

WATTS *Current*

April
2025

MVEC Earns Higher than Industry Average Satisfaction Scores for Electric and Fiber Internet Services

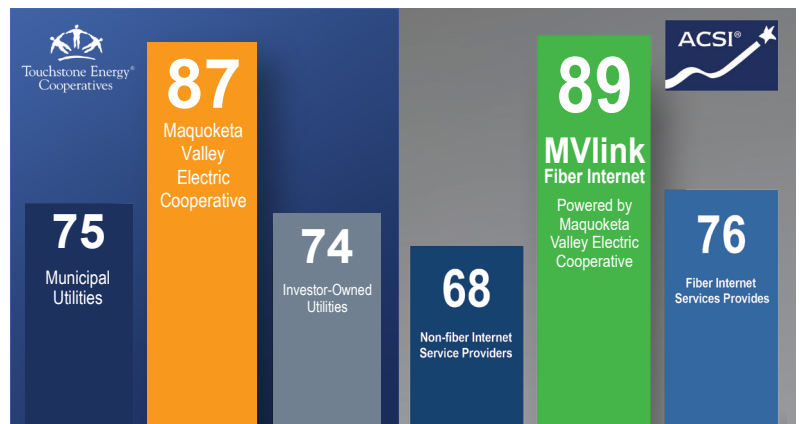
MVEC recently completed annual satisfaction research with members of the co-op's electric and fiber internet services. Now in its 90th year, member satisfaction with MVEC remains high.

MVEC completed its annual member-wide customer satisfaction survey in early January, where over 2,000 electric members were asked to participate. The member responses were sent to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®), a company that measures customer satisfaction across multiple industries throughout the United States. For 2024, MVEC received an ACSI score of "87", on a 100-point scale.¹ MVEC's score places MVEC 13 points higher than the average investor-owned utility score of 74, as well as 12 points higher than the municipal utilities score of 75, per the 2024 ACSI Energy Utility Study.

Additionally, MVEC conducted a member-wide customer satisfaction survey for MVlink Fiber Internet, where 2,000 fiber internet members were asked to participate. These member responses were also sent to ACSI. For 2024, MVlink received an ACSI score of "89" out of a maximum score of "100". MVEC's score places MVlink 13 points higher than the average Fiber ISP score of 76, as well as 21 points higher than the average ISP score of 68, per the industry ratings in the 2024 ACSI Internet Service Provider Report.

For more information, please visit theacsi.org.

"As a member-owned cooperative, we take satisfaction with our service very seriously," said Jeremy Richert, MVEC CEO. "For years, we have gathered member feedback on the electric service we provide achieving ACSI scores well above average for the utility industry. Now that we also provide MVlink fiber internet service to members and some surrounding communities, we gathered the same benchmark feedback on our internet product. The high scores MVEC received on both electric and fiber services are indicative of the level of service our employees provide to ensure reliable power and internet backed by responsive, local member support."



¹Surveys were administered by MVEC from December 6, 2024 to January 16, 2025. Surveys were modeled by ACSI LLC using the proprietary ACSI methodology. ACSI LLC did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. 'ACSI' is a registered trademark solely owned by American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC

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MVLink MEMBER SATISFACTION IS STRONGER THAN EVER! FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF



EARNED AN ACSI® 21 POINTS HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE INTERNET PROVIDER.

"MVlink tech support goes above and beyond, quick response and very patient with non tech customers. I definitely recommend MVlink."

