

# WATTS *Current*

March 2023

For Our Members

## Beat the Peak

If you look around your home, you likely have more devices and equipment that require electricity than ever before. Our connected lives are increasingly dependent on more electricity to function. At the same time, as demand for electricity rises, MVEC must deliver an uninterrupted 24/7 power supply regardless of market conditions or other circumstances.

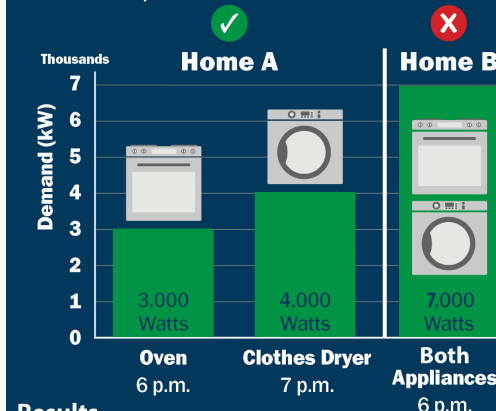
As you would expect based on your family's habits, electricity use fluctuates throughout the day based on consumer demand. MVEC must provide enough electricity to meet the energy needs of all members during times of highest energy use or "peak hours."

What you may not know is that electric utilities including MVEC typically pay more for electricity - either from a power plant or from another utility with excess power - during those morning and evening "energy rush hours." In addition, the demand for electricity is even higher when it's especially cold outside, when heating systems must run longer to warm our homes.

## Switch Your Thinking and



1. **Keep electricity usage to a minimum between 4 pm and 9 pm.** MVEC pays the most for electricity used in these peak hours. If you cut back during this window every one saves.
2. **Coordinate the number of appliances you operate at once.** Staggering the use of appliances reduces the demand on our system, which means lower costs.



### Results

**Home A** staggered the use of their appliances during peak hours, using less of a demand on the Cooperative's system.

**Home B** used both appliances at once during peak hours, creating higher demand, which will increase costs.

If the "peak times" concept is puzzling, here's an easy way to think about it, and it's similar to a concert. We know costs go up when there is strong demand for tickets (or electricity), and both are subject to the basic laws of supply and demand. When a lot of people want the same thing, it's more expensive. When they don't, it's cheaper - like a matinee or an "early bird" special at a restaurant.

On-peak hours are 4 pm to 9 pm each day and off-peak hours are 9:01 pm to 3:59 pm each day. On-peak energy is billed at a rate of \$0.16/kilowatt-hour (kWh) and the first 750 kWhs of off-peak energy is billed at \$0.08/kWh with any off-peak usage over 750 kWh billed at \$0.649/kWh.

During peak time when the cost to produce and purchase power is higher, we encourage you to take steps to save energy, turning your thermostat down a little, turning off lights and waiting to use large appliances during off-peak times.

You can also save energy by plugging electronics and equipment such as computers and TVs into a power strip, then turn it off at the switch during peak hours. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings to sync up with off-peak rate periods. When we all work together to reduce energy use during periods of high electricity demand, we can relieve pressure on the grid and save a little money along the way. Visit ([mvec.coop/understanding-my-electric-bill](http://mvec.coop/understanding-my-electric-bill)) to learn more.

## Watts Inside:

**Board Approves Rate Increase**  
Page 2

**February MVEC Board Meeting Updates**  
Page 2

**Ready to Re-Connect Your Meter?**  
Page 2

**Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins**  
Page 3

**Reminder: Assistance for Winter Heating Bills**  
Page 4

**Our Energy Working for You: Tree Selection and Planting**  
Page 5

**TechLink - Email Tips as you Convert to MVlink Service**  
Page 6

**Iowa RECs Holding Drive for Area Food Pantries**  
Page 7

**Save the Date: MVEC's Annual Meeting**  
Page 7



## Board Approves Rate Increase

The Cooperative's Board of Directors approved a rate increase to take effect on April 1, 2023, which will be reflected on the energy bill you receive in May. This increase is intended to generate approximately \$1,200,000 in additional revenue, approximately 3.5% above the existing rates. It has been four years since the Cooperative last adjusted rates in early 2019.

