



## Make sure your heating system is ready for winter

Members who participate in Energy Wise load management programs, especially heating programs, are encouraged to have a reliable, automatic backup heating source in place and ready to work when MVEC calls for load management time periods. Test your back-up heat (such as propane or natural gas) and schedule any servicing or tune ups now before the real cold temperatures arrive!

## Wondering how Energy Wise programs benefit you?



Energy Wise load management programs help you as a residential or business owner and the cooperative as a whole save on power costs.

- Consider installing a WiFi thermostat and save energy and money by automatically adjusting temperatures according to your schedule. Rebates and summer discounts apply if installed to MVEC's Energy Wise program.
- An Air Source Heat Pump provides inexpensive heat during most of the colder months, and you will also be ready for hot summer days next year, as it also can cool your home. Rebate and low rates also apply.
- Reliable hot water is also a winter necessity. Consider replacing your hot water heater if it is over 20 years old to avoid unexpected loss of hot water.
- An electric garage heater can be an efficient way to add heat to a workspace or garage.
- Call energy specialists Michael H. or Mike O. at 952.492.2313 for a free consultation on home heating, cooling and electric water heating options.

## Winterize your home for more energy savings

Your wallet will thank you for considering these energy-saving ideas:

- Replace worn weather stripping and caulk around doors and windows
- Install storm doors
- Replace older windows
- Make sure your home is insulated according to recommended levels for Minnesota winters.
- Seal gaps in attics, soffits and basement rim joints by stuffing in pieces of insulation.
- Use expandable caulk to seal around gaps in exterior plumbing and wiring access
- Have your furnace or boiler inspected and cleaned, including vents.
- Replace furnace filters throughout the year.



# Be prepared for Update your phone

at 952.492.8333 or 1.866.492.8333 | C

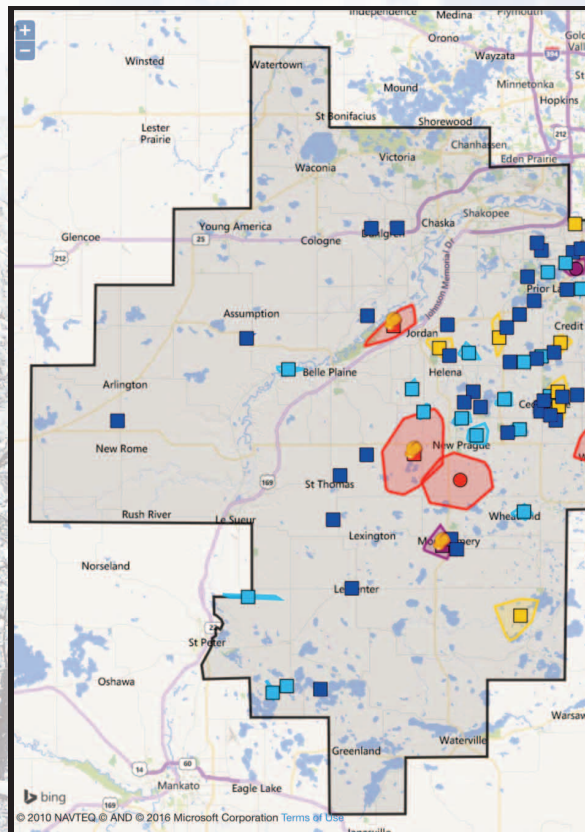
## Why are your phone numbers important?

If your two most-used phone numbers (landline and cell phone) are in MVEC's records, our automated phone system will be able to identify your location when you call in an outage. Your information is added to the other outage information that has been reported. This helps our dispatchers send crews to needed areas and speeds up power restoration.

### Learn more online:

- Outage map
- Outage updates
- Restoration process
- Be prepared
- Critical service load
- Update phone #
- Tree trimming
- Call before you dig
- Public safety

[www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)



**Call 1.800.232.2328**  
to report outages or do



## Be prepared with an eme

Stay weather aware. Here are things to consider before

- Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.

- First Aid kit, blankets, matches, flashlight, battery-powered radio, fire extinguisher, shovel, rock salt, non-electric can opener and extra batteries.

- Take into consideration things that are specific to your home and family. Listening to weather forecasts

regularly can provide you with information that will allow you to check emergency supplies on essential supplies.

- If an outage occurs, you should have a backup heating source. A fireplace, wood-burning stove would be a good option. Fuel and wood-burning heaters should be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide detectors are working properly.



# Winter weather Emergency numbers!

OR [www.mvec.net/update-phone](http://www.mvec.net/update-phone)



**MVEC**  
Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Please call 1-800-232-2328 to report an outage.

When there is a power outage this map will display current outages within MVEC's service area - noted in black and gray on the map. The map key below indicates the number of members affected by an outage and line crew assignment. As outages occur MVEC will work hard to resolve the issue and restore power as quickly and safely as possible. Visit the Power Outage section on MVEC's web site for more information - <http://www.mvec.net/category/outage-update>.

This page will update automatically every minute.