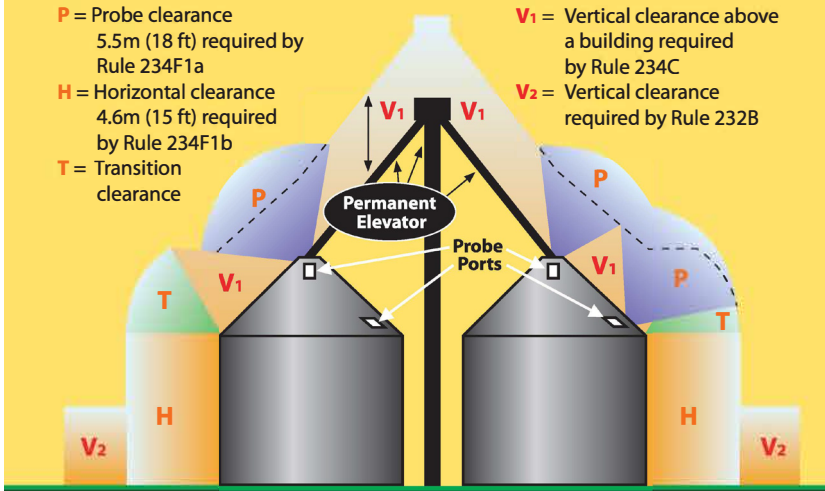
"We love our MVlink service all around, we've never had an issue. Thank you for great service and products!"

SIGN-UP TODAY! mvec.coop/mvlink-internet



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

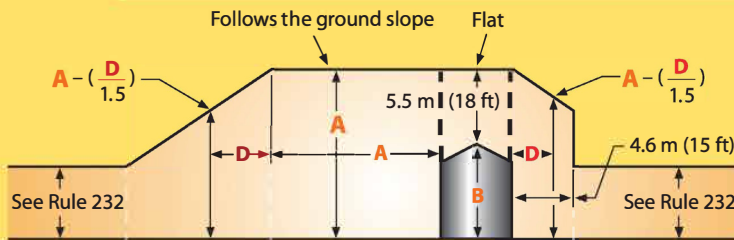
- P** = Probe clearance
5.5m (18 ft) required by Rule 234F1a
- H** = Horizontal clearance
4.6m (15 ft) required by Rule 234F1b
- T** = Transition clearance
- V₁** = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C
- V₂** = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



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

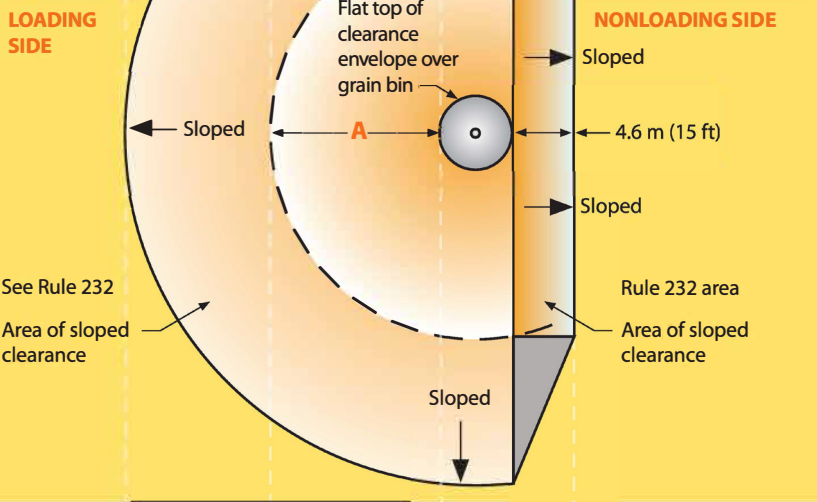
ELEVATION



- B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
- A** = B + 5.5m (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



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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 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.

Bylaws Available

Copies of the Bylaws of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative are available on our website and at the Cooperative's office.

If you would like a copy of the Bylaws, please pick one up, or contact us to have one mailed to you.



Safety Matters: Lineworker Safety *By Jenna Curtis, Safety Director*

Co-ops across the US celebrate Lineworker Appreciation during the month of April, honoring men and women who work around the clock to keep the power on. The career of a power lineworker is one of the top 10 most dangerous careers due to working around electricity and at significant heights. What better way to show our appreciation to our MVEC lineworkers this month and all year round than by ensuring they are safe doing their jobs? Below are some of the safety measures lineworkers take to stay safe on the job as well as some tips on how you can help keep our crews safe.

Safety Gear

When working around electricity, lineworkers can't wear just anything, they have specific materials of clothing and types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that they must wear.



