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October is also Cybersecurity Month

Three quick tips to keep your personal info safe:

- October is National Cyber-security Awareness Month. Technology breaches have become more commonplace. MVEC has data safeguards in place, and there are things you can do to protect your personal data.
- Keep your computer updated with the latest software and web browser. This ensures security patches block the latest security threats.
 - Create a strong password and keep it private – it can take up to two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more!
 - Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to get to secure data. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

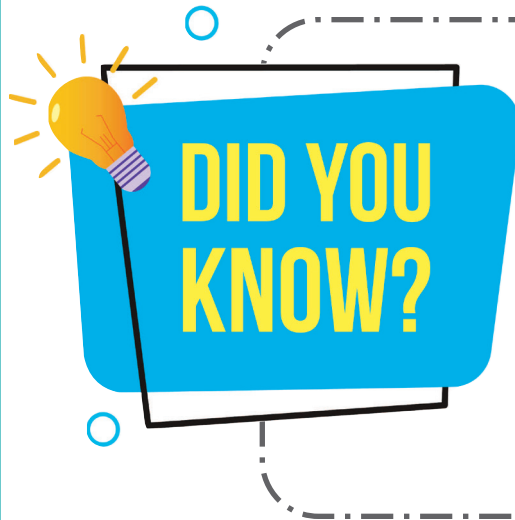
Additional resources
available 24/7 at
www.mvec.net



ElectricEye

October 2020

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative



- October is National Co-op Month.
- In 1844, a group of British weavers created the Rochdale Principles - seven business guidelines co-ops still follow.
- Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.
- Co-op Month has been nationally recognized since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Ag Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.

Your co-op is unlike any other utility

CEO's Corner/Ryan Hentges



Electric cooperatives power 56 percent of the nation's landmass—from booming suburbs to remote rural farming communities. Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative is among more than 800 American distribution cooperatives serving as energy providers and engines of economic development for more than 20 million American homes, businesses, farms and schools in 48 states.

Unlike investor-owned and municipal utilities, the purpose of a cooperative—above all else—is to safely provide reliable, affordable electric service to its membership. In recognition of National Co-op Month in October, take a look at other ways we are different from other utilities.

I You're a member, not a customer. Cooperatives are unique because they are owned by you, the member. This means you have a voice in the way we run the co-op. Members elect the co-op's board of directors and can run for a seat on the board if they wish to do so. Your vote and participation help shape the direction of the cooperative.

2 We focus on service, not profits. Unlike investor-owned utilities, which are operated to make the most profits for stakeholders, electric co-ops do not earn profits. Instead, any margins or revenue remaining (after all expenses have been paid) are returned to members in the form of capital credits. Capital credit returns are based on each member's years of participation in the co-op.

3 We're local, community-focused businesses. Because we are owned by the members we serve, electric cooperatives have a strong commitment to our local communities. In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable power, electric co-ops are involved in local volunteer opportunities, sponsor community events, provide high school scholarships and support the Youth Tour leadership trip.

4 We're committed to innovation. Because we answer to local members rather than far-away shareholders, electric cooperatives are more nimble and able to respond quickly to changing member needs. We are committed to experimenting and innovating in ways that benefit the local communities and members we serve.

Did You Know - Your cooperative was founded in 1937 by farmers who took it into their own hands to bring electricity to areas in Scott, Carver and Le Sueur counties where investor-owned utilities didn't think it was profitable.

You are a member-owner of this cooperative, and a nine-person board of directors, elected by all members, govern the co-op, set rates and make other high level decisions. And they're members of MVEC just like you.



Did You Know - MVEC's mission is to create exceptional member experiences, while safely providing reliable energy at cost. MVEC has 101 employees (we like to call ourselves Team Members) specially trained to accomplish that mission.

Did You Know - As we all navigate through this unprecedented time together, please know your co-op cares. MVEC can offer a variety of payment arrangements to help those who may be overwhelmed by their electric bills.

A brand-new program MVEC launched this year is Gift of Electricity. During challenging times or just as a practical gift, the Gift of Electricity is something you can give for any

occasion. You can purchase any amount to give to an MVEC member of your choice. It's great for anyone facing financial hardship, adult children living on their own, your hard-to-buy-for parent, a loved one on a fixed budget or just a practical gift for a friend.



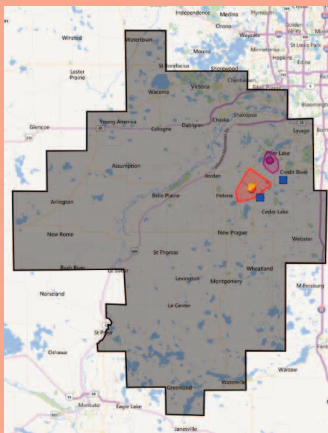
Did You Know - MVEC is conducting a pilot for an optional, no obligation Time-of-Use (TOU) rate program. With Time-of-Use, your electric bill is determined by the amount of electricity your household uses during certain segments of the day by a rate specific to those hours. Interested in participating in the pilot? Email michaelh@mvec.net. (Members with electric vehicles already enjoy MVEC's electric vehicle Time-of-Use program.)



**We are here
these cooperative
programs a**

Did You Know - As an electric provider, we hate outages even more than you do. However, since they are inevitable due to storms, animals, vehicle accidents, and unforeseen equipment failure, our linemen do their best to restore power as safely and quickly as possible — in all types of weather, day and night.

