Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

WATTS Current

October 2023

For Our Members

Co-ops Grow for the Communities They Serve

October is National Co-op Month, and Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) joins cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric co-ops, including MVEC, exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide safe, affordable and reliable services to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs. For instance, MVEC evaluated members' interest in fiber internet and launched MVlink in 2016.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways ***"Co-ops Grow"*** for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do. MVEC focuses our efforts on projects or initiatives we feel can provide a positive impact to the communities as a whole. For example, this past year, we worked with local grocery stores in each of the four primary counties we serve to hold a food drive to help restock food pantries. When it was all said and done, we collected 420 pounds of food to help those in need. Thank you to all of our members who helped support this effort. Some other examples from the past year include supporting efforts to maintain medical services in a couple of our communities with the Cooperative's revolving loan fund program. Without our assistance, these offices could have closed meaning members would need to drive many miles to other larger communities to receive similar services. Lastly, our employees rolled up their sleeves and volunteered over 1,600 hours last year to be on boards, lead scout groups, coach youth teams, and volunteer at school events.

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together! MVEC is also part of statewide (Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives) and national (National

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Rural Electric Cooperative Association) organizations to leverage marketing, promotion and resources to improve our service and communication to members.

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations or community events, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond. In the past year, MVEC has supported several area FFA chapters to help students attend the Washington Leadership Conference, hosted student tours and given safety presentations to students across our service area. Additionally, MVEC had a summer intern in our Operations department who gained valuable experience while preparing for lineman school next fall. The future is bright at MVEC!

Co-ops Grow for You: At MVEC, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you! MVEC continues to invest in expanding our smart grid network for our electric system. Technology combined with crews in the field allow us to quickly identify the problem and operate the system in a more efficient manner in our efforts to keep the lights on or get them back on faster when they go out. Outage durations today are 28 minutes less on average than what they were 20 years ago. Last year, our members averaged 0.9 outages for the year with a total outage time of 65 minutes. The 65 minutes of total outage time was 45% lower than the total outage times for the average rural resident in Iowa. Over the last five years, the outage time experienced by our membership has been 48% lower than the Iowa residential rural average.

Periodically, MVEC gathers feedback from our membership via the Survey on time Cooperative Difference which allows us to obtain an American Customer Satisfaction Index Score. This year, for the first time, we also obtained an ACSI score specifically for our fiber internet and we received a score of 88 out of 100. This score is 20 points and 33% higher than the average score for internet providers.

We look forward to meeting your evolving needs and serving you for years to come!

MVEC Welcomes New Employees

Over the last year, MVEC has had several new employees join our co-op family. What better time to recognize these new additions than Co-op Month! We welcome the following:

Tyler Stanley, Staking Technician
Trae Klatt, Maquoketa Lineman
Jason Takes, Cascade Lineman
Melissa Pepmeyer, Receptionist
Marc Breeden, Fiber Lineman
Jolene Kramer, Human Resources Manager
Drew Dotson, Summer Intern
Alex Casey, Anamosa Lineman
Tara Beasely-Garcia, Customer Service-Electric

Important Note:

MVEC strives to provide timely, pertinent information to members. To support our communication efforts, MVEC sends two monthly e-newsletters to MVlink fiber internet members (one focused on streaming content and one more general member e-newsletter) as well as Watts Current to electric members who prefer to recive it by email. On occasion, MVEC also sends service updates and maintenance alerts via email as well. Please note that if you opt out of receiving emails from MVEC (via a link at the bottom of MVEC/MVlink emails), you will be removed from our email database and will no longer receive any emails from MVEC (including those containing maintenance notices and account information). Opting out of an email doesn't just prevent you from receiving that type of email, it will prevent MVEC from communicating with you via email altogether.

MVEC Supports Our Communities

As mentioned in the Co-op Month article on pages 1 and 2, "Concern for Community" is one of MVEC's core principles and because of this, MVEC supports various community organizations across our service area all year long. In recent years, we have also selected a community project in each of the four main counties we serve. In 2022, we supported a disc golf course in Manchester, student-made benches for Maquoketa parks, the Rural Community Food Pantry in Dyersville and the Wapsiana bandshell in Anamosa. In 2023, we were able to apply for matching funds from our cooperative lender, CoBank, through their Sharing Success program to support the following community endeavors: Raiders on Main (student-run store in Anamosa), the new Farley Public Library, improvements at the Spragueville Community Center and enhancements to Delaware Park.

Additionally, MVEC helps keep our area vibrant through our Revolving Loan Fund program by providing loans to support new and existing area businesses. This year, MVEC made a loan through our Revolving Loan Fund to Monticello Family Dentistry to help retain those services in that community.

