrence received 64.3% of the 1,034 votes cast in District I, which covers portions of Prior Lake, Savage, Burnsville, Credit River and Elko-New Market.

Michelle Morrison of Belle Plaine ran unopposed in District II, which covers portions of Carver, Hennepin, Sibley and Scott counties. Under the bylaws, her term continues until the rescheduled Annual Meeting is held. At that meeting, a voice vote will be taken to affirm her re-election.

Fran Barten of New Prague was re-elected with 1,551 votes. Challenger Terese (Terri) Gulstad of Prior Lake received 396 votes. Barten received 79.7% of the 1,947 votes cast in District III, which covers portions of Scott, Le Sueur, Rice, Blue Earth and Waseca counties.

Details of MVEC's rescheduled Annual Meeting will be announced in this newsletter, by Constant Contact email and online in the near future.



Brent Lawrence
District I

Brent and his wife Deb live in Credit River Township and have been members for 31 years. Brent is president of Lawrence Auctioneering.



Michelle Morrison
District II

Michelle and her husband Terry live in rural Belle Plaine and have been members for 27 years. Michelle is the clerk for the city of Cologne.



Fran Barten
District III

Fran lives in rural New Prague and has been a member for 52 years. Fran is the owner of a family ag business, Barten Pumpkins.

We understand the importance of reliable power at this time

Although the pandemic has changed some of our business practices short term, we continue to strive to deliver safe and reliable power. If you are facing financial hardship and have trouble paying your electric bill due to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, we are here to help. MVEC has suspended all service disconnections, and we are waiving late payment charges and returned bank fees until further notice.

Learn more at www.mvec.net/coronavirus-pandemic-update/



CEO's Corner/Ryan Hentges

Continued focus on serving our members and our communities

Over the last several weeks there have been many changes at the cooperative. Most of our office employees now telecommute. Most of our field personnel go directly to the job site, rather than come to the office. Many work processes have changed. What hasn't changed is our continued focus on serving you, our members and communities, with safe and reliable electricity.

Our team has been creative in finding ways to ensure they remain healthy, while continuing to keep the cooperative running as normal. We realize our local economy needs construction projects to continue. Our crews have identified ways to continue these important construction projects, while safely

working at a distance. We realize there is a heightened need for reliable power with many people working from home and many business and medical organizations relying on that power to perform their important work. For three weeks, our crews completed detailed maintenance of the electric system, looking for and resolving potential issues that could create outages in the future.

We also realize many of our members may be out of work and will have a difficult time paying bills. Our member service reps are ready to help you and find creative solutions to meet your individual needs. If you find yourself in a difficult financial situation, please call and allow us to help.

Many of our members may notice their electric bills are higher than normal. While the rate you pay for electricity has not changed, we have seen a noticeable increase in residential energy usage. We offer online

tools through our SmartHub app to allow you to track and understand your change in usage. In addition, our member service reps can help you understand your usage patterns, and our energy specialists can provide money-saving options.

Our cooperative remains financially stable and capable of handling uncertain economic times. We are closely watching our budgets and managing costs. Our largest expenditure is purchasing the power we deliver to your home and business. To date in 2020, we have been successful in managing that cost, and we foresee it to continue.

On behalf of the team at MVEC, I want you to know that we are confident in our ability to manage through these times and not just "hold-on," but accelerate the cooperative forward. We are here to serve you, our members, and we appreciate that opportunity.

May is Electrical Safety Month

Know what to do if your vehicle hits a power line?

Do you, your teen or loved one know what to do in the event of a collision with a utility pole resulting in a downed power line? Do your loved ones know what to do if they come upon an accident with a downed power line? Here are a few safety tips we hope you never have to use. But if you do, they could save their life.

Vehicle touching a downed line?

If a car collides with a utility pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. Anyone exiting the car could come in contact with thousands of volts of electricity from the downed line. In essence, when you step out of the car, you become part of the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted.

It's critical to stay in the vehicle and tell others to do the same until emergency crews have told you it's safe to exit the car. If the vehicle is on fire or you must exit for other safety reasons, jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or

clothing touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away (in small steps with your feet still together) to avoid electric shock. Keep moving away until you are at least 40 feet from the vehicle.



If you come upon a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, keep your distance. A downed power line can energize the ground up to 35 feet away. While your natural instinct may be to rush to the car to help, instead pause. Do not approach the car or scene of the accident.

Tell others to stay away. While you may be concerned about injuries to those involved, the best action you can take is to alert emergency officials, who will in turn coordinate with MVEC or other appropriate power providers. For the same reasons described above, never drive over a downed power line or through water that is touching a downed power line.

