

84th Annual Meeting to be held online Tuesday, April 6

Learn more about how your cooperative works by attending MVEC's 84th Annual Meeting, which will be livestreamed 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 6.

The hour-long business meeting will include the annual cooperative update from General Manager Ryan Hentges. Gerry Mareck, vice president of finance, will present a report outlining 2020 financials. There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the conclusion of the meeting.

All three districts have a seat open on the Board of Directors. In District I, candidates are incumbent Tom Wolf of Credit River Township and Kirt Briggs of Prior Lake. In District II, incumbent Bill Heinlein is unopposed. In District III, incumbent Kevin Gibbs is unopposed.

Since there are no races in District II or III, **ballots will only be mailed to homes**

Registration will be required. Watch for details in the March *Electric Eye*.

Info will also be emailed to members with correct email addresses on file.



or businesses in District I in early March. Use the postage-paid envelope to mail ballots, which must be received by Tuesday, April 7. Voting is also available at the meeting on April 7. **See district map and sample ballots on page 3.**

MVEC's 2020 scholarship winners will be announced in a pre-meeting sideshow.

Though an in-person meeting is much preferred, MVEC choose an online meeting to avoid potential large group exposure to COVID-19.

COVID-19 Update

Our service continues with safety measures

It's hard to believe nearly a year has passed since the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down. As conditions continue to change, we are still taking precautionary steps to keep our members and staff safe to ensure the flow of your electricity.

Though our office remains closed to the public for the foreseeable future, we are committed to serving our members as efficiently and completely as usual.

- **Payments:** Members can make payments by automated phone system at 952.492.8333 or 866.492.8333. Online payments can be made at www.mvec.net.
- **Outages:** If you experience a power outage, please report it as usual by calling 952.492.8255 or 800.232.2328. Linemen are working dedicated pods to stay healthy and make repairs as quickly and safely as possible.
- **Energy Specialists:** Mike O and Michael H are available for consultations by phone, text or Facetime to help with your heating and cooling needs.
- **Having trouble** paying your bill? MVEC is committed to helping our members recover from pandemic conditions. Rather than let your account reach an intimidating balance, call our member service reps at 952.492.2313 or 800.282.6832, and we will help create a plan to get your account back on track.

New look for newsletter and website

The co-op's 2021 project plans have been made, including the redesign of www.mvec.net, and in conjunction, your monthly newsletter. The new web design will launch by the end of March and will include streamlined menus, quicker access to your account and other new features. We can't wait to unveil other project plans to you throughout the year.

Additional resources and board meeting highlights available 24/7 at www.mvec.net



Inside this issue:

CEO column: the gift of electricity/**page 2**

Sample ballots and district map/**page 3**

Cold weather energy savings/**page 3**

2021 construction work plan/**page 4**



CEO's Corner By Ryan Hentges

The gift of electricity and kindness of strangers

"It is my hope that this donation will provide a cushion and encouragement for those in need as we move together towards the better tomorrow that sits just around the corner."

In my December column, I focused on the idea of gratitude. It seemed an appropriate way to finish the year. Recently, I was pleasantly surprised to learn of an incredible story of generosity that compels me to share great news on this topic again.

Some of you may be aware of our Gift of Electricity Program. This was an idea from one of our team members at the cooperative, and it was implemented last June as a resource to help our membership as they deal with impacts from the pandemic. The program details are simple. It's an opportunity where a person can help pay the bill of a co-op member.

We've had a variety of people donate to the Gift of Electricity Program since it started. In late December, a member contacted us about making a donation. However, this donation was a bit different. It was in the amount of \$25,000.

The donor asked to remain anonymous, but provided insight into how the money should be used. Their comment was:



In the end, the donation assisted 222 residential members who had an outstanding balance on their electric bill.

Neighbors helping neighbors – that's how our co-op started. That's how it continues

today, and it is also one of seven cooperative principles we value – "Concern for Community." The Gift of Electricity program is one way our members can help each other. Another way is through Operation Round Up. Around 53% of our members "round-up" their electric bill on a monthly basis. Each quarter, MVEC's Operation Round Up trust board distributes around \$30,000 to community non-profits and charitable organizations such as food shelves, schools and emergency service organizations. Another opportunity for neighbors to help neighbors.

