

WATTS *Current*

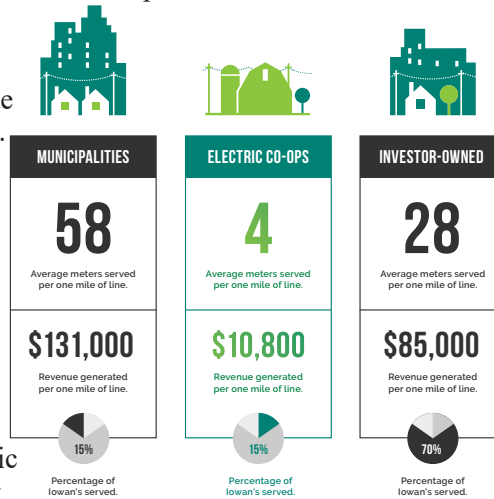
March 2025

The Power of Iowa's Electric Cooperatives: Doing More with Less

By Erin Campbell, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

Iowa's electric cooperatives serve primarily rural areas with sparse populations, meaning we literally cover more ground than other types of utilities. While investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs) in Iowa serve 28 meters and generate \$85,000 of revenue per mile of line on average, and Iowa municipalities average 58 meters per mile and generate \$131,000 of revenue per mile of line, on average, electric co-ops serve a mere 4 meters and generate \$10,800 of revenue per mile of line.

The realities of these numbers mean that Iowa's electric co-ops must maintain more infrastructure with significantly less revenue per mile compared to other electric utilities. To accomplish this task, co-ops structure rates and fees to recover costs and partner with other cooperatives and organizations to create efficiencies of scale for supplies, insurance, financing, technology solutions and more. For example, many of Iowa's electric cooperatives provide employee benefits through the Hawkeye Insurance Association and a health care plan managed by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives as well as leverage marketing programs from Touchstone Energy Cooperative.



CEO Insight: MVEC Doing More for Members Since 1935

By Jeremy Richert, CEO

Along the lines of doing more with less, the Cooperative business model allows MVEC to meet our members' needs despite not having the revenue or revenue potential that other utilities have. MVEC was founded in 1935 by several neighbors who banded together to bring electricity to rural eastern Iowa when IOUs would not make that investment due to lack of population density. Ninety years later, the cooperative business model has stood the test of time as MVEC continues to invest in our members to serve you with reliable, affordable and safe electricity and more recently, fast and reliable fiber internet connections.

Reliability

Our consistent 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.

Affordability

At MVEC, we work to balance our investment in grid reliability and resilience while maintaining rates competitive with IOUs, municipalities and other Iowa electric co-ops. MVEC's rates are 14% to 20% lower than other utilities in the area.

Serving Members' Needs Beyond Electricity

In 2016, MVEC management and Directors made the decision to invest in smart grid technology to improve communication with our electric grid which gave us the ability to provide a fiber-to-the-home connection for members and residents in our rural service areas. As a member-owned cooperative, we're committed to improving our members' quality of life for years to come.

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Spring Reminders from MVEC

Spring is a busy time for our electric and fiber internet crews at MVEC. Please review these reminders to protect co-op property, keep our crews safe and allow our representatives to serve you best.

- **Don't Grade around MVEC Poles:** Don't grade or remove dirt from around MVEC poles. MVEC poles are designed per Rural Utilities Service (RUS) specs to be set at 10% the height of the pole, plus an additional 2 feet. Removing dirt could be dangerous and costly to you.
- **Call Before You Dig:** Before you take on outside projects this spring that will require digging or planting, make sure you call 811 or Iowa One Call—it's easy and it's free (800-292-8989). It's the safe thing to do and it's the law.
- **Burning Ditches Can End up Burning a Hole in Your Wallet:** It's that time of year when many of you may be burning off the weeds, grass, etc. in your ditches. Please remember that burning close to Cooperative property can not only cause costly damage and potential electric or internet service problems, but it can be dangerous. Already this spring, multiple ditch burns have resulted in damage to MVEC equipment. Members involved in such fires will be invoiced for damages they cause to Co-op property and some have seen costs as high as \$10,000.
- **Designate Authorized Users:** Consider authorizing your spouse or adult child to access your account (this makes things much easier in times of emergency or transition).



STAY IN THE KNOW



Provide Updated Contact Information to MVEC: If you have changed your phone number, email address or will be moving, don't forget to notify MVEC—both on the electric and the fiber internet sides of the business, *if applicable*. Having your updated contact information ensures that MVEC can notify you with ✓important co-op updates, ✓provide timely service and ✓future patronage earned.

