

# WATTS *Current*

December 2023

For Our Members

## Season's Greetings & Wishes for a Bright 2024!

*By Jeremy Richert, MVEC CEO*

As the holiday season arrives and the to-do list grows with holiday decorating, baking and celebrations with loved ones, it is also a great time to pause and reflect on what was accomplished this past year. While higher costs and supply chain issues continue to challenge the cooperative, our dedicated team of employees worked diligently to provide reliable and affordable services to our members. The Board and I continue to be grateful for the MVEC team's unwavering commitment and hard work. Below are just a few examples of what was accomplished in 2023:

### **MVEC's Commitment to Providing Safe, Reliable and Affordable Electricity**

Mother Nature showed her power several times over the past year with severe storm and wind events in February, March and July that resulted in a significant number of outages across our service territory. Our investment in technology combined with the dedicated efforts of our crews in the field and operations center allows us to efficiently and quickly restore services when outages do occur. Outage durations today are 28 minutes less on average than what they were 20 years ago and over the last five years, the outage time experienced by our membership has been 48% lower than the Iowa residential rural average. These statistics reinforce that our energy is always working for you as we strive to provide safe and reliable power to our members.



On the construction side of things, we have spent a significant amount of time this year working on line improvement projects in the Dubuque area as we accommodate current growth while also preparing for future expansion around the southwest arterial in Dubuque. We have also focused efforts on upgrading and updating aging areas of the distribution system to ensure it is able to perform reliably in the future.

While we have done our best to keep rates stable over the last couple of years, the power supply and materials markets have seen a lot of volatility and upward pressure on pricing. In April, we reached a point that required us to implement a 3.5% rate increase. It was the first rate increase to the membership since 2019 and was primarily due to the rising costs of power, materials, equipment, tools, and labor. MVEC staff and the Board of Directors will continue to work diligently to provide reliable power in the most cost effective manner.

### **MVEC's MVlink Provides Members with World-Class Fiber Connections**

Since MVlink's launch in 2016, MVEC has placed 2,300 miles of fiber across our service territory and has connected nearly 7,000 members. We continue to expand the fiber footprint to communities adjacent to MVEC's electric lines, such as Anamosa, Ryan, Coggon and areas of Manchester. MVlink members continue to praise the speed and reliability of the MVlink network. In 2023, we gathered our first American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score for MVlink. With a score of 88, MVlink satisfaction is 20 points higher than the average Internet Service Provider. We also recently completed the hiring of a three person fiber line crew to support the maintenance of our fiber plant. We look forward to growing our MVlink subscriber list and bringing our fast, reliable, affordable connections to more members next year. Packages start at just \$59.95, contact our friendly, local Fiber team at [fiber@mvec.com](mailto:fiber@mvec.com).

## Watts Inside:

**Season's Greetings & Wishes for a Bright 2024! *continued***  
Page 2

**Cultivating a Culture of Family at Kendrick, Inc.**  
Page 2 & 3

**A Storm is Brewing: Electric Reliability is in Jeopardy**  
Page 4

**Our Energy Working for You: 'Tis the Season to Check Your Smoke Alarms**  
Page 5

**November Board Meeting Update**  
Page 5

**Tech Link - Revolutionize Your Holidays with these Innovative Tech Gadgets for Christmas 2023**  
Page 6

**Line Clearance Workshop**  
Page 7

**Electricians Code Class**  
Page 7

**Don't Forget to Send in Your 2023 Rebates**  
Page 7



*Continued from front page*

### **MVEC in the Community**

MVEC continues to place an importance on showing concern for the communities we serve. In 2023, co-op employees adopted families in Jones and Delaware Counties for the holidays, bringing holiday cheer to children in our service area. Last spring, MVEC held a food drive (along with the help of area Fareway Stores) to fill food pantries in Jones, Jackson, Delaware and Dubuque Counties. Just recently, MVEC employees hosted a bed build service project for Sleep in Heavenly Peace-Jones County where employees worked together on the construction of over 20 beds.



### **Safety Matters at MVEC**

MVEC is committed to the safety of our employees, members and the public. In early 2023 we completed a Commitment to Zero Contacts 2.0 training and educational program for our crews. This program focuses on identifying the things that need to be accounted for on every job to ensure our employees and members of the public go home safely at the end of each day. There is a lot going on when crews are at a jobsite, please do your part to allow them to complete their work safely. This includes not interfering with them as they work and driving safely and at appropriate speeds when near a job site.

