

# WATTS *Current*

February 2023

For Our Members

## Electric Co-ops Advocate for Rural Iowa Priorities as 2023 Legislative Session Begins

More than 150 directors, managers and employees from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with over 100 state legislators on January 10, during the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's 2023 Welcome Back Legislative Reception in downtown Des Moines. The IAEC hosted the annual reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2023 Legislative Session to discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, we're concerned about large industrial and commercial corporations that are seeking to circumvent Iowa's electric service territory laws; these protections exist to provide stability for Iowa homes, farms and businesses. Iowa's electric co-ops are also opposed to any legislation that would deny landowners the option to use their property for utility-scale solar generation if they so choose.

"The Welcome Back Reception is a great opportunity to gather state legislators and representatives from Iowa's co-ops in one room. It is important to meet with the legislators at the beginning of their session to discuss priorities on behalf of our organization and the members we serve," said Tom Stewart, Vice President of the Board of Directors, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, electric co-op directors, managers and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues. Collectively, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives provide affordable, reliable, safe and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans throughout all 99 counties every day.

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MVEC Board Secretary, Gene Manternach with Senator Carrie Koelker



MVEC Board Vice President, Tom Stewart with Representative Steven Bradley and MVEC Board member, Billie Zumbach



Representative Steven Bradley with MVEC Board Secretary Gene Manternach



*Pete Boffeli*

A long-time employee, Pete Boffeli, Lead Lineman in Cascade, retired in December, after thirty-three years serving the Members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

Pete joined the MVEC family in 1989 as an Apprentice Lineman. He became Lead Lineman-Maintenance in 2001, and worked out of the Cascade

outpost. Through the years, many members have commented on Pete's helpful manner and his dedication to keeping the lights on. We appreciate Pete's commitment to reliability and safety.

*Thank you Pete!*



*Marcia Schwandt*

Marcia Schwandt, retired in December, after ten years serving the Members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

Marcia joined the MVEC family in September of 2012 when she was hired as a Member Accounts Representative. In Marcia's ten years at MVEC she has

helped thousands of our members pay bills, set up payment plans, learn how to pay on line, and visit with a friendly voice about their electric needs.

*Thank you Marcia!*

## January MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Reviewed the 2022 Year End Safety Report and the 2023 Safety Improvement Plan.
- Executed loan documents to receive loan funds from Rural Utilities Services (RUS) for projects included in the 2023-2025 Construction Work Plan.
- Approved the deferral of \$500,000 of revenue from 2022 to 2023 to help limit the impact current market situations could have on potential 2023 rate adjustments.
- Received an update on the accomplishments of the MVlink Smart Grid project in 2022 and reviewed MVlink plans for 2023.
- Received an update on cyber security measures that are in place at the Cooperative.
- Approved resolution recognizing the retirement of Pete Boffeli and thanking him for 33 years and 9 months of dedicated service to the membership.



## MVEC Receives Community Award

The Anamosa Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Celebration Dinner on Thursday, January 19th at the National Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa. MVEC was proud to receive the organization's 'Community Engagement Champion' Award at the event.

"Concern for community is one of the 7 cooperative principles, and we are pleased to be recongnized for our support of important community events," said MVEC CEO, Jeremy Richert.





## Please Cash 2022 Dividend Checks!

Dividend checks were issued to eligible MVEC members on October 20, 2022, and automatically become void on February 20, 2023.

If you have not cashed your check, please do so soon. Dividend checks not cashed by February 20, 2023, will be retained by the Cooperative and redistributed next year when dividends are paid.

Please call the office at 800-927-6068 and talk to Jan if you have any questions. As a reminder, if your dividend was under \$5, it is being held until the accumulated amount in the future is over \$5.



### Stop by MVEC's booth #409 at the Greater Dubuque Home & Builders Show the weekend of February 17-19

Representatives from our electric and fiber internet teams will be on hand to answer questions. **Plus**, MVEC/MVlink members will receive a **gift!** If you are building a new home or remodeling your current home, this will be a great opportunity to learn about new technologies and meet area contractors.