September Board Meeting Update

- Discussed the 2023 Annual Meeting that was held in August. Approved date and location for the 2024 Annual Meeting.
- Reviewed and updated the Cooperative's financial forecast and approved moving forward with submitting a loan application to RUS to cover a portion of construction costs for the next 2-3 years.
- Reviewed Employee Medical Coverage plans for 2024. Approved participation in the IAEC Health Care Plan.
- Reviewed bids from auditing firms and selected the firm Eide Bailly to audit the Cooperative's financials for the next three years.
- Accepted the resignation of Director Jan Null who is retiring from the Board and approved a Board Resolution thanking Jan for her service to the Cooperative's membership.
- Approved the retirement of member patronage for the years 2008 and 2012. Patronage will be returned to members in October pending RUS approval.
- Appointed Directors to the Board Policy Committee and Board Finance Committee.

RECare

You Care, We Care, RECare, a way for members to help members

MVEC's RECare program allows members to contribute to a fund that assists low-income members with weatherization to help improve their heating and cooling costs or supplement energy assistance. Funds collected are distributed by local community action agencies.

Yes, I care and want to contribute.

☐ **I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is closed.**

☐ **I will contribute $_____ per month to RECare.**

I understand that this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill. (Even one dollar shows you care.) Monthly pledges may be cancelled at any time by notifying MVEC in writing.

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

State:_____ Zip:_____

Account Number:_____

Email:_____

Please mail to MVEC or include with your electric bill payment.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative®

109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa IA 52205

Iowa LIHEAP 2023-2024 Guidelines

Attention Residential Members: Get Help with Your Heating Bill

The 2023-2024 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled October 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024
- All other households November 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

WHAT TO TAKE:

- Proof of Income (for all household members age 18 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- Social Security numbers for **all** household members (documentation required)
- Most recent heat bill
- Most recent electric bill

WAGE EARNERS:
Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:
This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:
Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified. Additional income not listed here may be required.

Contact the local community action agency in your area as listed below:

Hawkeye Area Community Action Corporation (HACAP)

Delaware County:	Manchester	563-927-4629
Dubuque County:	Dubuque	563-556-5130
Jackson County:	Maquoketa	563-652-5197
Jones County:	Anamosa	319-462-4343
Linn County:	Cedar Rapids	319-366-7632

Community Action of Eastern Iowa

Cedar County:	Tipton	563-886-3191
Clinton County:	Clinton	563-243-5220

Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation

Clayton County:	Decorah	563-382-8436

Operation Threshold

Buchanan County:	Independence	319-334-6081

Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	$29,160
2	$39,440
3	$49,720
4	$60,000
5	$70,280
6	$80,560
7	$90,840
8	$101,120

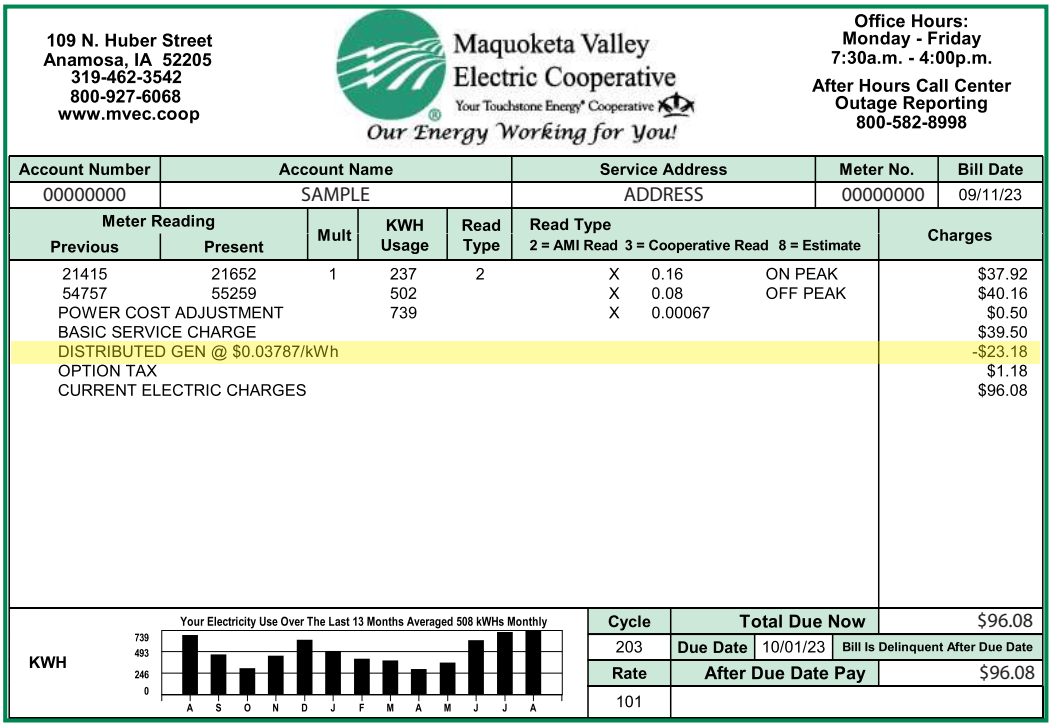
Note: For households with more than eight members, add $10,280 for each additional member.

