

WATTS *Current*

December
2024

Wishing you Joy this Holiday Season and Beyond

By Jeremy Richert, MVEC CEO

As we embrace the holidays and get into the spirit of the season, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on this past year’s accomplishments at your cooperative. The team at MVEC takes great pride in bringing power and connectivity to our members. Throughout the year and in various conditions, our dedicated team 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 highlights of what was accomplished in 2024:

Serving Members with Safe, Reliable and Affordable Electricity

On the construction side of things, our crews were busy rebuilding 12 miles of 3-phase line between substations to strengthen the system for load growth and weather resistance. We built some new lines to accommodate housing development expansions near the communities of Peosta, Cascade, Dyersville and Bellevue. Additionally, our crews moved eight miles of line where the State rebuilt Highway 13 near Manchester. We have also focused efforts on upgrading and updating technology so that we can monitor the system more closely with additional capability to control the system remotely without having to roll trucks.



Mother Nature has continued to create havoc within our service territory. We have had seven major weather event days over the last 18 months. Prior to 2023, we had seven major weather days for the entire four year period of 2019-2022. Our continued 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. Over the last five years, the outage time experienced by our membership on non major event weather days has been 45% 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.

In the fourth quarter, the Dubuque Regional Airport energized the largest solar array on the MVEC system—the installation is capable of 300kW of power and 125kW (234kWh) of battery storage.

Extending a Helping Hand

2024 brought many opportunities to lean into the cooperative principle ‘Cooperation among Cooperatives,’ starting in May with six MVEC linemen answering a call for mutual aid in Arkansas to assist Carroll Electric Cooperative with storm restoration. Then in June, Bailey Bautsch, MVEC Journeyman lineman, was one of 14 Iowa and Minnesota linemen who traveled 2,800 miles to Las Peñas, Guatemala, to bring power to the remote village as part of NRECA’s International Program. This 14-person crew battled rainy weather, rugged conditions and impassable roads to power a brighter future for more than 30 families.

In September, MVEC sent a crew of four linemen to assist Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative with

Watts Inside:

Wishing you Joy *continued*
Page 2

Budget Billing Plan
Page 2

November Board Meeting
Update
Page 2

Embrace the True Spirit of the
Season with a Live Nativity at
The Bean Farm
Page 3

Watts Up at MVEC: Warehouse
Management at Your Co-op
Page 4

Our Energy Working for You:
Stray Voltage Prevention
Page 5

Tech Link - 'Tis the Season for
Streaming
Page 6

Electricians Code Class
Page 7

MVEC Food Drive
Page 7

Patriotic Employer Award
Page 7

Don't Forget to Send in Your
2024 Rebates
Page 7



Continued to page 2



Continued from front page
 restoration efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene that broke more than 350 poles and left 97% of their members without power. Matt Porth of Mid-Carolina said this about our crew, "Tony, Steve, Alex and Matt all represented Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative in the best way. I personally worked with them for the nine days they were here, and I can tell you these guys are awesome. They worked with efficiency and pride. More importantly they were committed to safety. They worked hard and steady and, in the process, got thousands of people's power on. You should be proud of them and how they brought a little bit of Iowa down south."



highest cost to serve areas within our MVlink footprint. We now have over 2,300 miles of fiber and more than 7,500 connected members.



Looking ahead to 2025

As we say goodbye to 2024, we look forward to the New Year where we will celebrate MVEC's 90th birthday. We are proud to have been serving our members with reliable, affordable electricity for nine decades and we look forward to continuing to serve your power and internet needs well into the future. Look for fun throwback photos and trivia questions in Watts Current and on our social media platforms throughout the year. Wishing you joy and light this holiday season and all through 2025!