**Greater Dubuque Home and Builders Show**  
Grand River Center • Dubuque, Iowa  
**February 17-19, 2023**

#### Hours:

Friday 4:00–8:00pm  
Saturday: 10:00–5:00pm  
Sunday: 11:00–4:00pm

#### Admission:

Adults: \$5.00  
Children under 12 free

## Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442 or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)



## MVEC Hosted Course for Area Electricians

MVEC hosted a continuing education course for electricians on Friday, January 20th, at the Lawrence Community Center in Anamosa. Nearly 90 area electricians attended the one-day course on the 2023 National Electric Code (NEC) Update taught by Dave Sullivan of Sullivan Training & Consulting from Clive, IA. The course has been approved for six hours of Code CEUs and covered the important changes that will affect quoting and wiring when Iowa adopts the 2023 NEC. MVEC is pleased to host these continuing education courses so that electricians in our service area do not have to travel far to keep up on their training.



## Pull The Plug

Do you have old appliances taking up space? Get rid of that old refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioner and get paid through MVEC's Pull The Plug program.

Sign up today by calling our recycling contractor, CLEAResult, at 855-838-7817 (toll-free).

Please have your account number as you will be asked to provide it. Appliances in **working condition (run and cool)** will qualify for the rewards to the right.

*(Limited to three appliances per year.)*



## Our Energy Working for You: On-Site Generation

*By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor*

As I talk with members, one of the topics frequently asked about is renewable energy. The majority of the questions and interest pertain to solar arrays, but occasionally wind energy is also asked about. You may be considering on-site generation at your home, farm or business to partially offset electric usage. Energy efficiency of solar modules is increasing, and component costs are coming down. If you are exploring a renewable energy source, I want to share some things to consider.

### Determine your goals for adding renewable energy

MVEC's membership is diverse and goals may vary from member to member. A common goal is to reduce the energy bill, and solar equipment providers can develop a proposal that allows you to see the economics of a solar installation at your home or business. Or, your goal may be to reduce your carbon footprint, or to be less reliant on the energy grid. Each of these help shape the type and size of a system you would need. You should also consider addressing energy efficiency improvements at your home or business as you may be able to reduce the size of a generation system you are contemplating.

### Ask a lot of questions

Installing onsite generation is a major decision and can be a long-term investment of 20 or more years. MVEC is a resource for our members and we have a section on our website to help in your decision-making process: [www.mvec.coop/site-generation](http://www.mvec.coop/site-generation). You can also use the My Electric Account section to review your electric usage trends. Or, feel free to call us at 800-927-6068 to discuss your specific situation.

### Do your research

And check references of any solar or wind company you are







considering. Make sure you work with a reputable company and contact MVEC to understand how MVEC buys power back from members.

### Understand the process

The process often starts with a solar equipment provider sending MVEC a member's release for usage data. We provide a historical electric load profile to help them in developing a proposal for each member. If the proposal is approved by the member, then the equipment provider will provide a detailed diagram of the system, including equipment specifications, wiring diagrams, and layout of the solar array. MVEC's engineering team will review this information with two main goals:

1. To ensure that the system will operate safely on our distribution grid.
2. Determine if our system has adequate capacity to receive any excess generation that the on-site array can develop at that location.

For the safety reasons, it is critical to notify MVEC and receive engineering approval before starting the installation.

Once the design is approved, installation is started. In addition, a member agreement is completed that outlines MVEC and the member's responsibilities with the system. When the installation is complete, a State of Iowa electrical inspection is conducted and Certificate of Completion is issued. A final commissioning test is completed by MVEC to ensure the safety and operation as originally proposed.

### Did you know?

That as a member of MVEC, you are already a user of renewable energy? MVEC purchases power from Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) and currently, approximately 7% of CIPCO's energy portfolio is from solar and 30% is from wind energy. CIPCO and MVEC will continue to provide a diverse energy portfolio with the priorities of reliability, safety and affordability.