Safety Training

Safety is at the top of MVEC's priority list and the cooperative invests in training and tools to ensure our employees use safe work practices in the field, on the road and in the office.

MVEC received accreditation from the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), a program that reviews our safety efforts on an annual

basis and every three years (including this year) with a more detailed and in-depth review. We also hold monthly safety meetings and have created a hands-on training field for our apprentices to practice hot (energized) work without the hazards. We also have a safety committee that meets monthly to identify priorities and implement safety improvement plans.

How Can You Help?

Safety isn't just up to the co-op and our employees, we also depend on our members and the public to keep our crews safe. Please keep these tips in mind this month and all year long:

- **Move over and slow down:** Always watch for our crews when they are working on or near roadways
- **Contact the cooperative for any on-site generation installations (solar/wind):** Submit an application to the co-op when you are in the planning stage with your solar installer.
- **Use licensed electricians:** Always use licensed electricians for your electrical projects.
- **Always assume downed power lines are energized:** Steer clear and call the electric utility to report downed lines and hazards.

Upcoming Director Elections

Did you know that as a member of MVEC you have the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors? Since 1935 when the co-op was founded, MVEC has been owned by its members and governed by a Board of Directors who are members themselves. The Board of Directors is responsible for representing the members and overseeing the co-op. Nine directors serve on the board, each for a three-year term. Each director is nominated by a committee and elected by the Co-op's members at the annual meeting (Thursday, August 14, 2025, at the Peosta Community Centre).

MVEC's service territory is divided into four regions (visit our website for a map). Two directors represent each region and one director serves At-Large. The following region seats are up for election: Region 2; Region 3 and Region 4. To serve as a Director, an individual must be a member of the co-op and reside within the region they are elected to represent.

Directors must be willing to devote time and effort to attend and actively participate meetings, training classes and/or meetings sponsored by Cooperative-affiliated organizations. Look for more details on this year's director election in the May issue of Watts Current. If you are interested in learning more about serving on the Board of Directors, please contact MVEC's office at 800-927-6068.



Our Energy Working For You: Thinking about solar?

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

Occasionally, members of MVEC contact us for information about installing solar photovoltaic systems at their home. This type of system is generically referred to as distributed generation and can include wind turbines, battery storage and even hydro systems. If you are considering distributed generation for your home, there are some steps to take and resources to consult to ensure a potential installation meets your goals and expectations.

The initial contact may start out as a call or visit from a solar installation company. There can be a lot of information to consider, and terms like microinverters, monocrystalline photocells, interconnection agreements, and annual production ratios can add to the confusion. To ensure you get the results you expect, it is important to research and ask questions. Below are some sources to help with your research process.

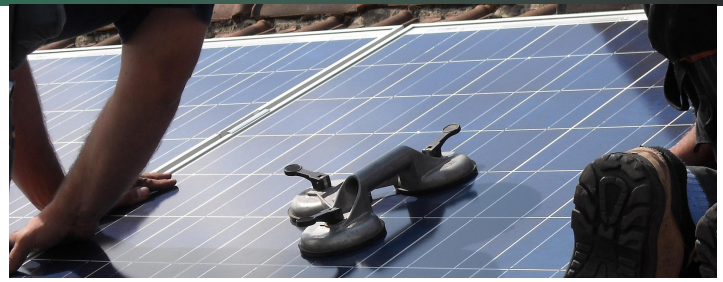
- MVEC is a resource to cooperative members and can answer questions. Many answers to those questions and information are available on our website at www.mvec.coop/site-generation



- Iowa Utility Commission has consumer information about on-site generation. [consumer_guide_for_distributed_generation_3.2023.pdf](#)
- Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association lists solar vendors that have committed to its Code of Ethics for consumer protections. www.iowaseta.org/about
- Your neighbor on MVEC lines who has installed a system can also be a great resource.

MVEC reached out to a couple of local solar providers with whom we frequently work, for on-site generation projects with our members.

Tod Hollenback, Vice President Design and Engineering with Eagle Point Solar based out of Dubuque, offers some tips to ensure that members get accurate information and a system that performs as planned.