The increase will be applied to the basic service charge portion of the energy bill. This is a charge paid by all members and reflects the distribution plant costs that are necessary to ensure each location is adequately served with electricity, whether or not any electricity is actually used. It is our responsibility to provide you with the electricity you need whenever a switch is flipped.

As we have explained in recent months, the Cooperative has faced rising costs for power, materials, equipment and labor. One of the largest cost increases we have seen has been in electric line materials, with one of our material providers estimating that material prices have increased 23% on average across the board over the last 18 months.

The majority of our membership utilizes either our residential single phase rate, or a farm/commercial three phase rate. The single phase rate will see a \$6.25 monthly increase as the Basic Service Charge moves to \$39.50 per month. The three phase rate will see a \$6.75 monthly increase as that Basic Service Charge becomes \$75.00 per month. The other rates will also see increases based on the costs to serve them. The Cooperative's goal over the past several decades has been to strive to reach a Basic Service Charge that more closely reflects the true costs to provide service to individual meters, recognizing different services have different requirements to meet.

Being a member of a Cooperative like ours is of great value, especially when rate changes are needed. That's because the people making the decision to change rates are not only your Cooperative's board members, but they are also members who pay their own energy bills each month. The board and MVEC staff works hard to ensure your Cooperative is operated efficiently and that any rate increases provide the least impact possible to members.

## February MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Approved 2023 construction costs for new services, service rebuilds, pole moves, and metering equipment.
- Discussed legislative bills that are of interest to the Cooperative.
- Discussed and approved the implementation of a 3.5% rate increase to the membership that will take effect April 1, 2023. This rate adjustment was part of the 2023 budget that was approved in December.
- Approved changes to employment policy E-7 for the residency requirements of staff involved with outage response efforts.
- Reviewed energy efficiency rebates paid out to the membership in 2022 and discussed plans for the 2023 energy efficiency program.
- Approved voting delegates for the upcoming business meetings of affiliate organizations.
- Reviewed and had discussion on Director per diems.

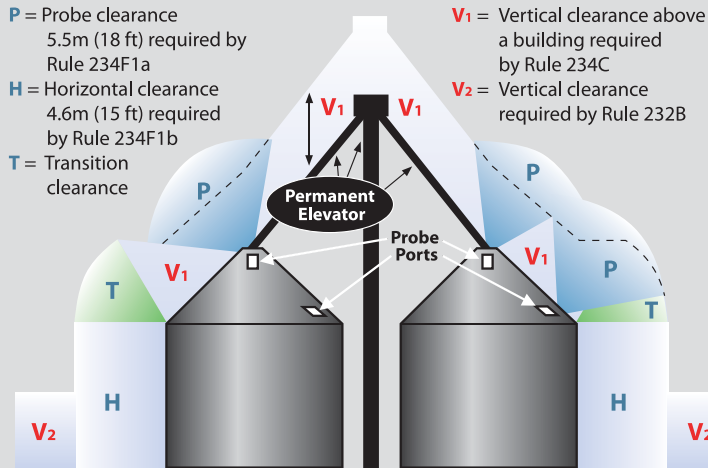
## Ready To Re-Connect Your Meter?

When you are ready to have your meter re-connected this spring, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative will need two weeks notice. Please contact Erica at 800-927-6068, extension 299.





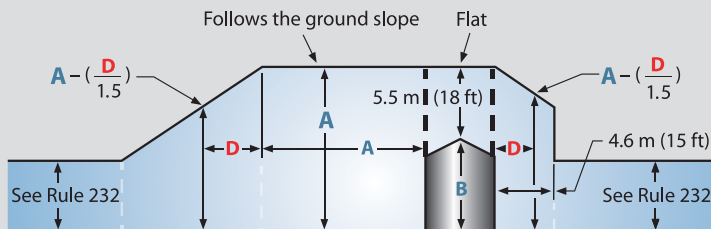
### Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators



From IEEE Std. C2-2017, "National Electrical Safety Code." © Copyright 2016 by IEEE. All rights reserved.

### Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

#### ELEVATION



**B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin

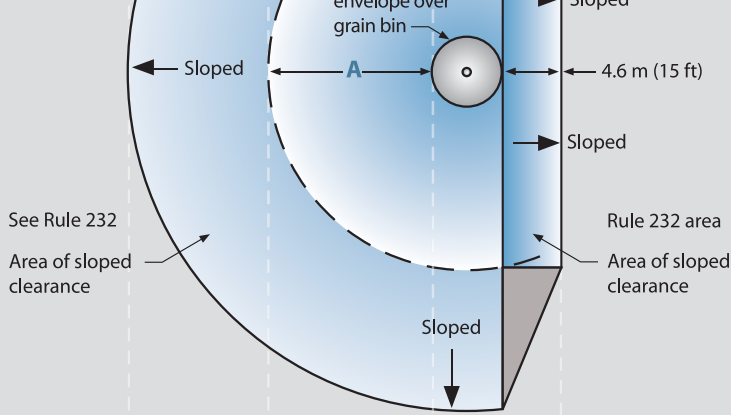
**A** =  $B + 5.5\text{ m (18 ft)}$

**D** = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

#### PLAN VIEW

#### LOADING SIDE



From IEEE Std. C2-2017, "National Electrical Safety Code." © Copyright 2016 by IEEE. All rights reserved. The IEEE disclaims any responsibility or liability resulting from the placement and use in the described manner.

*Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents for these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.*

## Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins

The state of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators.

If you are planning to construct a new grain bin (or move an existing one) please contact Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. We will provide assistance in planning a safe environment for everyone working at, and living around, your grain bins.

Electric wires should be at least 15 feet from the non-loading side of the grain bin; at least 18 feet from the highest filling or probing port on the bin; and a clearance of at least the bin height plus 18 feet from the loading side of the grain bin. Electric service cannot be provided to a grain bin installation that does not meet these clearances.

According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199-25.2(3)b. *An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board.)*

If the electric wires around your existing or proposed grain bin do not meet the requirements shown in the diagrams or if you have any questions, please contact our office at 800-927-6068.



## Reminder: Assistance for Winter Heating Bills

Help is still available for Iowa residents who may struggle to meet winter home heating costs. You can apply now for the 2022-2023 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

This program is funded through the Iowa Department of Human Rights, and helps qualifying families meet home heating costs. Qualifying Iowa residents can submit applications until April 30, 2023.

For information about household income maximums, see the chart below or visit ([mvec.coop/iowa-liheap-guidelines](http://mvec.coop/iowa-liheap-guidelines)) for a list of area agency contact information.

If you are not sure where to apply, Dial 2-1-1, or visit [humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply](http://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply) to contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP  
Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Capitol Complex  
Des Moines, IA 50319

### Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$27,180
2	\$36,620
3	\$46,060
4	\$55,500
5	\$64,940
6	\$74,380
7	\$83,820
8	\$93,260

**Note:** For households with more than eight members, add \$9,440 for each additional member.

## SAFETY MATTERS

### MARY DID EVERYTHING RIGHT

On a stormy night, 17-year-old Mary Gehrig was driving home and torrential rains made it hard to see. Mary was almost home when she saw some small white lines.

As she got closer, she realized the lines were massive and lying across the road. She slammed on her brakes and came to a stop. Mary had hit a high-voltage transmission line.

Luckily, Mary called her parents, who told her to stay put and call 9-1-1.

If there is a downed power line due to an accident, stay inside your vehicle or cab until the utility arrives and deenergizes the line.



Your instinct might be to flee from the vehicle, but the inside of your car or cab is often the safest place to be. Tell others to stay away and call 9-1-1 to report the situation.

**Doing the right thing could save your life. To learn more, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).**



## Our Energy Working for You: Tree Selection and Planting

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

With spring hopefully approaching soon, we start thinking of yard projects for the upcoming year. If you are considering planting trees around the home, congratulations, you may be taking another step toward energy efficiency.

**Proper selection and location of trees around the home can reduce energy costs year round.** The US Department of Energy notes that carefully positioned trees can save 25% on energy bills. Shade trees help reduce energy consumption by shading your home and reducing the heat gain during the summer.

Shading your outside air conditioning or heat pump unit can reduce cooling costs by 10%. Care must be taken to ensure there is clear area around the outside unit to allow adequate air movement. Planting trees to shade paved or concrete patio areas will reduce the heat they absorb and radiate later in the day.

In winter, an effective windbreak of trees and shrubs can reduce heating energy consumption by as much as 20-40%. While the primary goal of shade trees is for the summer, consider taking advantage of the low arc of the winter sun after the tree has lost its leaves.

