

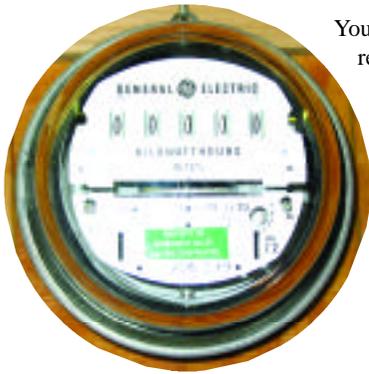
## Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

# WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • July 2004

## HELP US HELP YOU SAVE MONEY!

### *Meter Readings Due on the 28th*



Your meter reading and payment are due on the 28th of every month. The meter reading is used to calculate the bill that is mailed on the 8th day of the following month. In the past, we have been very lenient in accepting meter readings on the 29th or 30th or even later in order to avoid estimating your bill or charging you the \$20 meter reading charge. This leniency has created a large volume of monthly bill adjustments and often requires us

to send staff to your site to read your meter in time for the bill process. Timely meter readings are even more crucial for the Heat Plus accounts as those bills cannot even be calculated without an accurate meter reading off both meters.

**Report your meter reading(s) to:**

- 800-927-6068
- MVEC, PO Box 370, Anamosa IA 52205
- Via on-line bill payment at [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop)
- Via email at [billing@mvec.com](mailto:billing@mvec.com)

Reading your meter on the same monthly schedule helps to regulate your bills and helps us help you when you call with questions like "How could I have used that much electricity?" Perhaps keeping a pencil in your mailbox would remind you to read your meter the day your bill arrives in the mail. Or, if you typically pay your bills and then hang on to them until a certain mailing date, be sure we are receiving the reading prior to the 28th. Your reading can be called in, emailed, mailed or submitted via our website.

Most importantly, if we do not receive your reading by the 28th, our tariff allows us to charge a \$1.00 fee to estimate your bill. Then, if a reading is not received by the 28th of the second consecutive month, it becomes necessary for a Cooperative employee to read your meter and a charge of \$20.00 plus taxes will be assessed for each meter we read. Therefore, you can save yourself, and your Cooperative, money by simply reading the meter each month and making sure it is received in our office by the 28th.

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## **MEET OUR SOFTWARE CONVERSION TEAM**

Staff members from Southeastern Data Cooperative's headquarters in Georgia spent several weeks in Anamosa the past few months working closely with your Cooperative staff to assist in the software conversion process.

At the time of this writing you will have received two billings through the use of the new software and most likely have noticed a few changes. Many of you have called asking about items on the bill that perhaps you didn't notice on the old bill, or maybe you had some questions about your new password for the on-line payment processing, or didn't recognize your accounts due to the new account numbers we have assigned.



*Todd Childers, Marilyn Culverson,  
not present, William Service*

Whatever your question, please be assured we are working hard to make this transition as smooth as possible for you and we always welcome your phone calls or emails. As the conversion process winds down we are looking forward to the new capabilities it offers and want to thank you for your patience and understanding.

## **ALTERNATE ENERGY PURCHASE PROGRAM**



Would you like to promote alternate energy without investing in your own windmill or biomass project? Now you can purchase 50 kWh blocks of alternate energy from your Cooperative by simply notifying the billing department. An additional fee of \$1.00 for each 50 kWh block will be added to your monthly energy bill.

This program does not guarantee renewable energy will be delivered directly to your premise, however it does assure the amount of renewable energy you purchase will be purchased by the

Cooperative first from approved generators on the Cooperative's electrical system and then from the Cooperative's power supplier, CIPCO, for delivery into the electrical system.

To enroll in the Alternate Energy Purchase Program, please call the billing department at 800-927-6068 or email [billing@mvec.com](mailto:billing@mvec.com).



## THE ABC'S OF ON-LINE BILL PAYMENT

If you are accustomed to paying your electric bill on-line you have probably noticed some changes resulting from our recent software upgrade. Or, if you would like to begin paying your bill on-line, these simple steps will guide you through the process. As always, please feel free to call if you have questions. The process also offers a good on-line HELP section.