Budget Billing Plan

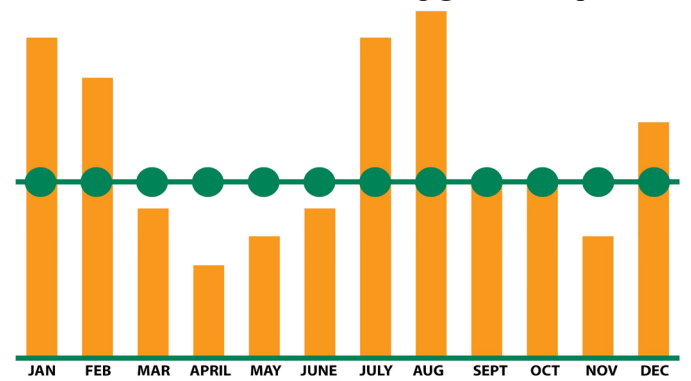
As 2024 winds down, you are likely evaluating your household budget for next year. Did you know that MVEC offers a budget billing plan where you can pay the same amount each month for your electricity?

The monthly amount is calculated each year based on your usage history. The account must be current at the time of enrollment. Accounts are reviewed annually (typically after the January billing cycle) and payments are adjusted as usage changes. To apply call 800-927-6068 or email billing@mvec.coop.



Showing Concern for Community
 MVEC embraced the Cooperative Principle, 'Concern for Community' all year long with support for area organizations and employee volunteerism

with area youth groups, Scouts and sporting teams. This fall, MVEC showed some extra concern by assembling a group of employees to help out at Monticello-based Animal Welfare Friends no-kill animal shelter. Employees spent several hours on a Sunday in October tackling some cleaning, maintenance and organization projects at the shelter. In addition, during Co-op Month, MVEC held a service-area wide food drive to gather donations for area food pantries. Thanks to the generosity of members and employees, 465 pounds of food and hygiene items were collected. We are ending the year on a sweet note by donating Christmas Cookie Kits to a local food pantry so that families can make holiday memories.



KEY: ■ MONTHLY ENERGY USE ● ELECTRIC BILL

Bringing Fast, Reliable MVlink Fiber Connections to More Areas

We continue to evaluate rural communities adjacent to our service territory that have a need for a broadband connection. This year, we expanded MVlink's footprint to include the communities of Earlville and Dundee as well as additional portions of Dyersville, Manchester and Anamosa. We also were awarded grant dollars from the state of Iowa to build fiber to some of the remaining

November MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Were updated on MVlink activities for 2024 and budgeted plans for 2025
- Had a discussion on bit coin loads within MVEC's service territory
- Reviewed the 2025 Draft Capital and Project budgets
- Reviewed the results of CFC's annual financial report
- Approved 2024 write-offs for unpaid accounts



Embrace the True Spirit of the Season with a Live Nativity at The Bean Farm

It's easy to get caught up in the hustle bustle of holiday shopping, decorating and cooking and lose touch with the true meaning of the Christmas story. Doug and Julia Bean of The Bean Farm of Scotch Grove aim to bring that back with Live Nativity events at their farm. This year marks the Nativity's 10th anniversary.



When Doug and Julia purchased the farm in 2011, in addition to building a simpler life for themselves, they had a vision of helping people to experience the peace of the countryside and grow their faith. Part of that plan included hosting a live Nativity during the Christmas season. "Faith is important to us and materialism at Christmastime leads to emptiness and disillusionment," said Julia Bean. "The Nativity Story is a great story we can share with people of all ages and faiths. It's become a Christmas tradition for us now."

The first year the Beans put on the event, they rounded up some children from their church, ran one advertisement and drew about 70 people per performance. Fast forward 10 years and the event now draws around 1,500 throughout the weekend.

What can one expect when traveling to the Bean Farm for the Live Nativity event? The 90-minute experience is very interactive and features the Streets of Bethlehem in addition to the narrated Christmas Story. Attendees will experience what the streets of Bethlehem were like 2000 years ago, even getting counted for the census,



encountering beggars and fending off Tax Collectors. Merchant shops include carpentry, bread, clay vessels, incense, herbs and oils.

Julia estimates that about 125 people are needed to make the event happen from actors to people helping with

parking. The Bean's orange barn cat Clyde may even make an appearance as Julia mentioned he enjoys spending time in the manger.