### **MVEC is Your Co-op**

MVEC closes the year by working to fill a vacant board seat for Region 1. A Search Committee has been formed and is seeking qualified and interested candidates. Later this month, the Board of Directors will select a member to fill the seat until the next Director Election occurs as part of Annual Meeting next August. If you are interested in learning more about becoming involved with MVEC's Board of Directors, please feel free to reach out to me no later than December 5th at [jrichert@mvec.com](mailto:jrichert@mvec.com) or 800-927-6068. MVEC is owned and governed by you, the members we serve and we appreciate having an engaged membership.

As you can see, 2023 was another busy year at MVEC. We look forward to continuing our work to best serve you in the New Year (and beyond). The Board of Directors and employees of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative wish each of you and your families a joyous holiday season and a bright 2024!

## **Cultivating a Culture of Family at Kendrick, Inc.**

*By Christie Remley, Manager of Communications & Public Relations*

During the holiday shopping season, we are often reminded to 'shop local' (hopefully we do so all year round!) which is easy to do when you have unique stores like The Markket in Edgewood. Once you step through the doors of the two-story 6,500 square-foot retail shop, all of your senses will be engaged—sight, smell, sound, touch and even taste. From stunning décor to unique kitchen utensils and delicious mixes and snacks, every square inch of The Markket is brimming with gifting potential (even if the recipient is yourself!). The Markket is open 7 days a week and features many products made by various Iowa companies and artisans. If your shopping partner isn't so eager, let them know that The Markket even offers shoppers beer while they browse.



The Markket, owned by the Kendrick family, was established in 2017, to bring people to Edgewood and to showcase products from the family's various businesses stemming from the flagship company, Kendrick Forest Products; a logging and sawmill company that provides finished and unfinished lumber throughout the US and internationally. It all started 40 years ago when Tim Kendrick purchased the sawmill business. His wife Rhonda joined the company in 1984 and today all four of their children are involved in the business that employs 180 people and is now the largest lumber mill in the state. Family is what Kendrick, Inc. is founded on. In fact, the letters in Markket, stand for each of the family members' first names: Morgan, Andrea, Rhonda, Kirby, Kerra, and Tim.

In 2001, they expanded the company by purchasing an existing cabinetry business from Raymond, IA. They brought the company, now called Forever Cabinets, to Edgewood. In 2016, they opened a retail store in Dyersville called 'Just for You' which sells apparel and home decor. The store saw demand for wooden signs so Rhonda and Kerra flew to California to purchase a





printer that prints on wood and Kendrick Home was born. They took some product to Market in Atlanta and got picked up by a major national retailer that placed an order for 6,000 pieces within the first few minutes of the show opening. Now, that same retailer purchases 40,000 pieces at a time.

To support the expanding business, Kendrick took advantage of MVEC's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to acquire equipment for the 36,000 square foot facility that houses Forever Cabinets, Kendrick HOME, The Markket and Shimlee. With Kendrick, Inc., the family has found a use (and a business) for all the wood and scraps—from sawdust, to mulch to shims. "Nothing goes to waste at Kendrick," said Mary Kendrick, Event and Trade Show Coordinator, Kendrick, Inc. It was that mindset that led to the creation of Shimlee in 2017, an online company that prints custom photos on the leftover wood shims. If you want a one-of-a-kind piece commemorating your family, visit [shimlee.com](http://shimlee.com) to create your own custom print created right here in Eastern Iowa.

Kendrick, Inc. has come a long way from the sawmill that employed 12 people 40 years ago to now having its lumber used in gym floors for NBA teams, the home of a certain larger than life reality TV family, the interior of a luxury car brand and many other applications across the country and internationally.



I ended my visit with Rhonda and Mary by asking the question, 'What can MVEC and our community of members do to support your business?' Rhonda said, "The RLF (MVEC's Revolving Loan Fund) being available was powerful for Kendrick's growth. Then, just getting word out—there are still a lot of people who have never been here. Come visit, go on a tour (which take place April through October); learn and spread the word. For example, someone from Colorado toured this summer and now we are making their cabinets."