Tod notes, “Using a local solar provider helps to guarantee the project is completed within the specifications of local building code, electrical code and utility policy. Additionally, you will have greater access to meet with various professionals working on your project such as sales, operations, engineering and construction to assess a project on-site or at their local office.” He also advises to be cautious of “Bad Actors”- Beware of online social media ads and telemarketing firms that promise ‘no money down’ cost options, ‘free solar’ or use phrases such as ‘the utility will pay you to go solar’ which may hide excessive fees, finance charges or are downright misleading.”

Ed Wulfekuhle, Owner of Wulfekuhle Electric, is another local provider of on-site generation. Ed notes that, “considering a local provider means working with someone that will be on-site through the whole process and making sure the entire project runs well, from sizing and siting to the final testing and activation.” Ed encourages our members to consider the service after the sale and who that service person is going to be. Another consideration after the sale is the warranty and what it covers.

Once a solar provider has contacted you, they may request usage history and ask for a release to do so. If a provider is sizing and designing a system solely off of an electrical bill, they are not getting detailed data that MVEC will provide on request. This information includes daily usage charts, time-of-day meter reading and 12-month interval data and allows the solar provider to have a good understanding of detailed usage patterns to properly size a system for your home or business.

If you are considering a distributed generation installation at your home, take the time to do the research and ask questions to ensure your vendor and installation meet your expectations.

Heat Plus Rate Reminder

The Heat Plus rate ends with energy used through May 31, 2025. It is important that you do not turn off power to these meters because the Cooperative still needs to be able to read them each month. The Heat Plus rate will begin again October 1, 2025.



Gehlen Barn and Inn: Giving New Life to Iowa's Oldest Standing Barn

By Christie Remley, Manager of Communications and Public Relations

Back in the 1980s, there was a certain bar in Boston where everybody knew your name. Today, the same can probably be said for Gehlen Barn and Inn in St. Donatus. When Don and Kari Vize were looking for a location to start a brewery, they came across the historic property located on Main Street, now designated as Iowa's oldest standing barn. The Vizes purchased the property in July of 2019 and set about restoring the barn, converting it into a taproom and small brewery, called Beer in the Barn.



Don and Kari wanted to establish a *"little hometown tap room where people could come in and visit. A low-key, local place,"* said Kari Vize, Co-Owner. The Vizes feel they have accomplished that and more with Beer in the Barn Brewery and taproom. *"There were people who were just acquaintances who are now friends. There are no TVs in the taproom. If you come, you will have to talk to whoever is there."* said Kari. *"The employees and other patrons will talk to you and want to learn your story,"* said Kari.

The establishment opened in September of 2020 in the midst of the pandemic and has been growing its following ever since. The barn can hold 100 people throughout all the unique spaces, and can host hundreds outside for live music and events in the summer months.



In addition to Don and Kari, Beer in the Barn employs nine part-time workers. Don describes this as the employees' "fun job" and says that the bartenders are all very engaging, adding to the personal experience at taproom. *"It's always rewarding to hear comments about the bar. Some have said it's the coolest brewery they've*

visited. But it's really about the personal experience and connections people make," said Don Vize, Co-Owner. *"Our employees and our customers go out of their way to make people feel welcome."*



Before establishing the brewery, Don, a hobbyist brewer, owned Westside Automotive in Dubuque and Kari was a mental health therapist. However, as the taproom's popularity grew, Kari has taken over the bulk of the brewing at Beer in the Barn. Due to the barn's small size, Beer in the Barn has a one-barrel brewing system, and it takes Don and Kari eight hours to brew a batch of beer from start to finish.

Beer in the Barn is seasonal and is closed from January-March. However, the Inn is open year-round and Kari and Don brew through the winter to have beer ready to reopen each spring. During the season, they offer 18 beers on tap 12 of those are Beer in the Barn and 6 other Iowa craft beers.

Keeping true to their word about creating a close-knit environment, faithful customers can become members at Beer in the Barn taproom, complete with their own custom beer mug kept on a shelf at the establishment. Membership costs \$200/year and is a way for patrons to stay connected during the winter months with monthly pickups of two 32 ounce cans of beer for free. Members receive a handmade stoneware mug and \$1 off beer in the taproom, discounts on apparel and entrance to the two member parties (Friendsgiving and a summer party) held each year.