Julia describes the experience as "grounding, because without this story, none of the current traditions would exist." She also believes that the experience will make people feel more connected not just to their faith but others as well. "People are often isolated in today's society and this is a way to bring people together around a common story."

Julia hopes that the feeling people take away stays with them beyond the season. "Our hope is to bring people ongoing joy and peace. This event and story stand the test of time."



This year's performances are scheduled for the following:

- Saturday, December 7 with performances at 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm
- Sunday, December 8 with performances at 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm

Admittance is suggested at \$10/adult and \$5/child. The Bean Farm is a non-profit 501(c)3 so your contribution is tax deductible. A share of the proceeds will go to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a non-profit that builds and donates beds to children who need them. Last year, the Beans donated a total of \$6,000 to the organization.



Reflecting on her favorite part of putting on the event, Julia says it is "seeing the transformation in people—both the crew and attendees. The volunteers discover the uplifting experience of working alongside strangers that become fast friends. We are an unlikely mix of people with a variety of talents who experience the power of sharing the greatest story ever told!"



Watt's Up at MVEC: Warehouse Management at Your Co-op

By Brent Van Dorn, Warehouse Supervisor

In this month's Watt's Up at MVEC, we catch up with MVEC Warehouse Supervisor, Brent Van Dorn. December (year-end) is a busy time for Brent, but is a great opportunity to learn about the important role that his department plays at the co-op.

I have been the Warehouse Supervisor at MVEC for 19 years. As we close out the year and are in the process of annual inventory, I wanted to share the work that we do in the warehouse. In addition to annual inventory, spring, summer and fall are the busiest seasons in the warehouse. In the spring, we are ensuring materials are on hand to get work done before farmers begin planting, in the summer, we are in full swing with construction and maintenance projects, and in the fall, we are focused on ensuring our crews can complete projects before the ground freezes.

As an electric and fiber co-op with more than 17,000 members, our mission is to provide affordable, reliable and safe electricity and reliable, fast internet. The warehouse plays a role in that by helping to procure materials and equipment at the most reasonable prices and in the timeframe that we need them to complete our work.



One of the most challenging aspects is staying on top of materials and staying ahead of long lead times. Since COVID, the most random materials will have long lead times. One example is a transformer boot cover—a 12" by 10" piece of epoxy that currently has a 30-week lead time.

To best support the co-op, it's important that we be flexible and ready to roll with whatever comes our way. Typically, on Mondays, I go through and figure out what needs to be ordered, create the Purchase Order (PO) and get the item(s) ordered. Once I have done this for the Anamosa warehouse, I then go to the Peosta warehouse and do the same. It's critical to stay on top of material—if we run out, the crews and technicians can't accomplish what they need to out in the field.

Working with me in the warehouse is Matt Pepmeyer,

our Warehouse Specialist. Matt assists with putting up work orders for the linemen as well as keeping the warehouse orderly and clean. I work closely with Tami and Abby in accounting to ensure proper documentation, so work orders can get closed out and invoices paid. We also work closely with the Fiber and Electric departments to understand upcoming projects to make sure we have the needed materials on hand or on order.



One of the most important aspects of my job, in addition to inventory management, is developing and maintaining good relationships with our vendors. After the derecho, we had many poles that needed to be replaced and in just two days, we had poles delivered. I attribute this quick response to our positive relationships with vendors.

We take our work very seriously here at the co-op. We are responsible for keeping members' power and internet on so that they can go about their daily lives. Even though we are focused on our work, we have a great culture at MVEC. The atmosphere and the people I work with are what I like most about my job. It's very family-like—everyone is tight knit and we care about each other.

One of my favorite MVEC memories and a time that really exemplifies the cooperative spirit is when the derecho occurred in 2020. While the event itself was not positive, the way everyone at the co-op stepped up certainly was. It was all-hands-on-deck with the shared goal of cleaning up and getting our members' power back on as quickly as possible.

In my 19 years here, everything has changed in the warehouse department. In 2017, we expanded the warehouse to accommodate our expansion into fiber internet. In 2011 we added the Peosta warehouse and yard to support growth in that service area.