- 1) Gather the information needed as follows:
  - A) Your account number (use the first five digits only)
  - B) Your password (printed on your May bill, or call us for assistance to assure your privacy). Please remember the password is case sensitive.
  - C) Meter Reading(s)
- 2) Checking Account or Credit Card Numbers
- 3) Visit [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop)
- 4) Click on Electric Service—on the right side of your screen you will see a red link for ‘On-Line Payment/Meter Reading’; another link is at the bottom of the menu on the left side of the screen. This brings you to ‘Online Billing Information’.



Figure 1

- 5) Enter your 5-digit account number and your password (see 1B above) then click ‘Submit’.
- 6) Click the “Option” box for each account you want to pay. See Figure 1. Then click on the ‘Make Payment’ selection on the menu bar and choose either the credit card option or e-check.

First time users will need to complete the credit card or e-check information screen. Then a new screen appears reflecting the amount you are paying, giving you a chance to verify the information and then click ‘Submit’ to generate the payment.

- 7) The last step is to submit your meter reading(s). You have two options, either to submit it on-line or via a simple email or telephone call.
  - A) On-Line submission allows you to select ‘Meter Reading’ from the menu bar versus ‘Make Payment’ and insert your reading and date read. If you enter a meter reading that does not correspond with the previous reading we have on file for you, you may receive a prompt indicating the reading will not work. Please re-read the meter for accuracy and re-enter it.
  - B) Send an email to [billing@mvec.com](mailto:billing@mvec.com) listing your name, account number, meter reading and the date it was read.





## BLUFF LAKE CATFISH FARM THE CATCH OF THE DAY

*Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa*



The obvious question which I posed to present-day owner, Linda Wells, was as to how Bluff Lake Catfish Farm became the answer to the question, "Where's the best place in Eastern Iowa to go to eat catfish and have that satisfied feeling?" Linda responded, "Back in 1969, my dad, Clayton Kuhlman, with the urge to do a little farming and my stepmother, wanting to go camping and fishing, made the decision to trade their Maquoketa home for a farm. To keep everything in harmony, Dad built a pond and stocked it with catfish. He set up a small camper on the hillside close by for her camping and fishing. Word got around about the tasty catfish, which led others to want to go fishing. So Dad built another pond, stocked it with fish in 1971, and made a second decision to sell the right to go fishing. As one

thing led to another, those enjoying the fishing needed refreshments. Dad hired a couple of guys to build a one-room snack area, providing a place to get sandwiches and even let them cook the catfish which they caught. It was an inexpensive building. The workers got \$2.00 an hour and all the beer they could drink. Therefore, that may explain the reason that the right corner of the building is 8 inches higher than the left side."

Imagine the reaction of the people in town. Linda says, "People in town called it 'Clayton's Folly'. When the International Coon Dog Association contacted Dad about holding a field trial here, Dad decided there was a need for a real kitchen which he had built and also expanded the menu. So Dad proved them wrong."

"In 1972, Dad informed me that I was entering into the task of cooking and I was a real novice. One of my first experiences was when a Monticello realtor caught a HUGE fish in the lake and wanted me to prepare it. I said it wouldn't even fit in one of our largest pans. It would have to be staked out. But, no, the guy wanted it whole! I really tried. He wasn't satisfied. I tried again. It all ended with me running out of the back door telling Dad 'No More'."

"Also, when we were first open, it was a seven-day work week. At a lull in customers, (remember, I was young), I was sun tanning out back. Of course, I was barefoot, wearing a swimming suit, and my hair was down, (nets were supposed to be worn). I saw what I believed to be the restaurant inspector driving into the yard in an official looking car. He pegged



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me dead on as he entered and saw the expression on my face! Laughingly, he said to me, "You thought I was the restaurant inspector". As I replied in the affirmative, still laughing, he informed that he was a Federal Livestock Inspector. He became a frequent customer. That's the part of the job I miss now. I don't have the time to have the rapport with the customers. It was the greatest part of the job."

