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Participants sought for Time-of-Use pilot

MVEC is considering a Time-of-Use Rate program in which electric rates would vary according to the time of day and day type (weekday or week-end/holiday) with higher rates charged during the peak demand hours and lower rates during low demand hours.

If interested in learning more or participating in the pilot, email your name, service address and phone number to: michaelh@mvec.net.

Reminder

Lower seasonal rates go into effect Oct. 1. Residential general service rates are higher during summer months due to air conditioning demand pushing up costs for generating electricity.

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



ElectricEye

September 2020

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

WiFi? Why not!

Choose a thermostat with features and looks to meet your household's needs

You asked, and we are delivering: your co-op is expanding our money-saving WiFi thermostat program to include even more popular thermostat brands.

Why participate in the program?

- Receive a \$50 bill rebate (one per unit) and 10 percent discount on your electric bills (June – September).
- Control your settings from any connected device. Monitor your home's temperature wherever you are.
- Set it and forget it! Program your temperature settings while at home or away. Automatically lower your energy costs through efficient usage, as well as keeping MVEC rates low for everyone.

Already have one of the listed WiFi thermostat brands or looking to purchase one? Utilize it to manage your heating over the winter, but make sure you enroll it before next spring to receive your summer rate discounts. Any of the brands listed at right qualify, whether you already have it installed in your home or if you purchase a new one.



Brands now supported:

- Nest
- Alarm.com
- Honeywell
- Radio
- Ecobee
- Lux
- Emerson
- Viviant

Learn more at www.mvec.net/residential/energy-wise-programs

CEO's Corner/Ryan Hentges

Planning now for years to come

August and September kick off our strategic planning and budgeting processes for the coming years. These are important processes to ensure we are aligned as an organization to best serve our members.

It all begins with our vision and mission statements. While sometimes these statements can seem academic, both provide the context for how we make daily decisions. MVEC's vision is to be our members' trusted energy partner, loyal to the community, now and for future generations. MVEC's mission is to provide exceptional member service, while safely providing reliable

energy at cost.

With those two statements in mind, we step back, take into account of where we are at and determine what we need to do in order to fulfill our mission and vision.

Some of the key areas on which we focus our discussions include safety, reliability, member service, and finances (rates). We seek to understand our current performance, and then develop ways to improve — with the goal of overall operational excellence. Like any business,

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we need to balance a variety of competing interests. As an example, although we want to continue to advance reliability, we have to ensure we do so at a pace that doesn't negatively impact the rate you pay for electricity.

After we've gone through the strategic planning processes, we develop goals and budgets for the coming year. This is a very detailed process that goes through many iterations. The final product is

presented to the Board of Directors for its consideration. After the Board has approved the budget for the next year, staff has their direction for the year and proceeds to implement as defined.

In the end, our objective is to have a plan for the future, so we can achieve our vision and mission. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you.



Member alert:

Scammers call and threaten service disconnection, asking you to pay immediately

Demands for immediate payment over the phone through prepaid cards, gift cards or other unusual methods are scams. If you have a past-due balance, MVEC will mail/email multiple notices and offer payment options before disconnecting service. Give us a call at 952.492.2313 if you have questions about your account.

Operation Round Up 3rd quarter: \$29,572 granted to 19 local organizations

The MVEC Operation RoundUp Trust Board reviewed third quarter requests and fulfilled \$29,572 in grants to 19 local applicants. Once again, due to the pandemic, food requests were doubled from the usual \$500 grant amount.



Community and school programs receiving \$1,000 food grants are:

- Belle Plaine Foodshelf
- Burnsville BrainPower in a Backpack
- Jordan Blessings in a Backpack
- Le Sueur Food Shelf
- Le Sueur-Henderson Backpack food
- PROP of Eden Prairie
- Sibley County Community Connect
- Sibley County FoodShare

Other 3rd Quarter recipients are:

- Burnsville Robotics - \$500/laptop computer
- Czech Heritage Club - \$436/Czech cookbook
- Green Isle Lions - \$1,500/back-to-school supplies
- Holy Redeemer School - \$1,200/field trip transportation
- Hope United Grief Group - \$3,000/online retreat

- IRIS (Infants Remembered in Silence) - \$4,000/grief literature
- Jordan Fire Department - \$5,000/rescue boat
- Lutheran Home Hope Residence - \$760/outdoor furniture
- ProAct, Inc. - \$1,026/tables and stationary
- TreeHouse - \$2,500/transportation
- True Friends - \$1,100/hospital-grade protective gear



Thank you to MVEC members who round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar amount. This extra change is what the ORU Trust Fund Board uses to fulfill donation requests to area groups and charities.
Sign up at www.mvec.net/our-community

Like many organizations, Southern Valley Alliance's programs have been adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Utilizing ORU grant funds (gifted in the first quarter of 2020) helped us accommodate our services to continue meeting client needs," said executive director Christie Larson. "In the photo, SVA staff at the Children's Visitation Center are wearing masks, as we were able to restart visits between children and their parents on June 1."