According to Co-Owner Rhonda Kendrick, Kendrick employees are a very creative group. "At Kendrick, the word 'no' is not in our vocabulary. It's not, 'No we can't.' It's 'How can we?' Everyone has the attitude of how do we fill this need for our customers," said Rhonda. The creativity extends to the talented decorators who transform The Markket for each season and help customers bring their décor and cabinetry dreams to life.

"We take a lot of pride in this business and its impact on our community," Rhonda said. "We are fortunate to have such a supportive business climate in Edgewood. But, ultimately, we couldn't do any of this without our employees—they are like family and they are all instrumental to the growth we've experienced."



So, if you're looking for unique gifts for the holidays or some meaningful décor for your home in the New Year, consider making a trip to Edgewood to visit The Markket or Forever Cabinets. Chances are, one of the Kendricks will be waiting to welcome you with a smile (and maybe even a beer).





## A Storm is Brewing: Electric Reliability is in Jeopardy

*By Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, and Congressman Randy Feenstra, representing Iowa's 4th District*

Supply chain delays. Disorderly retirements of dispatchable electric generation. Complex regulations on power plant emissions. Regional warnings about a lack of generation capacity to cover electric demand. Permitting delays for needed electric transmission infrastructure.

Individually, any one of these issues is enough to seriously impact reliability of electric service. But all these scenarios are playing out simultaneously across the nation and a perfect storm may be on the horizon.

Electric reliability across America is in serious jeopardy, and frankly, it's unacceptable. Here are the facts:

Dispatchable sources of electric generation like coal and nuclear are being retired far too early. And their generation capacity is being replaced by intermittent sources of generation like wind and solar. The downside: These intermittent sources only work when the wind blows and the sun shines.

Battery storage is not yet feasible for longer durations on a utility-scale level. For all practical purposes, electricity must be generated as it is being consumed. This becomes a problem when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining and energy consumption is high.

Demand for electricity continues to grow as our society becomes increasingly reliant on electricity.

Locally owned electric cooperatives work hard to provide reliable and affordable electricity for the member-consumers they serve. Co-ops are mission driven to power lives and empower communities and they make long-term decisions to ensure power is available when it's needed.

That's why we believe in a power generation strategy that prioritizes energy diversity. The same adage used for sound financial investing also applies to power generation: don't put all your eggs in one basket. Iowa's electric cooperatives use dispatchable sources of power like coal and natural gas because they can control the output and ramp up generation when needed to match sudden increases in electric demand. But our ability to provide reliable electricity is in jeopardy.

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency released its proposed rule to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing fossil-fuel-fired electric generating units.

The proposal is part of the current administration's misguided regulatory agenda to create a carbon-free power sector by 2035 and net zero emissions economy-wide by no later than 2050. We believe this proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation.

But that's not the only threat we face. The 2023 NERC summer reliability assessment is just the latest in a series of alarming reminders about the new electric reliability challenges facing the nation. Nine states experienced power interruptions last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply.

It's imperative that policymakers work to prioritize reliability in every energy policy discussion. Federal policies must recognize the compromised reliability reality facing the nation before it's too late.

The families, farms and businesses served by electric cooperatives deserve affordable AND reliable electricity to power their lives.





## Our Energy Working for You: 'Tis the Season to Check Your Smoke Alarms

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

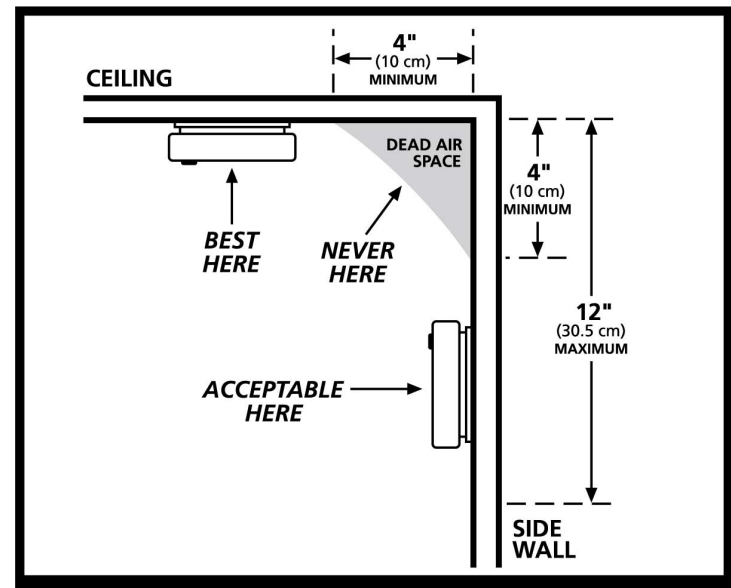
This month's article focuses on an important safety device in your home: smoke alarms. A smoke alarm is one of the most important tools to reduce property damage and loss of life. In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can become a large fire, so early detection is key to minimizing damage.