As I mentioned back in December, working at a co-op and serving our members is something for which we, as employees, are grateful. Our members' actions, both big and small, inspire us and drive us to keep co-op strong.

If you'd like to participate in either Gift of Electricity or Operation Round Up, please visit our website at www.mvec.net, or call our office at 952-492-2313.

Take care,

Program provides confidentiality

Minnesota's Safe at Home program helps people who fear for their safety, such as survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and over crimes, by establishing a confidential mailing address and providing a mail-forwarding service.

While MVEC needs your actual address to establish and maintain electric service, the Safe at Home program can be used for communication and to take special steps to protect Safe at Home participants' addresses. If you participate, contact MVEC and provide your Safe at Home mailing address.

To learn more about Safe at Home, contact the office of the Minnesota Secretary of State by calling 1-866-723-3035 or go to www.sos.state.mn.us.



Make a plan now for summer tree maintenance

Oak trees benefit from cold weather trimming to avoid oak wilt in the summer; however, other tree species can wait until late spring.

MVEC works with Carr's Tree Service year-round to keep branches and trees off co-op power lines and equipment.

Carr's provides services for tree shaping, tree trimming, tree removal, lot clearing, brush mowing, aerial bucket services and power stump removal.

Call Carr's at 888.470.3355 for a free estimate. Or visit www.carrstreeservice.com to learn more.



Winter bill seems high? The one you open in January reflects December holiday usage. Your February bill is impacted by cold spells in December and January.



Winter conditions — Short days/long nights mean lights are on twice as long. More time is spent indoors, families watch more hours of television, water takes longer to heat and so on. Even if your heating systems is gas, it still needs electricity for operating the fan and the air exchanger.

Dirty furnace filter — Your furnace doesn't run efficiently with a clogged filter, which causes higher costs and can lead to other problems. Remember to change your furnace filter on a regular basis.



Space heaters — A small heater can cost you \$110 or more per month if used continuously. Though it requires investment, electric in-wall, cove and baseboard heaters are more efficient, and they qualify for a lower Energy Wise electric rate and cash back rebates. Make sure any qualified equipment you buy or already own is installed to a money-saving Energy Wise program.

Vehicle block heaters — Many electric block heaters are 1,500-watts and use as much electricity as fifteen 100-watt light bulbs, another \$110 a month. Use a timer to schedule specific running time.



Covid quarantine — We've all spent more time at home this past year. Multiply the above factors with the additional hours you now stay, work, study and play at home. Remember to turn off TVs, stereos, computers, monitors and cell phone chargers when not in use. Many appliances have a "phantom" use that adds up.

Five Ways *easy* to Stay Warm

1. For those who "run" cold, **an electric blanket** can deliver quick warmth like a regular throw or blanket can't.
2. **Keep your feet warm.** Feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer.
3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and **harness natural warmth from sunlight.** Open all curtains, drapes and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in — you'll be able to feel the difference.
4. **Use a humidifier.** Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer.
5. **Area rugs** can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time.

Annual Meeting continued from page 1

2021 Board of Director Election

District I - ballots will be sent

Vote for one: (three-year term)

Tom Wolf, Credit River Township (*incumbent*)

Kirt Briggs, Prior Lake

2021 Board of Director Election

District II - no ballots will be sent

Three-year term:

Bill Heinlein, Chanhasen

As of 1/27/2021 no other candidate had filed

2020 Board of Director Election

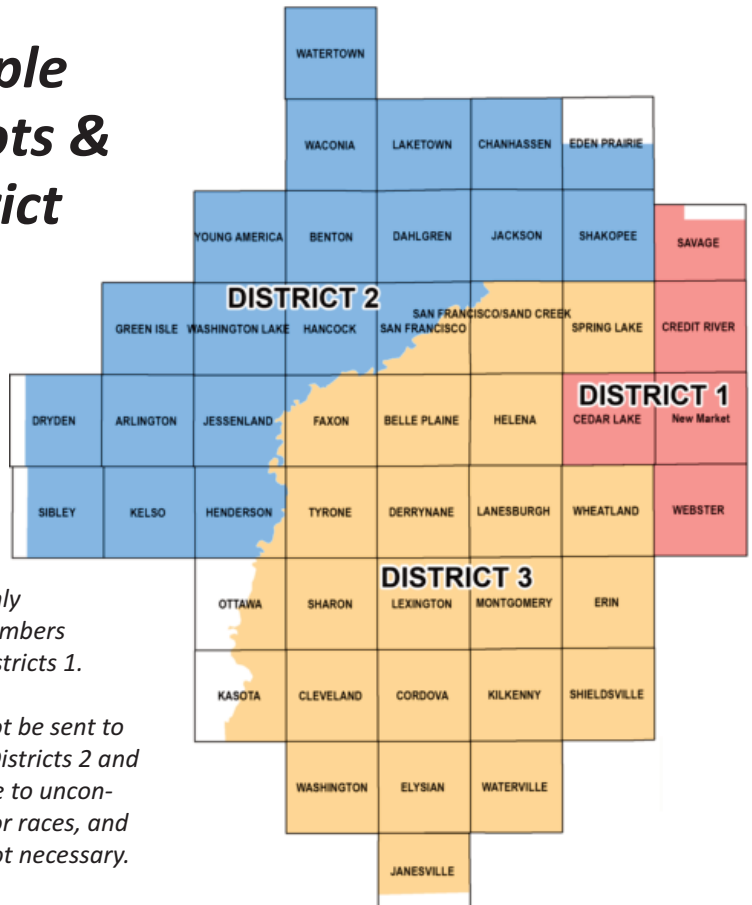
District III - no ballots will be sent

Three-year term:

Kevin Gibbs, Le Center (*incumbent*)

As of 1/27/2021 no other candidate had filed

Sample Ballots & District Map



Ballots will only be sent to members residing in Districts 1.

Ballots will not be sent to members in Districts 2 and 3 in 2020, due to untested Director races, and balloting is not necessary.