**Total Outages:**

Members Affected: 5,213  
Members Restored: 987  
Members Out Now: 5,213  
Members Called: 3,002  
Members Called Last Hour: 475

**Details for all outages**

**Map Key**

- Service Area
- 1-9 Members Affected
- 10-49 Members Affected
- 50-99 Members Affected
- 100-199 Members Affected
- 200-499 Members Affected
- 500+ Members Affected
- Restored Outage

**Symbol Legend**

or 952.492.8255  
owned power lines

## Emergency kit

Before a storm hits:

With several days notice to  
emergency materials and to stock-up

should plan for an alternate  
propane space heater or  
be sufficient.  
ating sources should always  
carbon monoxide and smoke  
erly. Always practice extreme



caution when using alternate heating sources.

- If you use a portable generator, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Do not overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

## Your electric heat bills may be exempt from sales tax

If 50 percent or more of your energy costs are for using electricity to heat your home, you may be exempt from Minnesota sales tax on that heating cost. Fill out the exemption form online at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net). If you have filed for an exemption in the past, there is no need to file again.

## Active military personnel protected from shut off

Minnesota Law protects active duty military personnel house-holds from shut-off if they cannot pay



utility bills. To request an arrangement, complete a Military Protection form at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net) and return it to MVEC. If you qualify and make the required monthly payment, MVEC will not disconnect your electricity due to financial hardship.

## Cold weather rule reminder

Members who fall behind on utility bills can avoid disconnection between Oct. 15 and April 15 when it affects the primary heat source for the household and as long as members have filled out a form at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net) declaring inability to pay, meet state fuel assistance guidelines and have a payment arrangement with MVEC in place.

## Area emergency assistance



If you require emergency assistance due to potential utility disconnection, there are various agencies that may be able to assist you.

- Carver County Social Services: 952-361-1600
- Dakota County Human Services: 651-554-5611
- Hennepin County Energy Assistance: 952-930-3541
- Le Sueur County Human Service: 507-357-2251
- Rice County Human Services: 507-332-6115
- Scott County Human Services: 952-445-7751
- Sibley County Human Services: 507-237-2981
- CAP Scott/Carver counties: 952-496-2125
- CAP Dakota County: 651-322-3500
- Three Rivers Community Action: 507-732-7391
- Minnesota Valley Action Council: 507-345-6822
- Heat Share/Salvation Army: 612-721-1668 or 507-345-7840 or 888-999-1568



## CEO's Corner

By Ryan Hentges

### Communicating to serve you better

Thank you for taking time out of your day to read our newsletter. Communication is critical in any relationship. It's important for MVEC and our relationship with you. With open communication, we are able to serve you better. As we move into the winter season, here are three topics that help us serve you better:

#### Updated phone numbers

We work hard to avoid outages; however, when they occur, our focus is on responding safely and quickly. An important item that helps us react quickly and saves you time during an outage is making sure we have your correct phone number, which allows our systems to quickly identify you, your location and accurately predict the scope of the outage. Your phone number is listed on your bill and online in SmartHub. You can update your phone number online or by contacting our member services department.

#### Safety

Driving conditions can be treacherous during Minnesota winters. Many times, during snowy and icy weather, vehicles veer off the road and come in contact with our power poles. This can be dangerous for many reasons, especially if power lines fall down in the collision — they still may be energized. It's important if you come in contact with a power pole that you remain in your vehicle, if possible, and contact 911. Emergency personnel will be dispatched to your location, and we'll work with them to ensure a safe environment.

#### Payment assistance

We understand these are difficult times for many of our members. If you are having difficulty paying your bill, please reach out, and we will work with you. We have a variety of tools and resources to help. In addition, we can review your electric usage to see if there are ways to reduce the amount of electricity you use on a daily basis without sacrificing the comfort level of your home or business. Please think of us as a resource to help you through these challenges.

Thank you again for taking the time to read our newsletter. We appreciate your business and will continue to work safely and efficiently to serve you.

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**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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Editor: Susan Larson

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## Ways to save during the holidays

- 1 Use LED holiday light strands, which can last up to 40 seasons, making them a great option for any festive home.
- 2 When giving power tools as a present, choose cordless with an ENERGY STAR® rating. According to energystar.gov, if all power tools in the U.S. used ENERGY STAR®-rated battery chargers, 2 billion kWh hours of electricity could be saved — equivalent to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1.7 million tons!
- 3 While a fireplace can keep a small area of your home cozy and warm, it can also pull heated air from the room through the chimney. Close the fireplace flue when a fire isn't burning.
- 4 Power strips are ideal for holiday lights, workshops, craft nooks, game rooms and other spaces in your home. With one simple switch, you can conveniently control several devices at once that are plugged into the power strip.



### ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS

This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



**Take notice** of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



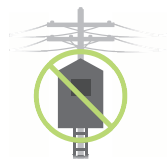
**Do not** shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



**Know** where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



**Be especially careful** in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.



**Do not** place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



**Do not** place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.