

## Short-term Board of Director appointee sought in District 1

Interested in serving a six-month term on MVEC's Board of Directors? The Board is accepting applications to fill the remaining term of Brent Lawrence, who has recently moved from District 1.

Candidates must be members who reside in District 1 and be able to attend board meetings, held at 8:30 a.m. the last Monday of each month. A director cannot be employed by a competitor selling electric energy or supplies.

**Interested members with questions or wanting an application should contact [cheril@mvec.net](mailto:cheril@mvec.net). The deadline to apply is Friday, Sep. 15, 2023.**

Lawrence remains an MVEC member and was appointed by the Board to serve the remaining six months for Bill Heinlein who retired from his District 2 seat.

## Saving energy in little ways can help your bill and the co-op's

### CEO Update from Marvin Denzer

If you look around your home, you likely have more devices and equipment that require electricity than ever before. Our connected lives are dependent on more electricity than households in the past – even just five years ago. In the summer, demand for electricity also increases when we cool our homes during hot summer days.



Denzer

As you would expect, based on your family's habits, electricity use fluctuates throughout the day based on what you are doing. MVEC provides enough electricity to meet the energy needs of all members during times of highest energy use or "peak hours." These peak times are typically in the morning as people start their day and in the evening as people return to their homes.

CEO Update continued on page 2



## A Layman Installs a Wi-Fi Thermostat You don't need to be a master electrician!

By Dan Ring  
Member Information Specialist

It is ironic that I work at MVEC. Usually, I call a local electrician for things like ceiling fan and light switch installation, But if there are simple and safe ways to do it myself and save money, I'll attempt it - if it's safe to do so, of course.

Though I live in a new rambler-style home in New Prague, it came equipped with a basic Honeywell thermostat that could not do much beyond adjusting the inside temperature. And after researching and asking around at the co-op, I kept hearing about the benefits of a Wi-Fi thermostat and thought that might be a project I could undertake.

Here is what the process looked

like for me and how it might help you tackle a similar project.

**1. Selecting the right thermostat.** This was the longest part of the process for me. I checked on reviews, asked friends and family what they have and gained insight from Team Members at the co-op. It's important to choose the right thermostat for your home as there are several types available without even considering brand, including programmable, smart, and manual thermostats. Consider your lifestyle, energy-saving goals, budget and thermostat style when making your selection.

**2. Ensuring the setup of the new thermostat will work.** Once we decided a new

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Additional resources and board meeting highlights available 24/7 at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)



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# MVEC

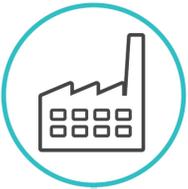
MINNESOTA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# 4 KEY FACTORS

## That Impact Energy Bills

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



### Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuels used to generate electricity fluctuates, which is why you see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



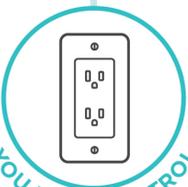
### Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance and additional costs necessary to provide electric service.



### Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



YOU HAVE CONTROL

### Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.

## CEO UPDATE from page 1

During peak periods when the cost to produce and purchase power is higher, we encourage you to take simple steps to save energy, such as turning your thermostat up in the summer or down in the winter a few degrees, turning off unnecessary lights and not using large appliances such as a dishwasher, during peak times – usually the 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. time frame.

You can also save energy by plugging electronics and equipment such as computers, printers, and TVs into a power strip, then turn the power strip off at the switch during peak hours. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings to match your family's comings and goings and sleep times. Shifting your energy usage to off peak times gives you greater control over your electric bill.

Here are some tools we offer to help you save:

- MVEC Energy Wise saving programs provide rate savings, rebates or discounts for heating, cooling, electric water heating, and electric vehicle charging. See how you can save at [www.mvec.net/energy-wise-programs/](http://www.mvec.net/energy-wise-programs/)
- The free SmartHub account management tool

where you can monitor your real-time energy use, pay a bill, and make service requests. Learn more about SmartHub at [www.mvec.net/smarthub/](http://www.mvec.net/smarthub/)