"In 1977 my mom and stepfather, Don Reese, purchased the property from Dad in a handshake. In 1989, I bought the business from Don. (Both Don and Dad passed away just a month apart in 1993.) In 1990, I married Brent Wells who has his own plumbing and air conditioning business which comes in very helpful in the restaurant. My son, Kory, has become an important part of Bluff Lake. He lives in the new house on top of the hill. REC worked with him in setting up a geothermal home, a totally energy efficient house, with energy efficient appliances."

The Wells' home is located right on the premises as is Linda's mother's home. After a short dull retirement after the death of her husband, she's back helping part time. Bluff Lake Catfish Farm is noted for "All you can eat meals". On Thursday, it's chicken from 4 to 9 p.m.; on Friday it's the famous catfish from 4 to 10 p.m. (Linda invented the batter for the fish. It's not written down anywhere. She's not surprised that the big chain restaurants try to get the secret but

doesn't really think it's fair when big business tries to delve into the secrets of the little guys.) On Saturday, from 4 to 10 p.m. it's filleted haddock and on Sunday, shrimp and chicken are both on the all you can eat menu, serving from 11:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thus, you notice that Bluff Lake is closed Monday thru Wednesday and also on legal holidays which doesn't include Mother's Day or Father's Day. "We count on increased attendance to keep the prices down even though the price of our supplies goes upward", explains Linda. "We seat about 100 people. Of course, there's special parties, rehearsal suppers, etc. We changed the patio area to add more room and there's waiting rooms inside and out with two bars to serve you better."

That family style of serving is really appealing. I was impressed at all the other sandwiches, ham, chicken strips, onion rings, ham steaks and cuts of beef steaks which can be ordered off the menu. Also, very outstanding was the cleanliness of the entire area. Ample parking room adds to the positive atmosphere. It's easy to see why 'word of mouth' is Bluff Lake's most effective advertising.

Once you locate Bluff Lake Catfish Farm, it's a certainty you'll agree that the variety of good tasting food will lead you back again to the scenic back roads. The easiest way to get there, says Linda, is to drive through the State entrance of Maquoketa Caves State Park and as

you depart, turn the steering wheel to the left.

If you're on E-17, also labeled 150th Street, there's a little sign to direct you to turn onto 94th Avenue for about two miles and then make a right for about one mile. (If you happen to drive straight ahead, you've made an error. You're in the park.) The road is a great drive through well-kept Iowa farmsteads surrounded by timber. It's a beautiful drive any time of the year. You don't need to drive out-of-state to view beautiful foliage and the end result at Bluff Lake Catfish Farm makes it a perfect outing. Phone ahead for that special occasion at 563-652-3272. I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I did!

## Mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Palace Ballroom

(at the Farley Speedway)

Farley, Iowa

**NEW LOCATION!**





## WATTS HEALTHY

*Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist*

### 12 Delicious Ways to Enjoy a Variety of Foods

Are you bored with your eating habits? Does it seem like you eat the same old things meal after meal? Have you ever thought about how many different foods you eat in a day? When it comes to nutrition, variety is more than the spice of life. An essential step to a long and healthy life is eating a wide variety of foods. Some experts recommend eating as many as 30 different foods in a day. Studies show that people with the longest life expectancies, eat small amounts of many different foods. I am talking about different nutrient dense foods like fruits and vegetables, rather than lots of different chips, candy, snacks, and soft drinks.

Focusing on a variety of foods allows your body to get all the nutrients required for optimal health. No one food, or food group, has everything you need. Your body needs over 40 essential vitamins and minerals, protein, fiber, and a growing list of disease-fighting antioxidants. Scientists have identified over 600 important compounds in the food we eat and they regularly discover new ones.

Are supplements a substitute for eating a variety of foods? No. First, pills only contain a handful of known nutrients. Many nutrients are also better absorbed from food than from supplements. Foods like fruits and vegetables, lean meat products, and dairy products have the added benefit of natural groups of nutrients that come together in food and work together in your body. For example, protein, iron, and zinc for muscles are found in lean beef; protein, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus for bones come together in dairy foods.