**Location, location, location.** Planting a tree is a long-term decision that will benefit your home for future generations. Each home is different and the layout

of the lot all factor into optimizing the value and energy efficiency trees can provide. Careful placement will allow the tree to thrive and grow faster.

### Keep safety in the forefront when planting.

Look up and look down! Visualize what the tree size is going to be when it's matured. Our tree planting guide below will help to ensure problems don't occur in the future. It is frustrating for all when a tree has to be trimmed because it is in the right of way. Keep in mind, the potential distance the root base can grow if buried lines are in the area. And always, **Call Before You Dig at Iowa One Call 800-292-8989 or [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com).** These safety steps will reduce potential outages and hazards not only for yourself, but also for your neighbors.

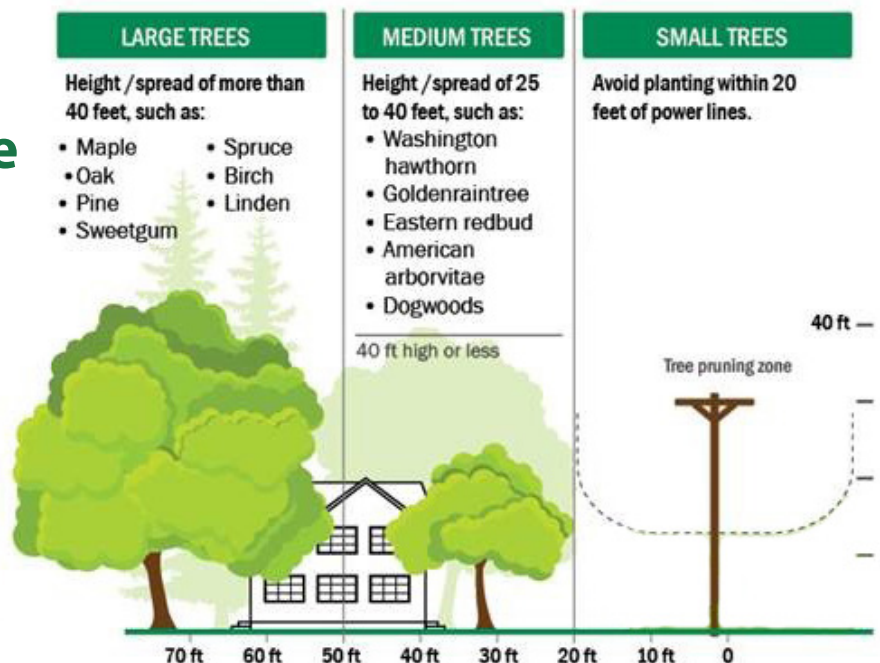


As the saying goes, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second best time is now. Your local tree nursery can help you select the best tree for your needs. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is also a great resource for tree planting and windbreaks.

## Planting the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our homes, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be hazardous... especially to utility lines.

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact MVEC or visit [mvec.coop/tree-planting-safety](http://mvec.coop/tree-planting-safety)





*Drawing for  
Gift Cards*



# OPEN HOUSE

Learn about MVEC's High-Speed Fiber Internet

**Thunder Hills Country Club**

16682 Thunder Hills Dr., Peosta

**Thursday, March 9th 5pm - 7pm**

**MVEC.COOP/MVLINK-INTERNET**

*Join  
Us!  
FREE Event*

# TECH LINK

## TechLink: Email Tips as you Convert to MVlink Service

Once we convert your internet service to MVlink, your existing email account may not work, especially if you are using one associated with your current internet provider (Example, @netins.net or @yousq). Prior to our arrival, you may want to set up a new email account and transfer your contacts so your email isn't interrupted. Gmail and Outlook appear to be the most widely used, free email services, and are user friendly; however you may find Yahoo, or another service are best for you. Below are steps to set up either a Gmail or Outlook account.