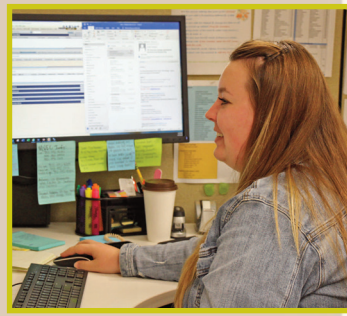
We keep you informed with our live outage map at www.mvec.net and on Facebook, when an outage affects over 500 members



Did You Know - MVEC's renewable mix in our energy portfolio meets the state of Minnesota's 20 by 2020 mandate. Want to be greener? You don't need to put up a wind turbine or solar panel to do so. Our GreenSource program gives you simple options to offset your monthly bill 100 percent. By purchasing Wind and Solar RECs, you further help reduce dependency on non-renewable energy sources, like fossil fuels.



Did You Know - When you call MVEC, you will talk to a real, live person. Our friendly receptionists will direct your call to the MVEC Team Member who can best help you. Our member service reps can help you with your billing and account questions.



During outages, you may first hear our automated phone system, but at any time, you have the option to speak with our Dispatchers or our overnight phone service, Cooperative Response Center (CRC).

Did You Know - We have an app for your account management. With SmartHub, you can:

- make payments
- check electric usage
- notify member service of account issues
- receive email or text alerts
- report a power outage

It's simple and quick to make a payment or view your hourly meter data. You can compare bills and find out what day of the week or hour of the day you typically use the most electricity.



**YOU
OW?**

**e for YOU with
erative values,
and services!**



Did You Know -

MVEC participates in the Co-op Connections Card discount program that offers savings for retail, entertainment and pharmacy purchases at locations all across the U.S. Print off a paper copy at www.mvec.net or add the GPS-enabled app to your smartphone app.

Did You Know - You have choices on how much you pay for electric rates. MVEC offers Energy Wise programs that can save you 10-50 percent on your electric bill when you participate in heating, cooling and electric water



heating load management. Our energy specialists offer free advice (by phone or Facetime), offer financing options and can find the right contractor for your job. If they need to drop product at your home, they play it safe and mask up!

Did You Know -

Every Spring, MVEC awards fifteen \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors whose families are co-op members.



In June, MVEC sends a high school sophomore or junior to Washington, D.C. for the Youth Tour leadership trip, co-sponsored by state and national rural electric cooperative organizations. Unfortunately, the 2020 trip was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Did You Know - We give back. In a variety of ways.

- If you purchase an energy efficient appliance or heating or cooling unit, you may be eligible for cash-back rebates, ranging from \$25 to \$500.
- Members of the co-op receive their share of Capital Credits. Even if you move off our lines, we try to find you and send a check. Since 1959, we've given back \$26 million.
- If you participate in Operation Round Up, you help the cooperative give thousands of dollars each quarter to deserving local organizations. Since 1995, over \$18 million has been donated.
- Our employees give back, too, with many volunteer hours within their respective communities. It's the co-op way.

Hey kids! Color this page for a chance to win prizes

In honor of National Co-op Month, MVEC is holding a coloring contest for kids 12 and under!



- Boys' first place prize: \$100 Target gift card
- Girls' first place prize: \$100 Target gift card
- 2 second place prizes: \$50 Target gift card
- 4 third place prizes: \$25 Target gift card

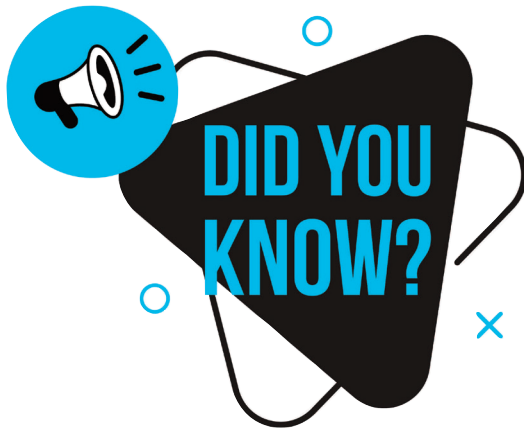
Go to www.mvec.net/coloring-contest, download and print out this sheet.

Color and return to MVEC at 125 MN Valley Electric Drive, Jordan, MN by Nov. 16, 2020. Entries will be judged by MVEC staff on neatness and originality. Child must live in an MVEC member household to enter.

Winners will be notified by email, and the first place entries will be published in the December *Electric Eye* newsletter.



Co-op kids: Download our coloring sheet at www.mvec.net/coloring-contest and have fun with your creativity!



To maintain a total of 4,095 miles of power line in an 968-square mile service area, MVEC has 26 linemen, 7 substation and metering technicians, and several seasonal apprentices. That represents over 450 collective years of service to the cooperative!

Other interesting facts:

- Substations: 29
- Utility Poles: 46,000
- Miles of overhead power line: 1,975
- Miles of underground cable: 2,120
- Construct and energize an average 7 miles of new line/month
- Connect an average 50 new services/month
- Plant Investment: \$195 million
- Property Taxes: \$1.5 million



Line foreman Jim Cullen represented almost 10 percent of the collective 450 line crew years of service. He retired in September after 43 and a half years at MVEC - his first and only job. On his last day, small groups of socially distanced linemen took turns in the breakroom to say goodbye. Staff working from home wished him well via a WebEx session. We wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement, Jimmy!

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