### Watts Green

As a member of MVEC, you also have the ability to purchase renewable energy from other members

who have renewable energy systems (our Watts Green program). The cost of this power is slightly higher than power generated from conventional sources such as coal and oil, or 2 cents per kilowatt hour (or \$1 for a 50 kilowatt hour block) which is applied only to that portion of renewable energy that is chosen.




Don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions you have as you consider on-site generation, energy efficiency measures or our Watts Green program. MVEC is a resource and is ready to assist you in meeting your goals.



## Watts Green


Renewable Energy Program







**Because you care...**

Today's changing energy landscape is bringing more attention to renewable energy resources. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative supports generation that is safe, reliable, cost effective and environmentally responsible.

**Watts Green** - Green renewable energy is electricity produced in an environmentally friendly manner. Sources of green energy include the sun, wind, and water, which are pollution free and naturally reoccurring. Some of the renewable energy that is sold to our members is purchased from other members who have renewable energy systems.

 **Benefits**

-  **Quick to market.**
-  **No air emissions.**
-  **Needs no water.**
-  **Zero fuel costs.**

**Costs** - The price for new green power is slightly higher than power generated from conventional sources such as coal. MVEC's Watts Green Renewable Energy Program enables you to support renewable energy by paying a small premium on your bill.

The extra cost is currently 2 cents per kilowatt hour, or \$1 for a 50 kilowatt hour block, which is applied only to that portion of renewable energy that is chosen.



# TECH LINK

## TechLink: Streaming Guide Now Available on MVEC.coop

Are you planning to “cut the cord” from cable or satellite TV and switch to streaming over your internet connection? MVlink wants to make things easier for you! Check out our new streaming website, StreamNow, for help making your initial choices about streaming services and equipment. Find the new website at [mvec.coop/streaming-guide](http://mvec.coop/streaming-guide).

This new StreamNow website will help you navigate through the many streaming options currently available in the marketplace. MVlink wants you to enjoy a great streaming experience, no matter which streaming device and services you choose.

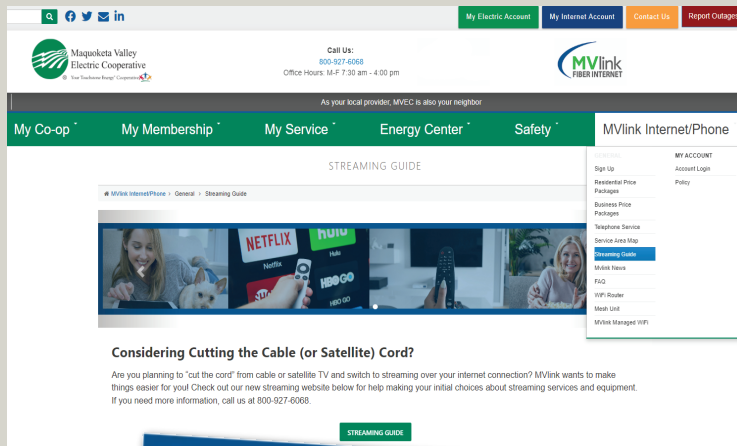
With this new resource, you can compare various streaming platforms (and their prices) and channel lineups to determine which platform has the channels that are important to you. Plus, learn more about the streaming devices on the market (if you don't already have a smart TV). There is also a fairly robust Frequently Asked Questions section where you can get answers to all your streaming questions.

Additionally, we recently launched the monthly Streaming Guide Insider email for current MVlink members. At the beginning of each month, members are emailed a listing of what is new to each streaming platform as well as what shows are coming off that month. This is the perfect resource to cut through the clutter and get right to viewing great shows and movies!