- My EnergyXpert is a free self-audit tool that takes you through a series of questions about your home and energy lifestyle and gives a personalized recommendation of potential saving solutions. Take your home audit at [www.mvec.net/my-energy-xpert-tool/](http://www.mvec.net/my-energy-xpert-tool/)
- Videos on understanding your bill, load management programs, and more can be found at [www.mvec.net/stay-informed/video-library/](http://www.mvec.net/stay-informed/video-library/)
- More savings tips for all seasons and reasons can be found at [www.mvec.net/energy-tips/](http://www.mvec.net/energy-tips/)

When we all work together to reduce energy use during periods of high electricity demand, we can relieve pressure on the electrical grid and save money along the way. Load control and member efforts help reduce power-supply cost. This is particularly noticeable as energy costs have risen across the U.S. collectively, everyone conserving energy and making small changes can truly make a positive impact.

## New resources for renters and landlords now online

MVEC has recently updated its policy regarding electric service when a rental property is in between tenants. MVEC is requesting landlords — or property managers acting on their behalf — to fill out and have on file a Rental Property/Landlord Agreement. This document allows MVEC to transfer electric service back to the landlord or management company when there is no current tenant and the property is unoccupied, but still requires electric service.

This agreement will provide uninterrupted service to the property location. Otherwise, power would be disconnected at the request of the tenant when they close their MVEC account. Landlords would need to apply for service to be restored each time between renters, keeping in mind power is still needed for showings, cleaning, and security purposes. This new agreement eliminates the extra steps to remember and follow up each time a renter moves and keeps the electric service active at the location.

A section on energy-saving tips especially for renters has also been updated online. The tips for warm and cold weather can help renters make the most of their energy dollars while maintaining a comfortable living area. Some ideas are no-cost, while others may need the permission of the landlord.

Links to the form and energy-saving tips can be found at [www.mvec.net/landlord-tenant-agreement/](http://www.mvec.net/landlord-tenant-agreement/)



Within MVEC's Wi-Fi thermostat program, popular eligible brands include Nest, Alarm.com, Honeywell, Ecobee, Lux, Emerson, and Vivant.

## Wi-Fi Thermostat cont. from page 1

Honeywell Wi-Fi thermostat was the right choice, next came the C-wire conundrum. You will need to figure out if you have a C-wire setup for the old thermostat, or if you'll need an adapter for the new one. The C-wire powers the thermostat so it's constantly connected to Wi-Fi and not running on a battery backup. Figuring that out was as simple as pulling off the faceplate of the old thermostat and reading the label. All wires are labeled – usually with a letter corresponding to the color – and sure enough, I had a C-wire already hooked up.

**3. Gathering the necessary tools.** There were only a handful of tools I needed to swap out the old thermostat.

- A very small flathead screwdriver
- Phillips head screwdriver
- Pen
- Level
- Needle nose pliers
- Cell photo (to take a photo of the wires prior to disconnecting)

**4. Turning off the power.** Once you've gathered all materials and are ready to get started, it's time to turn off the power. For me, it was as simple as flipping a switch located on my furnace. For others, you might just need to turn off the breaker for the entire furnace.

**5. Removing the old thermostat.** After removing the faceplate of my old thermostat, I took note of the wires. Each wire is labeled and colored. My new Honeywell came with sticky labels, allowing

me to simply remove the wires from the old control panel and wrap them around each wire. To remove the wires, I needed a small flathead screwdriver to release each from the panel. From there, you just unscrew the mounting plate and remove it from the wall.

*\*Something I considered when selecting a new thermostat was the brand. My old thermostat was a Honeywell and replacing it with a Honeywell simplified the process. As was the case for the new mounting plate, which was the same size with the same mounting screws.*

**6. Installing the new thermostat.** Once I attached the new mounting plate and ensured it was level, I fed the wires through and connected them to the new terminals. It really is as simple as connecting the C-wire to the C terminal and R-wire to the R terminal, etc. If any of the wires were tough to insert, needle nose pliers came in handy. Once all the connections were secure, I attached the faceplate and turned the power back on.

Close
?

## Find Rebate

ELIGIBLE DEVICES

Rebates available for zip code 56071

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The Honeywell app automatically finds energy-saving rebates in your area.

### Save with MVEC

Your smart thermostat can help you save even more. Get \$50 for helping to reduce your energy usage by enrolling with MVEC.