Your co-op cares

As we head into cold weather season while still dealing with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, please know MVEC has options to help members having difficulty paying their bills.



Cold Weather Rule in effect Oct. 15 until April 15

Members who fall behind on utility bills can avoid disconnection or be eligible for reconnection between Oct. 15 and April 15 by following the steps outlined in Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule. Under this rule, disconnection is prohibited when it affects the primary heat source for the household and as long as these three conditions are met:

1. Members must fill out MVEC-provided form declaring details of inability to pay.
2. Household income must meet state guidelines used to determine fuel assistance eligibility.
3. The member and MVEC must have a mutually-agreed upon payment arrangement.

For more information, visit www.mvec.net/residential/financial_assistance.

Low-income assistance may be available

To help members with limited financial resources, MVEC partners with local organizations such as the Community Action Partnership of Scott, Carver and Dakota Counties, Minnesota Valley Action Council, the Scott County Community Development Agency and local food shelves, using state-mandated funds to help members make affordable energy efficiency upgrades at reduced or no cost with Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program.

Assistance includes free energy audits and central air conditioner tune-ups. Upgrades for refrigerators, clothes washers, window or wall A/C units, dishwashers, microwaves, dehumidifiers and certain sizes of upright or chest freezers are available. Various forms of weatherization measures may also qualify.

Background

Since 2010, each electric and gas utility in the state is required to use at least 1.5 percent of its average retail sales by spending dedicated funds on low income consumers/members.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce (Division of Energy Resources) oversees CIP to ensure that ratepayer dollars are used effectively and energy savings are reported as accurately as possible.

Qualifications

To qualify for the CIP program, members must be homeowners, not renters. You must first apply for the Energy Assistance Program with one of the agencies below and meet the income eligibility guidelines. If approved, a home energy auditor will visit your home and determine what appliances need to be upgraded to more energy-efficient units. For more info, contact:

Community Action Partnership of Scott/Carver/Dakota Counties Michelle Franke, 952.496.2125

Minnesota Valley Action Council Kris Perendy, 507.345.2434

Dakota County CDA Bruce Anderson, 651.675.4400

Income Guide

Number in Household	Annual Income
1	\$28,266
2	\$36,963
3	\$45,660
4	\$54,357
5	\$63,054
6	\$71,751
7	\$73,382
8	\$75,013
9	\$76,643
10	\$78,274
11	\$79,905
12	\$81,536
13	\$83,166
14	\$84,797
15	\$86,428

Numbers based on 200% of Federal Poverty guidelines



Other groups benefit from CIP spending, too

In addition to working with the agencies above to help members with limited financial resources, MVEC is able to use CIP funds for energy efficient appliances at food shelves and low income housing programs. MVEC's latest donations include:

- Sibley County FoodShare: \$2,173 (shown at left)
- New Prague Habitat for Humanity: \$3,480
- Jordan Food Shelf: \$5,530

Donations of commercial-grade refrigeration units have also been made in the past to the Peace Center Food Shelf in New Prague and the Salvation Army Food Shelf in Montgomery. MVEC also donates the use of the food shelf building in Montgomery.

Food shelf coordinators may contact michaelh@mvec.net for further information regarding CIP funds for organizations.

To our members in the ag industry: Stay aware and safe during this busy season

The most recent statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show the agricultural sector have the most dangerous jobs in America with 574 fatalities, or an equivalent of 23.4 deaths per 100,000 workers. Fall harvest time can be one of the busiest and most dangerous seasons of the year for the agriculture industry.

The third week of September traditionally is National Farm Safety and Health Week. This annual promotion, initiated by the National Safety Council, has been proclaimed as such by each sitting U.S. President since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944.

The theme for National Farm Safety and Health Week 2020 is "Every Farmer Counts," which reminds us that it is in everyone's best interest to prioritize the health and safety of those who work so hard to provide our supply of food, fiber and fuel.



Electrical Safety Tips for a Safe Harvest

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter and flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.
- **If your equipment makes contact** with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions** of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.
- **Never attempt to raise or move a power line** to clear a path!
- **Don't use metal poles** to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
- **Use qualified electricians** to work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

Source: Safe Electricity

**Important safety advice
whether you are in a tractor,
car or any other vehicle**

IF YOUR VEHICLE OR MACHINERY CONTACTS A POWER LINE



STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE. The ground may be electrified.



Do not touch any part of the vehicle's frame or any other metal.



Call 911 and/or MVEC. Stay in the vehicle. MVEC will be out to check on the power lines and secure the scene.



Do not try to pull the equipment away from the power lines or poles. This will cause more damage to the line and could seriously or fatally injure anyone attempting to remove this equipment if it were to become energized.

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