MVEC's Annual Meeting

MVEC's Annual Meeting will be held at the Peosta Community Centre (7896 Burds Rd. Peosta) on Thursday, August 14th. Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to learn more about the issues affecting your local communities. 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 a cooperative; 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 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 14, 2025.

SAVE THE DATE





Our Energy Working For You: Heat Pump Water Heaters

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

This month's edition of Our Energy Working for You focuses on Heat Pump Water Heaters (HPWH). While the technology of heat pumps is not new, using them as a stand-alone source for the domestic hot water in a home is a newer but rising technology.

The most common electric water heater in a home is a single tank with a couple of resistance heating elements and thermostats. This type of water heater works to maintain the water at a set temperature and when enough hot water is used, the thermostat turns on an element to heat the incoming cold water. With a Heat Pump Water Heater, similar to other types of heat pumps, it is moving heat from one space to another. In this case it is moving heat out of the air and into a coil inside the water heater tank. This coil transfers heat to the surrounding water in the tank.

The main advantage of Heat Pump Water Heaters is increased efficiency. Comparing Energy Guides

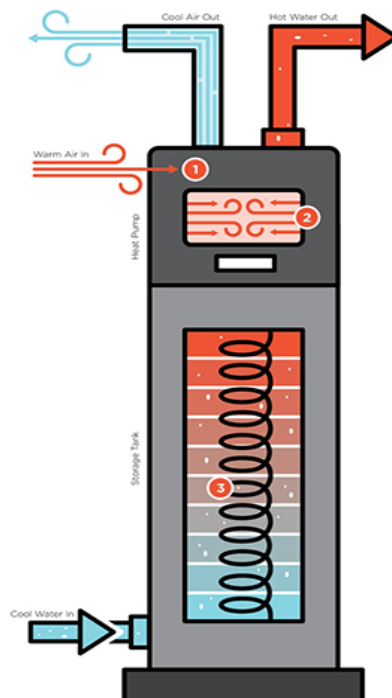


for types of water heaters, a 40-gallon electric resistance storage unit has an average annual energy cost of \$400-\$450 per year, an LP gas unit of \$430 per year, and a natural gas unit of \$231 per year. Conversely, a Heat Pump Water Heater has an annual energy cost of \$115 per year.

Most of the new Heat Pump Water Heaters have the same footprint as other water heaters so change out is relatively straightforward. A common option on this type of water heater is to also include resistance heat elements if a high demand occurs. They may also have connectivity accessible by a smart phone to allow for monitoring usage and setting up time-of-day settings based on utility rates. In practice, if hot water needs are being met, consider programming limited operation during On-Peak hours between 4:00 P- 9:00 PM to reduce your energy bill.

The initial cost of the Heat Pump Water Heater is higher than a standard water heater. Currently, the MVEC rebate is \$650.00 for this type of unit that meets the rebate requirements. Full rebate information can be found at www.mvec.coop/rebates. The rebates, coupled with potential federal tax credits of up to 30%, encourage investing in this type of efficient water heating system. More information can be found at www.energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/heat-pump-water-heaters and consult with your tax advisor on how this may apply to your situation.

An older water heater doesn't always give warning signs that it is failing, so if this is a water heating system you are considering for the near future, start planning now. Talk to your local plumbing contractor to get advice on options available to you for switching out to this type of water heating technology to minimize downtime.



HOW DO HEAT PUMPS WORK?

By transferring heat rather than creating it, heat pumps deliver hot water **3-4 times more efficiently** than conventional water heaters.

- 1 Heat pump pulls warmth from the air.
- 2 Warm air is compressed, increasing its temperature.
- 3 Condenser coils transfer heat to the water.



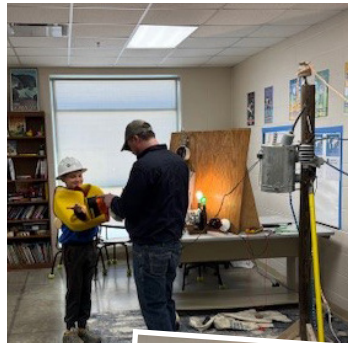
Winter Moratorium Ends April 1

Iowa’s annual winter home heating moratorium ends April 1, 2025. The Iowa Utilities Commission (IUC) reminds energy assistance customers currently protected from service disconnection through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), to contact their local utility company immediately to discuss payment options and avoid disconnection. LIHEAP is a federally funded program administered by the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Community Action Agencies, and is designed to assist qualified homeowners and renters pay a portion of their primary home heating costs through a one-time payment made directly to the utility or heating fuel vendor. Under Iowa’s winter moratorium law, customers who qualify for LIHEAP or the federal Weatherization Assistance Program are protected from the shutoff of natural gas or electric service annually from November 1 to April 1. The end of winter moratorium period can be stressful. Please remember:

- Consumers can apply for LIHEAP through April 30, 2025.
- Visit mvec.coop/iowa-liheap-guidelines for local community action agencies.
- www.211iowa.org a resource for assistance with utility payments

Tools of the Trade

Last month, MVEC’s Engineering Technician Foreman, Eli Hunerdosse, participated in the 5th grade Tools of the Trade event at Anamosa Middle School put on by Kirkwood’s Workplace Learning Connection. Eli provided real-world insights on career opportunities at an electric and fiber cooperative and the educational path that led him to MVEC. The purpose of the event is to provide students with a better understanding of the relationship between school and work. The students were able to try on lineman gear, learn about safety around power lines and even did some math on the amount of energy their favorite devices use! “I enjoyed the opportunity to share my career path with the students,” said Hunerdosse. “Most probably have not thought about working at an electric cooperative so hopefully, this job is now on their radar. And, I think anytime you can provide students with real-world applications of what they’re learning in the classroom, it’s valuable”.



Ready to Re-Connect Your Meter?

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

Watt’s Up at MVEC: Communications Department

By Christie Remley, Manager of Communications & Public Relations

I was fortunate to take over MVEC’s Communications Department when former Director Patty Manuel retired in 2021. With a degree in journalism and mass communications coupled with more than a decade of entrepreneurial/economic development experience, this role was the perfect fit. I have truly enjoyed immersing myself in the cooperative way and becoming part of the co-op family. In this month’s Watts Up, I am excited to share a behind-the-scenes peek of the Communications Department.

Some may wonder why the co-op has a communications department. Our department interfaces with and impacts many other departments at the co-op. From billing and operations to IT and fiber, it is important to inform both our employees and our members of co-op updates and to educate on safety and energy efficiency. MVEC is different than some co-ops in that we offer fiber internet, requiring us to market that service to members and communities adjacent to our electric lines that are now eligible to receive our fiber connection. The Communications Department is comprised of Elyse Fletcher, Marketing Specialist and myself. I also oversee the Energy Advisor (Al Reiter) and receptionist (Melissa Pepmeyer) positions which are responsible for interacting with and supporting co-op members.

In our department we are driven by deadlines for various publications, events and also try to be proactive with communicating information on co-op programs and safety messages. Our department is responsible for internal and external MVEC communications including the monthly printed member newsletter (Watts Current); our monthly MVlink member e-newsletter; the monthly streaming e-guide; our monthly internal newsletter (Employee Chatter), as well as the monthly Cybersecurity Bulletin for employees.



Additionally, the Communications Department maintains the MVEC website and social media channels. *Are you following us on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram?* These are great places to get the latest on all that is going on at MVEC.

I mentioned our MVlink fiber above, this is one of the areas of my job that I enjoy most—promoting this amazing service to our members and to residents in communities we can now serve with a fiber connection. To market MVlink, we use many different methods to reach potential members: digital marketing, direct mailers, print advertising, radio ads, billboards and events—all of which the Communications Department manages.

Probably the most important responsibility of our department is member relations. Al Reiter our Energy Advisor and Melissa Pepmeyer, Receptionist are solely focused on assisting members with any questions or concerns they might have. As a member of the cooperative, you are also an owner and we take our service to you very seriously.



Dubuque Home Show



Student Tour at MVEC



KDST Dyersville

Another aspect of communications at the cooperative is public relations which means that I attend community meetings as my schedule allows and work with area media to convey important co-op messages. Sometimes you might even hear me on the radio providing safety tips and sharing about events the co-op is hosting.

In addition to our monthly deadlines, the Communications Department is also responsible for organizing and executing various co-op events throughout the year such as our Member Meetup and Annual Meeting as well as MVlink Open Houses. We enjoy these events because they are opportunities to talk with our members face to face.

The Communications Department is responsible for representing the co-op at school safety and career

events as well as at many community events throughout the year. Sometimes, Louie the Lightning Bug makes an appearance!



Member Meet-Up



Middle School Career Day

Camp Courageous

I am also responsible for MVEC's Economic Development efforts to help keep our service area vibrant for years to come. To support this effort, I work with area economic development partners to encourage business expansion and attraction. MVEC manages a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that provides funding to businesses in our service area.