As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, I have the goal of continuing to improve our inventory process. I see us continuing to grow as a co-op to better serve our members. Then, I believe the warehouse and our capabilities in this department will continue to evolve to support that growth.



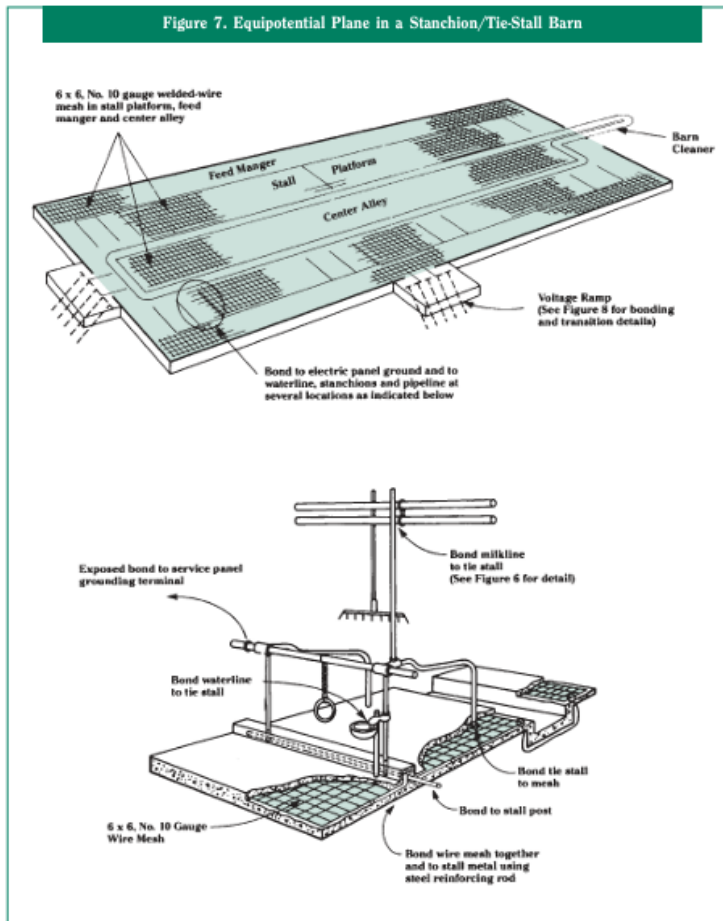
Our Energy Working for You: Stray Voltage Prevention

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

This month's article covers prevention strategies for the effects of stray voltage. As discussed last month, stray voltage, or more correctly identified as Neutral-to-Earth voltage, occurs in every grounded electric system. The goal is to take actions to remove any negative effects from stray voltage.

The good news is that with some planning and sound installation practices, the problems that stray voltage causes are reduced significantly.

One action to reduce stray voltage potential is to create an Equipotential Plane. While this may sound complicated, it is basically bonding the metal and electrical grounding system together to reduce voltage difference that the livestock could experience. It would also include a "voltage ramp" where the voltage transition would be gradual and not noticed by livestock. The illustration below shows the components of an equipotential plane.



Ideally, the preparation should take place before construction. It involves several areas of the building process including concrete work, construction,

electrical, plumbing and livestock equipment installation. Your qualified electrician can also take steps to reduce stray voltage effects during the construction phase.

These include:

- Balancing the 120 Volt loads to reduce the current on the neutral wiring of the system.
- Implementing adequate sizing and proper connections of the grounded neutral conductors.
- Installing wiring and electrical equipment that is rated for the environment in which it operates.

To assist in the design process, consider this resource: www.iowastrayvoltageguide.com/.

While these measures take increased effort during the construction process, and potentially result in higher installation costs, these preventative measures vs. repairs after the fact, will ultimately cost less, save time and provide a healthier environment for your herd.



Pull the Plug Program Ending on December 31

The Pull the Plug program will be ending December 31, 2024. Any MVEC members who have an old refrigerator, window air conditioner or freezer should contact CLEAResults appliance recycling center directly to schedule an appliance pick-up, (toll free number is 855-838-7817) before December 16, 2024.