Power line down on your property?

If you have a downed power line on your property as a result of a falling tree, storm or other circumstance, do not go near the power line. Assume that the downed line is energized and dangerous. Never try to move the power line even if you think it's not energized or if you are using a non-conductive material. We recognize that you may be anxious to clear your property of tree limbs or other debris near the downed line, but please wait until after an electric co-op crew or emergency officials have confirmed that it is safe to do so.



There's an electric transformer buried in here. The shrub growing over it will slow down MVEC crews in the event of an outage.



As the sticker warns, keep vegetation and other items away. A clearance of 10 feet is recommended for easy access.



You may not like the look of our big green box in your yard, but it is part of the reliable electric system for you and your neighbors.

Request from our crews: help us keep your electricity safe, reliable

The pandemic situation means more people are now at home during the day. This gives you a greater awareness of what's going on in your neighborhood during the work day, including electric system maintenance. This has led to some members surprised to find MVEC personnel working on their property.

We call ahead of time - but if your phone number is wrong in our system, you will miss our message

When MVEC personnel work on scheduled outages for maintenance, members are informed 24-48 hours beforehand by our automated phone system. This works great – as long as your main phone number we have on file is accurate. Also, if you are the one to hear the phone message be sure to tell the rest of your household the power will be off, so they aren't surprised.

This is very important during the current

health situation, because our linemen, meter readers and other staff are no longer able to go door-to-door to let you know work will be completed on your property. We also ask you to not leave your home to approach our crews with questions – to help keep you and them healthy.

Please don't landscape close to electrical equipment

Do you have one of our transformers (green box on the ground or canister-type item on a pole) on your property? It is very tempting to "hide" this unsightly equipment, but it is very important to keep transformers easy to find and free from vegetation growing around it.

All vegetation near the front door of the transformer needs to be 10 feet away. This allows crews to access the transformer with a "hot stick" to disconnect energized power before they can start repairs safely.

In the event of maintenance or emergency, crews need to access the electric equipment quickly and may need to remove the vegetation in the way. We don't want to compromise the landscaping on your property; however, having to remove shrubs, flowers and large rocks can slow down restoration efforts and may create a serious safety hazard.

Please keep landscaping away from the electrical equipment in your yard. MVEC and your neighbors who share the same electric circuit as you will thank you.

Is your contact info up-to-date? Have you removed your landline or have an updated cell number?

Easily update a new phone number by filling out a form at www.mvec.net or calling 952-492-8333 or 1-866-492-8333 toll free.



Utility service has never been more important.

If you're planning landscaping or any other digging projects, contact 811 first – the kids telelearning and adults telecommuting will thank you.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call 811.com/811-your-state



FIVE STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

- 1. Notify** - Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.
- 2. Wait** - Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.
- 3. Confirm** - Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.
- 4. Respect** - Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for your project.
- 5. Dig Carefully** - If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides) consider moving your project.

Our linemen have 427 combined years of service at MVEC!

They work smart, safe and efficiently, all while 40 feet in the air wearing thick gloves and heavy gear. On a typical day, our 26 linemen maintain the 4,000+ miles of MVEC's electrical system and build an average of 800+ new services a year. But when there's an outage or emergency, even in the middle of the night or on a

holiday or weekend, everything else takes a back seat. Thank you to the families who understand and support their lineman's commitment to the greater MVEC community during severe weather and prolonged after-hours outages.



Andrew B



Andy L



Bill H



Bret K



Bruce K



Bryan O



Chad M



Chris C



David W



Grant K



Jeremy D



Jim C



Jim S



Joe J



Kent S



Kevin R



Lee F



Lee H



Mike O



Pete K



Randy B



Sawyer M



Steve V



Stu H



Travis K



Trevor M

From an apprentice lineman (David) who started this past month to a veteran lineman with 40+ years of service (Jim C), our guys have worked in all sorts of conditions. This year, they are dealing with the challenge of pandemic conditions - maintaining safe, social distancing while maintaining MVEC's system for members like you.

More than ever, we appreciate the work you do!

The Electric Eye is the official publication of
Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative
125 Minnesota Valley Electric Drive
Jordan, MN 55352
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Office Hours: M - F: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

24-Hour Dispatch/Outages:
952.492.8255 or 800.232.2328
Member Service: M - F: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832
Pay By Phone: 952.492.8333 or 1.866.492.8333

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ElectricEye@mvec.net. The Electric Eye is printed
with environmentally safe soy based ink.
General Manager: Ryan Hentges
Editor: Susan Larson
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