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- Hunting safety and holiday savings **page 4**



**/eterans** - Day 2021 -



Thank you for your service!



#### Notices

MVEC offices will be closed Nov. 26-27 for Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-25 for Christmas and Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

October Board Meeting highlights are online at www.mvec.net.

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





# Electric Cooperative

## **Ready for colder weather?** Your cooperative is here to assist you

Our early dose of snow is a vivid reminder that winter is on its way. Combine that with the challenges of COVID19, and some members may be experiencing anxiety over paying their heating bills.

If you are having difficulty keeping up, it is always best to pay something toward your electric bill each month to avoid a large balance in the future. If you are unable to make full payments each month, visit https://mvec.formstack.com/ forms/payment\_arrangement and fill out the online form to work with us on an individually-tailored installment plan. Or call us at 952.492.2313.

#### Other sources of help

United Way 2-1-1 is available to help Minnesotans 24/7 with an easy-to-remember, three-digit phone number to call to receive free and confidential information on health and human services, including utility-assistance programs. Just call 2-1-1 or 800-543-7709 toll free or text your zip code to 898-211. You can also visit www.211unitedway.org. A certified community resource specialist will help you locate available resources in your area.

**Local Energy Assistance Programs** can be located by calling 1-800-657-3710 and following the prompts to enter your zip code or see our listing of local agencies on page 3.

2

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RICE

#### See pages 2 and 3 for more winter information

## Three director positions up for 2021 election

Interested in serving on MVEC's Board of Directors? The filing period is now open with a deadline of Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021. The director seats on the ballot are currently held by:

- Tom Wolf of Prior Lake (District I)
- Bill Heinlein of Chanhassen (District II)
- Kevin Gibbs of Le Center (District III)

Directors represent the membership in co-op decisions and work to establish policies, develop budgets and set rates.

#### Qualifications

- Candidates must be members who reside within MVEC's service area.
- Candidates may not be employed by or financially involved with a competitor
- or business selling electric energy or supplies.
- If elected, directors must be able to attend board meetings usually held the last Monday morning of each month.

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. April 6, 2021, and due to pandemic concerns will be held online rather than in person. Further details will be communicated closer to the event.

If you are interested in running for one of the open board seats, call 952.492.8242 or email cheril@mvec.net before Jan. 26, 2021.

#### 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.

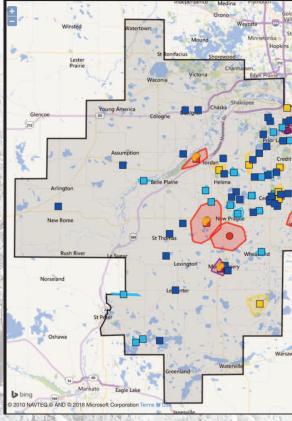
## Be prepared fo Update your pho at 952.492.8333 or 1.866.492.8333 | 0

#### 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



## Call 1.800.232.2328 to report outages or de

## 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, batterypowered 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 w allow you to check emerge on essential supplies.

• If an outage occurs, you s heating source. A fireplace, wood-burning stove would Fuel and wood-burning hea be vented, and make sure of detectors are working prop



## r winter weather ne numbers!

**DR www.mvec.net/update-phone** 

Your Touchstone Energy®Cooperative 🖈



#### MVEC's online outage map

shows the location and size of outages. A yellow hard hat means a crew has been dispatched. You can access it from your computer or electronic device at

#### outage.mvec.net

During large or prolonged outages of 500 members or more, updates are posted on

www.mvec.net

and on our Facebook page

## Trees are biggest cause of MVEC power outages

MVEC crews work hard to make sure power lines and equipment are ready for winter weather, including year-round trimming of trees that can fall on power lines when weighed down with ice or snow. Winter weather-related outages are costly to MVEC and a nuisance to members. If you have a tree in close contact to one of our power lines, contact our dispatch center at 952.492.8255.



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. 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.myec.net and return it to MVEC. If you

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 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

the map. The map key below indicates the number of member affected by an outage and line crew assignment. As outages occur MVEC will work hard to resolve the issue and restore po as quickly and safely as possible. Visit the Power Outage secti on NVEC's web site for more information http://www.mvsc.net/category/outage-update.

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

When there is a power outage this map will display current outages within MVEC's service area - noted in black and gray or

his page will update automatically every minute.

#### Total Outages

outage.

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

Service Area

10-49 Members Affected
50-99 Members Affected
100-199 Members Affected

200-499 Members Affect

500+ Members Affected

## or 952.492.8255 owned power lines

## rgency kit

#### ore a storm hits:

vith several days notice to ncy 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



## 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.

## Ways to save during the holidays

Use LED holiday light strands, which can last up to 40 seasons, making them a great option for any festive home.

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!

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.

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.

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