You can receive an incentive of \$35 for refrigerators and \$25 for window air conditioners and freezers. Only appliances that still operate will be accepted for the program. The minimum appliance size requirements are 10 cubic feet or larger. No commercial sizes will be accepted. When scheduling an appliance pick-up, you must identify yourself as an MVEC member and be prepared to provide your account number.



TECH LINK

'Tis the Season for Streaming

While the weather outside may be turning frightful, the holiday content available on various streaming platforms can provide some delightful entertainment this holiday season. If you are an MVlink Fiber Internet member, you should receive our monthly **StreamNow Insider** guide in your email in-box (typically arrives the first week of each month). This handy guide provides a summary of all of the new and most popular content on various streaming platforms. **StreamNow Insider** guide will also alert you to programs that may be going off your favorite platforms, giving you one more chance to catch them before they leave.

If you haven't taken the plunge into streaming yet but are considering it (maybe Santa will leave a Roku under the tree?), we also offer the **StreamNow** website as a resource to help you "cut the cord" from cable. The **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 the **StreamNow** website, 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.

Why cut the cord? According to a recent Forbes Home poll, nearly 99% of US households subscribe to at least one streaming service. Here are just 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 allows you to 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.



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 800-927-6068 or fiber@mvec.com to find the right plan.





CALLING AREA ELECTRICIANS! 2023 NEC CODE UPDATE

January 24th, 2025

Registration deadline is January 6th
space limited **Sign Up Today!**

Attendees can earn CEUs for Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota.
For more information or questions contact
Al Reiter, Energy Advisor, at 800-927-6068 areiter@mvec.coop

Approved For
6 CEU'S
By State Of
Iowa

Watts The Answer?

1. These _____ reinforce that our energy is always working for you as we strive to provide safe and reliable power to our members.
2. The monthly amount is calculated each year based on your _____ history.
3. There is also a fairly robust Frequently Asked Questions section where you can get _____ to all your streaming questions.

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 _____

October winners:

Bruce Knipper, Hopkinton
Joe Manternach, Cascade

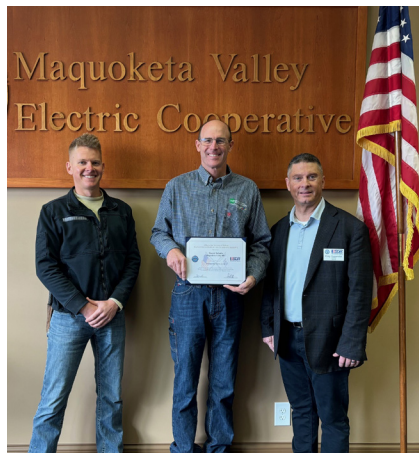
MVEC Food Drive

Thank you to all who supported MVEC's food drive during National Cooperative Month. MVEC held the food drive in partnership with Fareway Stores across our service territory during the month of October. Thanks to our generous members and employees, a total of 465 lbs. of food and hygiene items were collected! MVEC distributed these goods to food pantries in Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson and Jones Counties. In the Cooperative spirit, we were pleased to play a small part in helping our neighbors in need.



Patriotic Employer Award

MVEC Operations Director, Dan Schulte, was recognized by Lineman Matthew Althoff, for being a Patriotic Employer and supportive of Matt's participation in the Guard. Dan was presented the award at MVEC's November employee meeting by Matt and Kraig Hunnemuller, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Matt nominated Dan because of his continued support of Matt's duties in the guard and for accommodating the schedule changes that participation requires. Thank you, Matt, for your service to our country and for recognizing Dan with this award.



Don't forget to send in your
2024 REBATES



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

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Thank You

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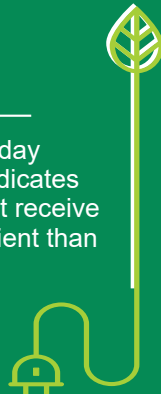
Members are at the heart of everything we do, and we're grateful for the opportunity to power your holiday season.

MVEC will be closed December 24th, 25th and January 1st

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products.

This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.



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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