With the Inn and taproom on the same property, the Gehlen Barn is a convenient and intimate venue to host small weddings, bridal and baby showers as well as girls' weekends or family reunions. The property also has live music at least once a week throughout the year, outside in the new pavilion during seasonal months, as well as monthly trivia nights. Starting this year the Vizes will also host karaoke once a month.



TECH LINK

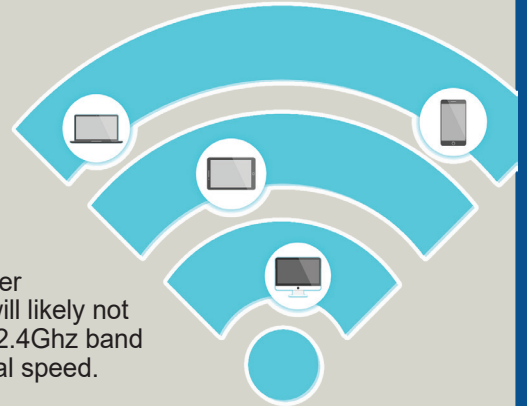
Factors that May Impact Your Internet Connection

While MVlink fiber internet provides a fast, reliable internet connection, sometimes there are factors that can impact the speed and quality of your connection. Consider these factors and if you need further assistance, contact our friendly IT experts for troubleshooting help.

Why are my Internet speed tests slower when I'm on Wi-Fi?

Your speeds over Wi-Fi are impacted by many things:

- What is the type and age of router you are using? An older router may not support the speed to which you subscribe.
- Do you have the latest firmware (software) updated on your router? This is important for both performance and security.
- What is the maximum speed the device you're using will support?
- Are you connected to the 2.4Ghz or 5Ghz band with your router? With higher speeds such as those offered by MVlink, conducting a test on the 2.4Ghz will likely not allow you to reach the speed you are paying for. The device as well as the 2.4Ghz band tend to max out around 144Mbps. It is best to use the 5Ghz band for optimal speed.
- Is there a chance you have a virus or malware on your device?
- Do you have other apps or programs running on your device when you're running the speed test?
- How far are you from the wireless signal (and what obstructions are between the router and your devices)?



VPN Connections Can Affect Download Speed

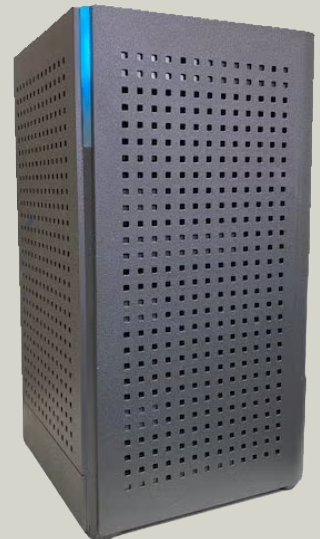
- With more people working from home and using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), it is important to note that a VPN connection can cause a bottle neck for download speeds. If you are conducting a speed test, you will want to turn off your VPN.
- Speaking of speed tests, we recommend using **speedtest.net**. MVEC has a speed test server in their network, so it provides the best test of our network speeds. You will want to make sure you are testing against the "Maquoketa Valley REC" server. If that server does not come up automatically, this is likely an indication that you might have a VPN turned on, or your traffic is being routed in some other way that could be causing a bottleneck.

What are the benefits to renting MVlink's GigaSpire router?

- MVlink's GigaSpire is professionally installed by one of MVlink's field technicians to ensure the optimal placement to maximize coverage in your home.
- The best thing about our GigaSpire router is that we take care of it. You don't have to try and select the right kind of router, or worry about updating firmware, we make sure it supports the latest devices, the fastest speeds and helps to keep your Wi-Fi secure.

What are the challenges with purchasing my own Wi-Fi router/extender?