**7. Programming and testing.** Even though it was nearing 90 degrees this day, one tip I was given was to test both the A/C and the heat to ensure both were functioning correctly. Everything

ran smooth, so it was time to program the thermostat. If you have chosen a programmable or smart thermostat, you can customize anything within your system such as when does the household go to sleep, wake up, get home from work, and if the fan should run on AUTO, CIRCULATE or ON. All these changes could be made from an app on my phone at any time. Even further, the app offers further ways to save, such as showing a pop up for your local energy provider and if they have any money-saving programs.

In conclusion, we love our new thermostat and the precise climate control over the inside temperature it gives us, in addition to the control it gives us while away from home. And while I was hesitant to take on the project myself, it took about an hour, start to finish, for a novice like me and is already making a difference in our day-to-day lives. Hopefully, my story can give you the confidence to upgrade this small but vital device with your home.

## Now that you've read about the installation, are you interested in a Wi-Fi Thermostat?

Sale prices lower than the big box stores!

Choose from two models.

What's the difference? The 9000 series screen has color choices.



Honeywell 6000 Series Programmable Wi-Fi Thermostat  
MVEC member pricing: \$50



Honeywell 9000 Series Programmable Wi-Fi Thermostat  
MVEC member pricing: \$75

If you've been considering a Wi-Fi Thermostat, good news for you! We're having a special sale on our in-stock Wi-Fi Thermostats!

Enjoy a low price plus a \$50 rebate once the thermostat is installed and enrolled to MVEC's Energy Wise Wi-Fi Thermostat Program.

MVEC's voluntary Energy Wise program rewards members for reducing electricity use during periods of high demand. This helps manage the region's electric grid, increasing reliability and reducing costs. Participants agree to brief, limited events when thermostats are automatically adjusted during peak periods during the summer cooling season, typically on hot summer days.

- Thermostat cost will appear as a one-time charge on your next MVEC electric bill.
- Install yourself or hire the contractor of your choice.
- Then set it and forget it or enjoy precise control of your home cooling and heating year-round.

*\*Important note: Like most Wi-Fi thermostats, these units require a C-wire. Consult with a contractor to ensure your home is properly equipped. \*\*While supplies last.*

Purchase your thermostat at [www.mvec.net/wifi-thermostat-program](http://www.mvec.net/wifi-thermostat-program)

# 6 EASY ways to pay - for free!

Sign up for the options of your choice at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)



## Online with SmartHub

Total account access to make secure online payments and view usage anytime, anywhere.



## Auto Bill Pay

Have funds automatically deducted from your checking or savings account each month.



## Recurring Credit Card

Set up monthly recurring payments, using your credit or debit card.



## Pay as you Go

Prepay for electricity — as you use it. Pay when you want, the amount you want.



## Pay Now

Make a quick, single transaction without having to register for a SmartHub account.



## Pay by Phone

On the go? Call the automated phone system Touch-n-Go at 952.492.8333 or 1.866.492.8333.

## MVEC hits the links to support injured linemen



**MVEC is swinging for a cause!**

MVEC Team Members Dan, Joe and Dylan teeing off from Hole No. 1 which was sponsored by MVEC at the MREA Burn Center golf tournament July 21 in Becker.

MVEC recently sponsored took part in the 18th Annual Burn Center Golf Benefit, which is put on yearly by the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and held this year at Pebble Creek Golf Club in Becker. Joining electrical co-ops and vendors from across the state, MVEC sent a team of Dan Ring and linemen Joe McKernon and Dylan Peterson, who played alongside EMS Partners on the links.

The Burn Center Tourney's mission is to provide relief for co-op linemen burn victims and aid families during difficult times while assisting hospitals with advanced technology for optimal treatment. Utility line work is in the top 10 of the most hazardous jobs in America, and electrical contacts can result in severe burns. Burn victims from rural areas often travel significant distances for care at specialty burn centers, for which Minnesota has three between Regions Hospital, Hennepin County Medical Center and Essentia Health.

This year's benefit raised over \$62,000 — which brings the tournament's total to more than \$500,000 — to help families with medical expenses, transportation, and other needs. It was a great day for electric co-ops staff and associates to be on the links.

The Electric Eye is the official publication of  
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