Information from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), notes most home smoke alarms are either ionization or photoelectric units. Ionization detectors are more responsive to flaming fires and detect a fire by passing charged ions between 2 metal plates. When smoke changes this current flow, it triggers the alarm. Photoelectric units pass a beam of light away from a sensor and when smoke enters this chamber, it reflects some light onto the sensor, triggering the alarm. Typically these are more responsive to a smoldering fire.

Over the years, where smoke alarms are required, and how they are installed in new homes, has changed. While some jurisdictions may vary on the requirements, the minimum would be at least one on each living floor of the home, and one in every sleeping quarters. Usually, alarms are powered by the house wiring and have a battery backup. Interconnecting all smoke detectors together is now also required on new installations to reduce the notification time. These changes have had a notable effect on fires. Since 1977, NFPA reports usage of fire alarms in homes has increased to 96% currently. Over that same time period, home structure fires have decreased from 734,000 to less than 334,000 annually in the US.

It is recommended that smoke alarms be replaced every 10 years, even if they are still functioning. Recently some models of alarms are available that have a 10 year sealed battery so it eliminates the task and cost of replacing batteries in the units every year. Another change has been to have carbon monoxide detection as part of the unit.

Because the alarms need smoke to pass through them, the location is important. Manufacturers recommend to not put them in the corners of rooms where there is dead air space.



While smoke alarms are designed to require minimal maintenance, you should regularly operate the test button, to ensure that it is working. Additionally, First Alert fire alarms recommend to gently vacuum the outside of the alarm with a soft brush attachment.

Smoke alarms can be irritating and a nuisance, and I have been reminded several times by them that I am not the best cook. But smoke detectors save lives and most of us likely can recall an event, where if smoke alarms weren't there, a disaster would have occurred. With the holidays approaching, and more temporary electrical cords and appliances being used, take a minute to test and make sure your smoke alarms are working. You and your family are worth the time.

## November MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Discussed topics of interest from recent training sessions, meetings, and conferences
- Approved a franchise agreement with the City of Maquoketa
- Reviewed and discussed the 2024 Draft Capital and Project budgets
- Approved an extension for a Letter of Credit with Co-Bank to meet RDOF Broadband grant requirements
- Reviewed and discussed statistics related to calls to the Cooperative's after hours call center
- Discussed the status and timeline for filling the Region One Director vacancy



# TECH LINK

## Revolutionize Your Holidays with these Innovative Tech Gadgets for Christmas 2023 *By Hillary Cyril for Tech Bullion*

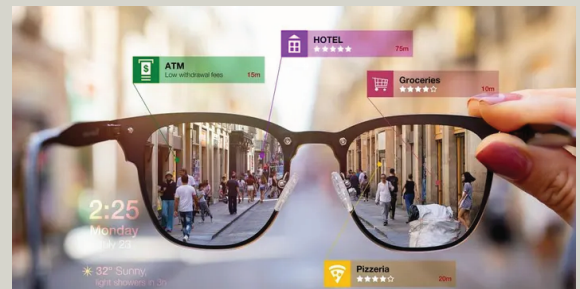
In an article for Tech Bullion, Hillary Cyril scoured the tech market to list an incredible lineup of cutting-edge tech gadgets sure to please those on your shopping list.

**What are Smart Home Devices?** Smart home devices refer to electronic devices that can be controlled remotely or automatically through a wireless connection.

**How Can They Revolutionize Your Holidays?** During the busy holiday season, time is of the essence. Smart home devices can save you valuable time by automating routine tasks and allowing you to control your home from anywhere with just a few taps on your phone or using voice commands. For example, imagine being able to turn off all the lights in the house with just one command before heading out for a Christmas party?