MVEC has placed an importance on communications at our co-op since the beginning in 1935, with the first member newsletter published in 1940. *How has communications evolved at the co-op in that time?* It has simultaneously gotten easier and more difficult. Easier in that technology helps us do more (and quickly!) and we have more ways to reach our members. More difficult in that people are overwhelmed with information these days, making it challenging to break through the clutter and ensure that our messages are heard. Communications at MVEC is a daily endeavor and we thoroughly enjoy interacting with our members and finding creative ways to inform and engage you. We hope that you enjoy reading Watts Current and following us on social media. Don't hesitate to reach out with article ideas or questions (cremley@mvec.com or 800-927-6068).

February MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Reviewed the 2024 Safety Report.
- Approved 2025 construction costs for new services, service rebuilds, pole moves, and metering equipment.
- Reviewed the results of recently completed American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ACSI) for both electric and broadband service.
- Discussed plans for the 2025 Annual Meeting and Member Meet Up events.
- Discussed 2025 Rebate and Energy Efficiency programs.

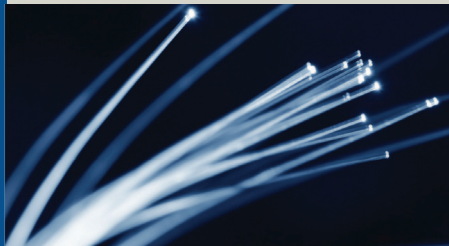


TECH LINK

Fun Facts About Fiber Internet Technology

MVlink is your go-to source for all things related to fiber internet. We often discuss the benefits of high-speed fiber internet, but it's equally important to understand the technology that makes it all possible. We're going to uncover some fun facts about fiber technology that might just surprise you.

Speed of Light: Fiber optic cables transmit data at the speed of light, which is approximately **186,282** miles per second.



Thin as a Strand of Hair: Fiber optic cables are incredibly thin, with some being as thin as a human hair. Don't be fooled by their size; they can handle vast amounts of data.

Immune to Interference: Unlike copper wires, fiber optics are immune to electromagnetic interference, making them ideal for delivering uninterrupted internet service.

Carries Telephone Calls: Fiber optics are not just for internet; they also carry telephone calls using a technology known as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Made of Glass: Most fiber optic cables are made of ultra-pure glass, which allows light to pass through with minimal loss.

Data in Light Form: Fiber optics transmit data in the form of light signals, and the light reflects internally as it travels down the cable.

Lower Latency: Fiber optic technology offers lower latency, making it ideal for online gaming and real-time video conferencing.

Secure Communication: Fiber optics are highly secure, as it's difficult to tap into the data being transmitted due to the nature of light transmission.

High Bandwidth: Fiber optic cables have an incredibly high bandwidth capacity, which allows for the simultaneous transmission of vast amounts of data.

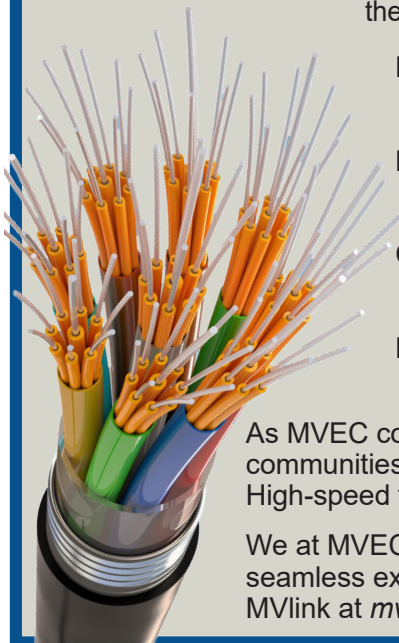
Energy Efficiency: Fiber optic technology is energy-efficient as it requires less power for signal transmission.

Green Technology: Fiber optics is considered an eco-friendly option as it reduces the need for cable replacements and has lower energy consumption.

Future Innovations: The future of fiber optic technology is promising, with ongoing research to further increase speed, efficiency, and applications.

As MVEC continues to expand and bring the benefits of MVlink's fiber technology to our communities, we hope these fun facts have shed some light on the benefits of fiber optics. High-speed fiber internet is woven into our daily lives in more ways than we might realize.