Our Energy Working for You: MVEC Energy Bill Comparison - Before and After Onsite Generation

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

This month's energy advisor column illustrates a comparison of power usage for distributed generation that members have installed at their properties - before and after the system is activated. MVEC routinely assists members who are considering onsite generation or have installed a system. While distributed generation can be several types of systems such as solar, wind, hydro or biomass, almost all of the renewable generation currently on the MVEC system are solar installations.

When I review usage with our members considering onsite generation, the most common goal is to reduce usage or reduce their electric bill. MVEC also fields calls from members who have had distributed generation installed and have questions about the reduced usage that they expected to achieve with their investment in a renewable energy project.



109 N. Huber Street
Anamosa, IA 52205
319-462-3542
800-927-6068
www.mvec.coop

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
Our Energy Working for You!

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
7:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.

After Hours Call Center
Outage Reporting
800-582-8998

Account Number	Account Name	Service Address	Meter No.	Bill Date
00000000	SAMPLE	ADDRESS	00000000	09/11/23

Meter Reading Previous	Meter Reading Present	Mult	KWH Usage	Read Type	Read Type 2 = AMI Read 3 = Cooperative Read 8 = Estimate			Charges
21415	21652	1	237	2	X	0.16	ON PEAK	$37.92
54757	55259		502		X	0.08	OFF PEAK	$40.16
POWER COST ADJUSTMENT			739		X	0.00067		$0.50
BASIC SERVICE CHARGE								$39.50
DISTRIBUTED GEN @ $0.03787/kWh								-$23.18
OPTION TAX								$1.18
CURRENT ELECTRIC CHARGES								$96.08

Cycle	Total Due Now		$96.08
203	Due Date	10/01/23	Bill Is Delinquent After Due Date
Rate	After Due Date Pay		$96.08
101			

We thought it would be useful to our members considering onsite generation to have some real-world numbers on change that actually occurs. We examined recent onsite generation projects that have been operating for at least one year where the member also had usage from the year previous to the installation.

First, some parameters of what the review included: Of the 14 members who installed distributed generation, the average size of the system was 9.05 kW, with the largest system generating 34.2 kW and the smallest generating 2.8 kW. Only one installation included any battery storage capacity.

The average bill before the distributed generation was $166.54 per month. Average usage before the installation was 1,528 kWh per month.

For the year following the completion of a distributed generation project, the average bill was $137.80 and the average usage was 1,131 kWh. It should be qualified that the member's load may have changed during this time, before and after the installation of the project.

So, in summary, the average reduction in the MVEC bill was $28.71 per month or, approximately 17%, which included credits for excess generation. Usage in kWh dropped an average of 26%. For every kW of installed distributed generation, the electric bill decreased $3.17. I encourage members to ensure they have a clear understanding of the expected bill reduction in dollars as they review a project with a distributed generation provider.

If you are considering some type of onsite generation, MVEC has several resources to assist in your decision-making process. A good first step is to look at information MVEC provides on our website at www.mvec.coop/site-generation which includes links to other information on renewable energy as well as the helpful guide, '10 Steps to Take Before you Install Solar'. We are here to be a resource for our members and understand that this is an important decision, a financial investment and usually a long-term commitment for members. MVEC wants to ensure our members have an installation that will meet their expectations for many years into the future.

TECH LINK

The Importance of Keeping Your Fiber Clean

MVlink actively tracks "low light" to help maintain your fiber internet connection

By Brent Wegmann, MVEC Director of IT

Fiber to the home (FTTH) is becoming more popular as it offers many benefits, such as faster speeds, lower latency, and higher bandwidth. However, to enjoy these benefits, you need to maintain your fiber connections in good condition.

How Fiber Gets Dirty - Fiber optic cables are made of thin strands of glass or plastic that carry light signals. These signals can be distorted or blocked by particles that get on the surface of the fiber. This can happen during installation, maintenance, or everyday use of your fiber. For example, if you touch the end of a fiber connector with your fingers, you can leave oils and skin cells that can interfere with the light transmission. Or if you leave a fiber connector exposed to the air, it can collect dust and moisture that can cause signal loss.

How Fiber Cleaning Works - The process of removing any contaminants from the fiber surface using special tools and techniques. There are different methods of fiber cleaning,depending on the type and location of the fiber. Leave the cleaning to our fiber techs.