**Note, MVlink installation technicians are not trained in setting up/transferring email service.**



- Start by first saving/exporting your contacts from your existing email service.
- Visit: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- Click on Gmail in top right corner
- A pop-up sign-in box appears. At the bottom of the box click on "Create Account"
- Enter your name and desired email address/username. Example: [joe@gmail.com](mailto:joe@gmail.com)
- Create a password using at least 8 characters including a mix of letters, numbers and symbols, then click Next
- Enter your phone number and a recovery email address for security purposes to ensure you can still access your account if you forget your password. Enter your birthday and gender, then click Next
- Read the Terms of Service/Privacy Policy and if you agree, click "I agree". Once you accept, your account is set-up.
- Next, import your saved contacts.
- Notify your contacts that your email address has changed.



- Start by first saving/exporting your contacts from your existing email service.
- Visit [www.outlook.com](http://www.outlook.com)
- Click on "Create Free Account" in center of screen
- Enter your desired email address in center of screen. Example: [joe@outlook.com](mailto:joe@outlook.com)
- Create a password using at least 8 characters including a mix of letters, numbers and symbols, then click Next
- Enter your first and last name, then click Next.
- Enter the country you live in, and your birthdate, click Next.
- To ensure you are not a robot, you will be asked to manually enter the random number/letter combination that pops up. Click Next. (If you entered the combination incorrectly, you may be asked to repeat this step.)
- The next few steps ask questions related to how you would like your account to look. Once these are answered, your account is ready for use.
- Next, import your saved contacts.
- Notify your contacts that your email address has changed.



## Iowa RECs Holding Drive for Area Food Pantries

Keeping concern for our communities top of mind, MVEC is joining Franklin REC (Hampton, IA) and Farmers REC (Greenfield, IA) to hold a drive for food pantry donations during the month of March (March 1st – March 31st). MVEC will collect non-perishable and personal hygiene items at the following locations until March 31st:

- Peosta Fareway (8400 NICC Dr. Peosta)
- Maquoketa Fareway (110 Westgate Dr. Maquoketa)
- Manchester Fareway (109 E. Marion St. Manchester)
- MVEC Headquarters (109 N. Huber St. Anamosa) (\*during business hours)

We will donate the collected items to food pantries in Jones, Jackson, Dubuque and Delaware Counties. Thank you for helping MVEC make sure that our neighbors are nourished. The following are items that are in highest demand: *canned fish and meat, dry pasta, pasta sauces, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, canned or dry soups, oatmeal and healthy cereal, kids snack items, toilet paper, diapers, baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.*

Thank you in advance for your generosity! If you have any questions, contact **Christie Remley** at [cremley@mvec.com](mailto:cremley@mvec.com) or 800-927-6068.

## Save the Date: MVEC's Annual Meeting

MVEC's Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting your local communities. Attendees can find out about programs offered by MVEC and get to know MVEC's staff members. Annual meetings provide a forum for staff members to gather feedback and learn how we can better serve you and your family. It's also an opportunity to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of an electric co-op: voting for the upcoming year's board of directors. MVEC's directors are members of your community and are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too. Remember, all members of MVEC are eligible to run for the board including you. Make it a point to participate in MVEC's next annual meeting Thursday, August 17th, 2023. Contact MVEC for details.

**Annual Meeting  
of Members**

**August  
17th  
2023**

**Berndes Center  
Monticello**

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



## Watts The Answer?

1. MVEC must provide enough electricity to meet the

needs of all members during times of highest energy use or "peak hours."

2. \_\_\_\_\_ placement will allow the tree to thrive and grow faster.

3. Thank you for helping MVEC make sure that our \_\_\_\_\_ are nourished.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

January winners:

Duane Droysler, Cascade

Amanda Kluesner, New Vienna



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

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



## Spring Forward on March 12!

Set your clock forward one hour

## 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

is published monthly for members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

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](http://www.mvec.coop)**  

Email direct to the following departments:

Electric Billing: [billing@mvec.coop](mailto:billing@mvec.coop)

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

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

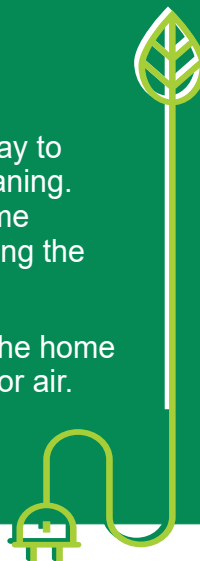
*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures.

Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



Printed by Julin Printing Company  
Monticello, IA

**julin**  
PRINTING COMPANY