### Why cut the cord?

*Did you know that 4 out of 5 US households subscribe to at least one streaming service? Here are a few reasons why people are cutting the cord:*

- **Monthly Savings** - Many people are replacing costly traditional TV plans with much more affordable streaming services, some of which have free trial periods.
- **Convenience** - Nobody wants to be tied to a TV schedule. Streaming lets you watch what you want, when you want.
- **Personalization** - Streaming services make recommendations on what series or movies to watch next based on your viewing profiles.



### NEED TO INCREASE YOUR SPEED TO STREAM?

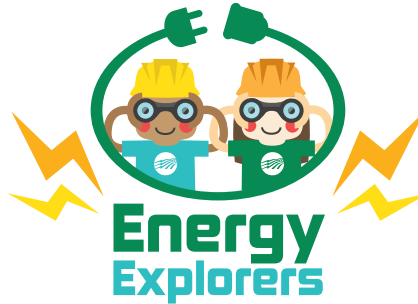
If you haven't already switched to MVlink fiber internet, we have the speed you need to stream without buffering. We offer packages from 85 mbps/85 mbps (for \$59.95) to 1 Gb/1 Gb (\$89.95). Visit [mvec.coop/mvlink-internet](http://mvec.coop/mvlink-internet), call **800-927-6068** or email [fiber@mvec.com](mailto:fiber@mvec.com) for more information or to **SIGN UP!**



# ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORD SCRAMBLE

Electricity is essential for our daily lives, but it can also be dangerous if you don't play it safe!

Read the safety tips below and unscramble the bolded text to complete the phrase. Use the answer key to double check your work.



1. Never place extension **rdsoc** under rugs or carpet.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Make sure electrical cords are not **yrafde** or broken.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Smoke **maalsr** should be tested every month.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **itpr** on them.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **shetear**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer Key: 1) cords 2) frayed 3) alarms 4) trip 5) heaters 6) water

## Watts The Answer?

1. MVEC was proud to \_\_\_\_\_ the organization's 'Community Engagement Champion' Award at the event.

2. As I talk with members, one of the topics frequently asked about is \_\_\_\_\_ energy.

3. MVlink wants you to enjoy a great \_\_\_\_\_ experience, no matter which streaming device and services you choose.

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

December winners:

Jeff Eagan, Peosta

Roger Boge, Earlville

## Lifeline Financial Assistance Available

Financial assistance through the Lifeline program is available to help those who qualify, to afford and maintain either telephone service or broadband internet access service, or bundled services. Lifeline participation enables Iowans to stay connected to jobs, family, community resources, and government and emergency services. For more information and the application form, visit [mvec.coop/lifeline-assistance](http://mvec.coop/lifeline-assistance)

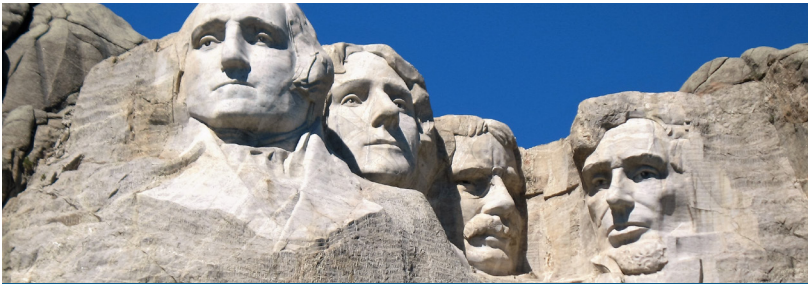






Maquoketa Valley  
Electric Cooperative  
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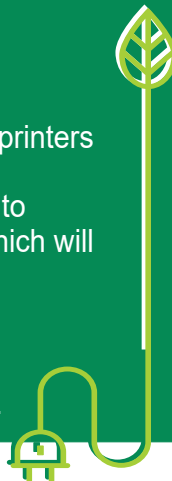


**Our Office Will Be Closed  
Monday, February 20  
In Observance Of Presidents' Day**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



## 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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Electric Service: [maintenance@mvec.coop](mailto:maintenance@mvec.coop)

Internet/Phone Service: [fiber@mvec.coop](mailto:fiber@mvec.coop)

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