Why Fiber Cleaning Matters - It is important for ensuring the reliability and performance of your fiber network. If your fiber is dirty, you may experience the following problems:

- Signal degradation: Dirty fiber can cause loss of signal strength. This can result in lower data rates, higher error rates, and poor quality of service.
- Signal interference: Dirty fiber can cause reflection, or bouncing back of light, at the point of contamination. This can result in noise, crosstalk, and interference with other signals in the same cable or nearby cables.
- Connector damage: Dirty fiber can cause physical damage to the connector end-face, such as scratches, pits, or cracks. This can result in permanent loss of signal quality and increased risk of failure.

Allow Fiber Techs to Clean Your Fiber - Fiber techs are trained professionals who have the skills and equipment to perform fiber cleaning safely and effectively. They can also help you troubleshoot any issues with your fiber network and provide you with tips on how to keep your fiber clean.

- MVlink monitors light levels in the fiber network and will contact you if we detect any problems. You **do not** need to call or schedule an appointment.
- Prepare your premises: Make sure that your premises are accessible and safe for the fiber tech to work. Clear clutter or obstacles that may block the way to your fiber equipment. Secure any pets or children that may interfere with the work.

Safety Tips for Fiber Optics - Fiber optics are powerful yet delicate, and capable of inflicting injury when damaged or broken. Here are some safety tips for working with or around fiber optics:

- Never look into the end of a fiber optic cable, the laser light can damage your eyes.
- Only trained technicians should handle fiber optic cables and equipment.
- Treat fiber optic splinters the same as you would treat glass splinters. Seek medical attention if you suspect that you have a fiber splinter in your skin or eyes.

ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SEARCH

Energy Explorers

Are energy vampires hiding in your home? These electronic devices consume electricity even when they're not in use and can drain home energy bills.

Read the tips below to learn how you can fight energy vampires, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

R	W	Y	E	S	B	G	S	V	F	S	V	V	X	Q
X	E	M	R	M	X	X	T	V	B	N	U	D	T	O
G	P	K	X	G	K	J	C	I	B	B	J	U	I	O
J	R	X	A	R	C	N	R	E	P	M	J	V	R	E
A	V	R	T	M	P	T	Y	Y	I	C	Z	U	W	L
T	R	W	Q	U	E	D	G	U	K	N	J	P	I	O
E	R	R	A	X	N	E	K	Z	X	C	D	E	F	S
F	E	K	Y	S	V	Y	F	A	Y	E	H	Z	E	N
Y	R	N	L	T	F	I	L	F	A	Q	W	O	U	O
O	A	A	W	V	Z	D	E	H	O	X	O	L	N	C
G	N	K	Z	T	T	Y	S	K	R	C	L	K	A	E
T	Q	S	D	G	M	J	S	W	W	W	X	S	N	M
Z	E	R	E	G	R	A	H	C	E	N	O	H	P	A
B	A	C	T	T	Z	K	Q	N	U	X	E	M	Y	G
L	A	P	T	O	P	C	O	M	P	U	T	E	R	S

Tips to Fight Energy Vampires:

- If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **phone charger**.
- Tell your parents to unplug the **coffee maker** when they're finished brewing.
- When you're finished playing that new game, unplug your **game console**.
- Unplug **laptop computers** when you're done with homework.

2023-2024 Heat Plus

The 2023-2024 Heat Plus rate with Power Cost Adjustment is $0.049 per kilowatt-hour for electricity used during the winter months. The bill you receive in November will reflect your first month's usage for this heating season. MVEC strives to keep this rate as low as possible to encourage the installation of highly efficient heat pump systems. If you are planning a building or remodeling project, contact us at 800-927-6068 for energy efficiency ideas.

Watts The Answer?

1. That's why we'll never stop _____ for you!

2. MVEC routinely assists _____ who are considering onsite generations or have installed a system.

3. These signals can be distorted or blocked by _____ that get on the surface of the fiber.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to efletcher@mvec.coop

Two winners will each receive a $10.00 credit on their energy bills.

Please complete the following:

Name

_____

Address

_____

_____

July winners:
Ronald Ronnebaum, Earlville
Janet Cocayne, Dubuque

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CO-OPS GROW COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month.
As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

Source: www.energy.gov

Understanding Your Electric Bill

ON-PEAK hours are 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.
OFF-PEAK hours are
Midnight - 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. - Midnight

These times are in effect every day.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Mailing Address:
109 North Huber Street • Anamosa, IA 52205
319-462-3542 or 800-927-6068

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998

www.mvec.coop

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Electric Billing:	billing@mvec.coop
Electric Service:	maintenance@mvec.coop
Internet/Phone Service:	fiber@mvec.coop

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