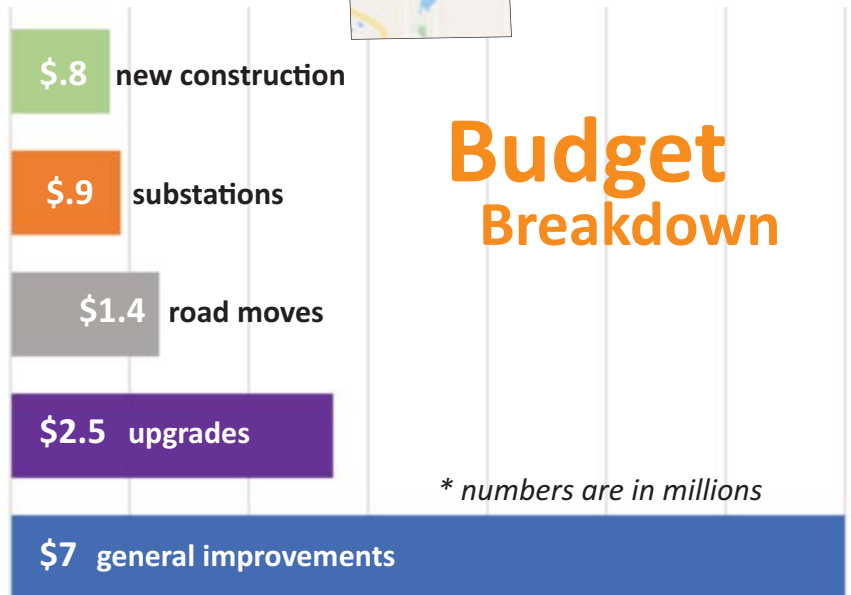
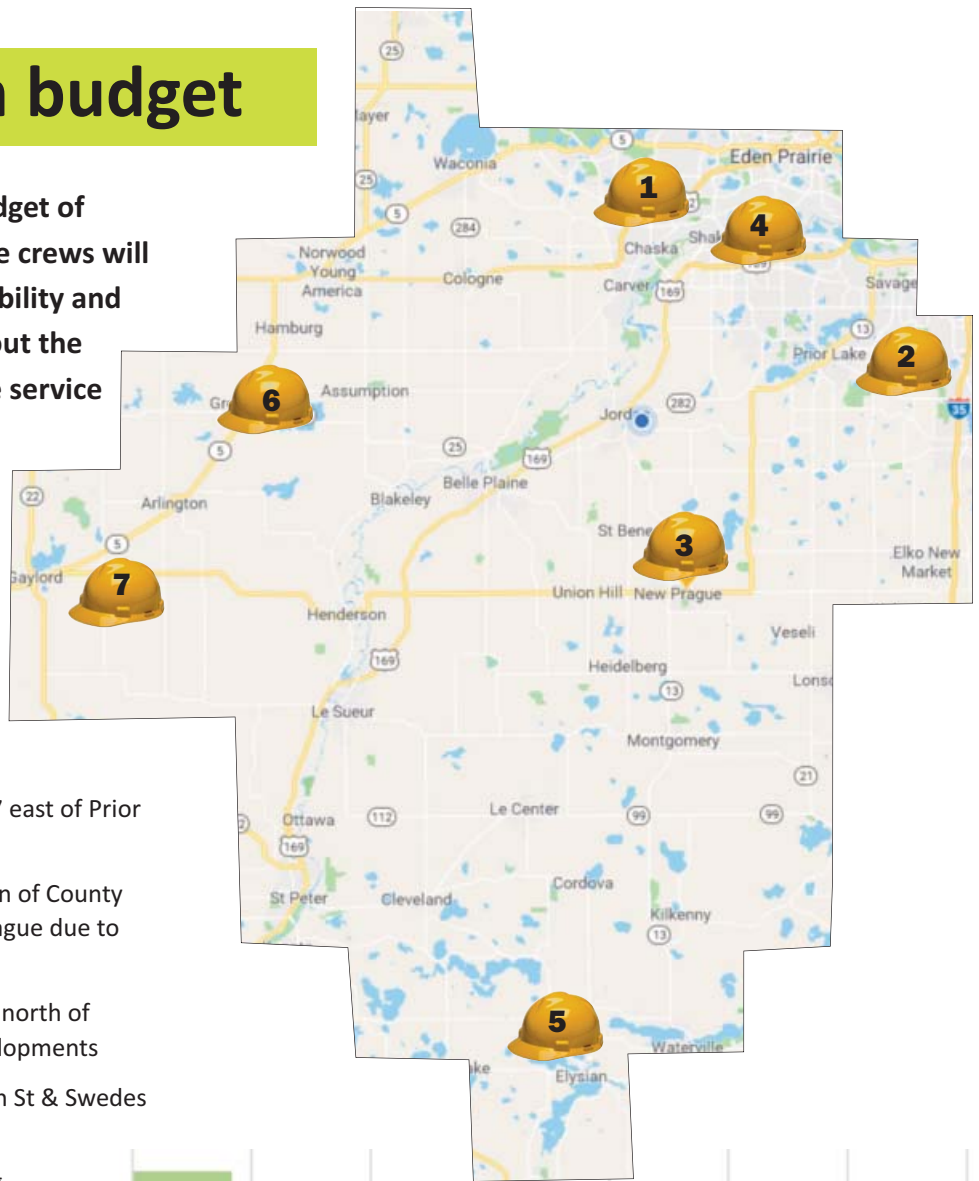
2021 construction budget



With a construction budget of \$12.8 million, MVEC line crews will be busy increasing reliability and power quality throughout the co-op's 928-square mile service area, as well as conducting general maintenance for MVEC's 43,500+ members in nine counties.

Here are some of the larger projects:

1. Finish a mile of line work on Highway 101 in Chanhassen due to a road move
2. Relocate two miles of line on county Road 27 east of Prior Lake due to a road move
3. Relocate half a mile of line at the intersection of County Road 15 and County Road 2 north of New Prague due to a road move
4. Install half a mile of line on County Road 21 north of County Road 42 in Shakopee for future developments
5. Replace one and a half miles of line at 480th St & Swedes Bay Lane in Elysian for age and condition.
6. Replace a mile of line southeast of Hamburg for age and condition
7. Replace a mile of line on 425th Lane, east of Gaylord for age and condition



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