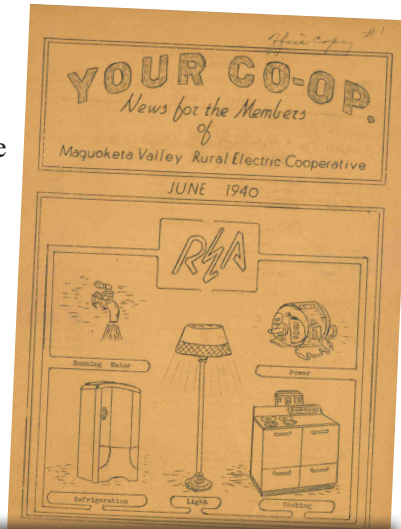
We at MVEC and MVlink hope you continue to stay connected, stay informed, and enjoy the seamless experience of MVlink's high-speed fiber internet technology. Learn more about MVlink at mvec.coop/mvlink-internet.





90th Anniversary Flashback: The 1940s at MVEC

MVEC is celebrating our 90th anniversary this year and each month, we are highlighting a different decade at the co-op. This month, we look back to the 1940s. MVEC debuted the first member newsletter in June of 1940. The original member newsletter (pictured here) was not called Watts Current but Your Co-op News for Members. The newsletter was hand-drawn with the internal pages typed on a typewriter. Then, to “mass” produce the publication, it was mimeographed (technology that pre-dated the photocopier/laser printer). Today, we design Watts Current using a creative software program, email the content to Julin Printing and then Mailing Services processes it and sends it out to nearly 14,000 members (some members opt to have their newsletter emailed). Let’s just say that the Communications department is grateful to have the modern tools we do to produce this monthly publication in a timely fashion.

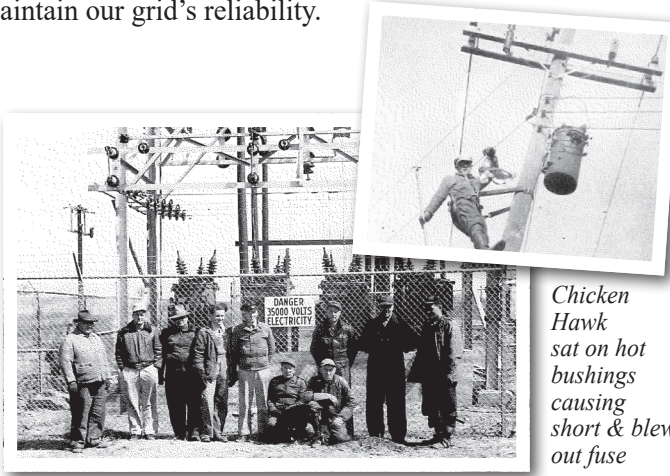


*** **
Surprise your Wife -give her that second honeymoon -slip a new electric range in her kitchen for oool summer cooking.

That inaugural newsletter addressed topics like new members, how (and when) to report an outage, acquisition of a new pole-setting truck and new-fangled electric appliances members were purchasing to take advantage of all that new electric power. One of the other topics covered in the first member newsletter was tree trimming. Ninety years later and while so much has changed, so much has also stayed the same! Trees were wreaking havoc on our lines in the 1940s and in 2025, we are still investing heavily in vegetation management to maintain our grid’s reliability.

Other highlights from the 1940s include:

- Energizing the Cascade substation in 1948
- Completing construction of 2,749 miles of line by March 1949, with 6,800 members connected
- By the end of the decade, 85% of the farms in MVEC territory had power



Energizing Cascade Substation 4/1/1948

Chicken Hawk sat on hot bushings causing short & blew out fuse

Watts The Answer?

1. Removing _____ could be dangerous and costly to you.
2. Some may wonder why the co-op has a _____ department.
3. We're going to uncover some fun facts about fiber technology that might just _____ you.

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 _____

January winners:
Patrick Ludwig, Farley
Pat Naderman, St. Donatas

FREE Event
Join Us!

OPEN HOUSE

Come learn about MVEC's High-Speed Fiber Internet
Wednesday April 2nd 5pm-6:30 pm
The Barn - in Sherrill
5090 Sherrill Rd
Drawing for a \$50 Visa Gift Card

MVlink
FIBER INTERNET



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

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

Our Office will
Be Closed
Friday, April 18th
In Observance Of Good Friday

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

March is an ideal time to service your home cooling system, ensuring it runs efficiently when the heat of summer arrives. Routine maintenance, like cleaning or replacing filters, checking refrigerant levels and inspecting parts, can improve your system's energy efficiency and lower your energy bills. By addressing potential issues early, you can avoid costly emergency repairs and extend the lifespan of your unit. Scheduling service in the spring helps you beat the peak-season rush, giving you faster access to qualified technicians. A well-maintained cooling system can save energy and keep your home comfortable all summer long.



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

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www.mvec.coop

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

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Printed by Julin Printing Company
Monticello, IA