### Must-Have Smart Home Devices for Christmas

1. **Virtual Reality Headsets** - These innovative gadgets allow users to experience a completely immersive virtual world by wearing a headset that covers their eyes and ears. There are various options available when it comes to VR headsets.
2. **Augmented Reality Glasses** - While VR headsets transport you to a completely digital world, augmented reality (AR) glasses enhance your real-world environment with digital elements. These glasses use cameras and sensors to detect your surroundings and overlay digital information on top of them.
3. **360-Degree Cameras** - These compact gadgets allow you to capture photos and videos in all directions simultaneously, providing an immersive viewing experience when played back using VR headsets or on social media platforms.
4. **High-Tech Kitchen Appliances for a Modern Holiday Feast** - Preparing a feast for a large group can be daunting and time-consuming, especially when it comes to cooking.



- **Smart Ovens:** Have taken over the market with their advanced features like voice control, remote access through smartphone apps, and even built-in cameras that allow you to monitor your food from anywhere.
- **Instant Pot:** This multi-cooker has become a staple in many kitchens due to its versatility. With various functions such as pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker, steamer, and more.

### Eco-Friendly Tech Gadgets for Christmas

1. **Solar-powered gadgets** - There are plenty of tech gadgets available in the market that run on solar energy, such as solar-powered phone chargers, speakers, and even laptops.
2. **Smart thermostats** - Heating and cooling account for a significant portion of household energy consumption. By gifting someone a smart thermostat, you're helping them save money on their utility bills while also reducing their carbon footprint.
3. **Reusable water bottles with built-in filters** - Plastic bottles are major contributors to pollution in oceans and landfills. Help your loved ones make a positive impact by gifting them reusable water bottles with built-in filters.

The holiday season is a time of joy, laughter, and gift-giving. As we approach the end of the year, it's also a time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. And what better way to embrace the future than with revolutionary tech gadgets for Christmas that can enhance our daily lives?





## Line Clearance Workshop

Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted a Line Clearance Workshop at MVEC's Peosta Warehouse in October. Employees from MVEC participated in the training, along with linemen from CIPCO and East Central Iowa REC. During the day-long training, they learned about safety procedures related to tree trimming around power lines.



## CALLING AREA ELECTRICIANS! 2023 NEC CODE UPDATE

January 26th, 2024

Registration deadline is December 22nd, 2023.

8:00 am - 2:30 pm (lunch provided) cost is \$90.

For more information or questions contact

Al Reiter, Energy Advisor, at 800-927-6068 [areiter@mvec.coop](mailto:areiter@mvec.coop)

Approved For  
**6 CEU'S**  
By State Of  
Iowa

## Give Your Family the Gift of High-Speed Internet

MVlink provides several packages to give you the speed you need this holiday season and beyond.

If your internet needs an upgrade, contact us today at 800-927-6068 or [fiber@mvec.com](mailto:fiber@mvec.com) to discuss the right plan for you.



## Watts The Answer?

1. MVlink members continue to praise the speed and \_\_\_\_\_ of the MVlink network.

2. It is recommended that smoke alarms be replaced every \_\_\_\_\_, even if they are still functioning.

3. Smart home devices can save you valuable \_\_\_\_\_ by automating routine tasks and allowing you to control your home from anywhere with just a few taps on you phone or using voice commands.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to [efletcher@mvec.coop](mailto:efletcher@mvec.coop)

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

Please complete the following:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

October winners:

Betty Brauer, Manchester  
Jan Bartels, Bellevue

Don't forget  
to send in your  
**2023 REBATES**





Maquoketa Valley  
Electric Cooperative  
109 North Huber Street  
Anamosa, Iowa 52205

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Permit 174

## Happy Holidays!

Spark joy and light this holiday season. From our co-op family to yours, we wish you safe and warm season with friends and loved ones.

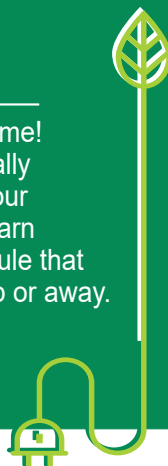
**MVEC will be closed December 25th, 26th and January 1st**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away.

For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR® label.

Source: [www.energy.gov](http://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.*

## Watts Current

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