- You must configure and install the router or extender yourself.
- The MVlink support team loses the ability to support and troubleshoot any devices that are connected to a third-party router or extender.
- With third-party extenders, devices may connect, but can't get to the internet ('Connected, no internet'). Devices may experience interruption in service when switching from MVlink router to a third-party extender as member moves throughout the house.
 - o Videos may pause/buffer on mobile devices
 - o Wi-Fi calls/video conference calls may drop
 - o Downloads might fail or be interrupted

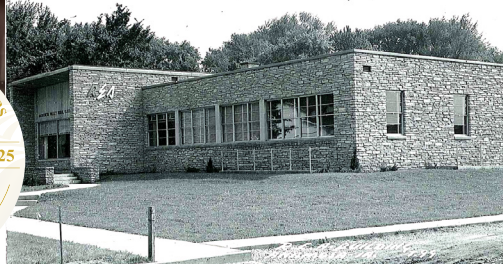


We strive to provide superior service with MVlink fiber internet. Please reach out to our technical support (800-927-6068) with any questions.



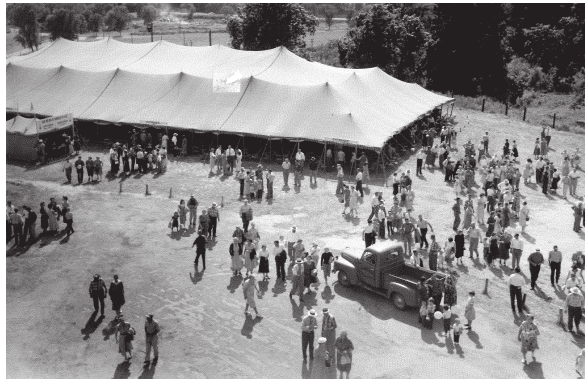
MVEC in the 50s

As we continue to commemorate our 90th anniversary, this month we look back to the 1950s. Up to this point, MVEC's office had been housed in a portion of the former Farm Bureau building at the corner of Main and North Huber Streets in Anamosa. In January 1950, the co-op broke ground on the current stone headquarters building located at 109 N. Huber Street. The co-op and employees moved into the new building in September 1950.



A few other notable events from the 50s:

- New Vienna substation was energized in March and Graf substation in May 1951.
- Willie the Wirehand character made his debut in the September 1951 issue of Your Co-op member newsletter.
- In 1952, MVEC hired its first Home Economist, Helen Senecaut, who used MVEC's kitchen (still functioning in MVEC's basement) to show members how to use their new electric appliances. Senecaut contributed a monthly newsletter column, called Elec-Trix, until 1955.
- During this decade, Annual Meetings shifted from February to a date between August and September. With rural electricity still being new, Annual Meetings attracted large crowds, in fact, in 1956 1,800 members attended that meeting.
- The co-op's original manager, Edgar Beach, submitted his resignation in 1959, suggesting to the Board, the co-op would be better served by someone younger.



Watts The Answer?

1. Now in its 90th year, member _____ with MVEC remains high.

2. Co-ops across the US celebrate Lineworker _____

_____ during the month of April, honoring men and women who work around the clock to keep the power on.

3. The _____ thing about our GigaSpire router is that we take care of it.

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 _____

February winners:

Elizabeth/Peter Hasler, Monticello
 Paul Heinrich, Maquoket

TOP 10 reasons we appreciate lineworkers

1. They are expertly trained to work on power lines and equipment.
2. They are dedicated to safely and efficiently maintaining power.
3. They have a heart for service, always looking out for their communities.
4. They conquer heights without hesitation.
5. They prioritize safety every second of every day.
6. They answer the call – day or night – to restore power.
7. They work in extreme weather conditions.
8. They go when and where they are needed, supporting communities nationwide when severe weather strikes.
9. They have each other's backs and work together like family.
10. They power our lives and energize our communities!

Thank you, lineworkers, for all you do to keep the lights on.

Safe Electricity.org



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




SUMMER OFFICE HOURS
MVEC will observe summer hours
May 5th to September 26th
Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

Turn your suds into savings. Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time.



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:
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Printed by Julin Printing Company
Monticello, IA