Food is about much more than nutrients. It's about flavors, colors, textures, and smells. Eating a variety of foods is the best way to get the nutrients your body craves and to satisfy your taste buds at the same time. For maximum satisfaction, enjoyment and nutrition, plan your meals and snacks with variety in mind. Aim for at least 30 different food ingredients a day. Eat

Right Montana, a coalition for promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles has developed 12 hints for getting more variety in your diet.

1. Enjoy **COLORFUL** foods: Bright green broccoli, bright orange sweet potatoes, and bright yellow squash are three tasty vegetable treats.
2. Enjoy **CRUNCHY** foods: When it comes to crunchy options, vegetables like carrots, celery, pea pods, and beans can't be beat.
3. Enjoy **CRISP** foods: Produce bins and Farmers Markets and our gardens are full of refreshingly, crisp foods like fresh peppers, Romaine lettuce, and raw spinach.
4. Enjoy **JUICY** foods: Refresh yourself with juicy plums, peaches, pineapple, nectarines, tangerines, grapefruit, and pears.
5. Enjoy **TANGY** foods: Tomatoes fresh in a salad, canned in sauce, or sun-dried on a pizza.
6. Enjoy **SWEET** foods: Cherries and berries (blueberries, strawberries, or raspberries) provide the perfect dessert.
7. Enjoy **MEATY** foods: For hearty protein, choose from beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, and seafood.
8. Enjoy **CHEWY** foods: Breads made from whole grains, like wheat, oats, rye, barley, and spelt are satisfying, and nutritious.
9. Enjoy **NUTTY** foods: Small amounts of nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, peanuts, flax, or sunflower) add lots of flavor.
10. Enjoy **CREAMY** foods: Low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese) offer a creamy, calcium-rich texture.
11. Enjoy **ZESTY** foods: Add zest with lemon, pepper, basil, oregano, or parsley.
12. Enjoy **SPICY** foods: Start with your favorite herbs and spice food up with garlic, onions, cumin, and chili peppers. Try the recipe on page 7 to increase the variety of the foods you eat.



## EMPLOYEE SPOLIGHT

### Bill Dietiker

Bill has worked as a lineman for the Cooperative since September 11, 1978. Bill and his wife, Judy, live just outside of Anamosa. They have three children and one grandchild. In his free time, Bill enjoys spending time outdoors, either with his family, working on his acreage, gardening or fishing.



### Jerry Streeper

As one of our Maquoketa based linemen, Jerry is a familiar face to Jackson County members. He started his employment on March 30, 1980. Jerry and his wife Diane live in Maquoketa. They have two children and three grandchildren who enjoy watching the NASCAR races with him.



### BEETS DIJON

Serves: 4

Butter-flavored vegetable cooking spray  
 1/3 cup finely chopped onion  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1/3 cup fat-free sour cream  
 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard  
 Salt and white pepper, to taste  
 1-1/2 pounds beets, cooked, peeled, cubed or sliced, warm  
 Minced parsley (optional)

Spray small saucepan with cooking spray; heat over medium heat until hot. Sauté onion and garlic until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in sour cream, mustard, and lemon juice; heat over low heat until hot. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. Spoon sour cream mixture over beets; stir gently. Sprinkle with parsley.

Nutritional Information Per Serving:  
 Calories: 71, Sodium: 185 mg.  
 Diabetic Exchanges: 3 Vegetable



## MODEL HOMES NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

This fall members will have the opportunity to visit two all-electric model homes featuring the latest in energy efficient technology including geothermal heating and cooling, wet blown cellulose insulation, Energy Star® appliances and much more. The basement walls of the Carpenter home feature an insulated concrete form (ICF) system, see photo. Homes built with an ICF system are proving to be stronger and more energy efficient than conventional wood-frame construction.

Jerry and Trish Driscoll, Bernard and Kevin and Diane Carpenter, Earlville were selected as this year's model home participants. Dates and details of the open houses will be published in future Watts Current issues. Make plans to attend and learn what's new in home construction.



Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF)





**MVEC Offices will be closed on  
Monday, July 5,  
in observance of  
Independence Day.**

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