Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

WATTS Current

November 2026

Teaching Kids to Save: From Light Switches to Lifelong Habits

By Miranda Boutelle, NRECA

Teaching your children to build good energy habits saves money on your electric bill today and sets them up for a lifetime of smart energy use. Here's how to get your family started on a household energy-saving adventure.

Safety first

When it comes to electricity, start with safety basics. Secure cords so appliances, lamps or other pluggedin items can't be pulled down. Use outlet covers and safety plugs to keep little hands from getting injured. As they get older, teach children not to stick things in outlets. When they are old enough to use outlets, let them know they should never unplug something by pulling the cord. When playing outside, educate them to stay away from downed power lines, keep a safe distance from all electrical equipment and avoid the dangers of electricity near water.

Teaching energy habits

Keeping safety in mind, you can teach age-appropriate energy habits.

Turning off fans and lights when you leave a room is always a good habit to instill. Fully powering down TVs, computers and gaming systems reduces energy waste.

Keeping the refrigerator door open is a common energy waster for kiddos and some adults. Show them they can take a quick look inside and scan their options. If they need time to decide what they want, they can close the refrigerator while making up their minds.

Closing your home's doors is another way to keep heated or airconditioned air inside. I wonder how many kids these days are asked if they were born in a barn or if they would even know what you mean?

Hot water is another area where families can save. In addition to reducing wasted water, using less hot water helps lower your energy bill. Heating water is typically the second-highest energy use in a home behind heating and air conditioning. Reduce energy use by turning off the water while hand-washing dishes, taking short showers and not overfilling the bathtub.

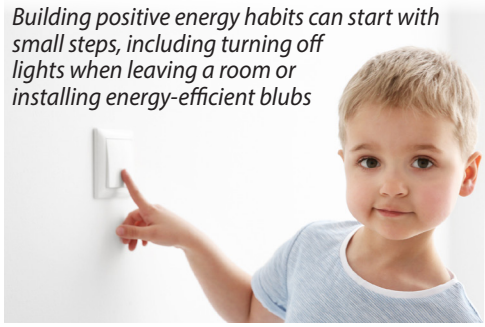
Gamify your bill

Review the electric bill with older children. Be sure to focus on energy use, which is shown in kilowatt-hours on your bill.

It's also a good opportunity to teach budgeting and household finances. If you save money on the electric bill, you may be able to do something fun with that money instead. Consider a trip to mini golf, getting ice cream or choosing a longer-term goal to fund a weekend family trip.

Make it a game. Consider a family reward for using less energy than the previous month or the same month of the previous year, or an individual reward for the person who guesses how many kilowatt-hours you used that month. The winner gets to pick the movie for family night.

Exploring energy efficiency and conservation with your children doesn't have to be a chore. Find fun ways to build lifelong energy habits and save energy around your home.



Building positive energy habits can start with small steps, including turning off lights when leaving a room or installing energy-efficient blubs



Reduce energy waste by teaching children how to fully power down electronics, such as gaming systems and TVs

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Teach children to quickly look inside the refrigerator for options and then close the door while they decide on a snack.

"Elavating" Community Health: Ellah Rolwes Brings 24/7 Fitness to Cascade

By Christie Remley, Manager of Communications & Public Relations



There is a fresh, energizing vibe in downtown Cascade, and it's all thanks to the vision and determination of local entrepreneur Ellah Rolwes.

Driven by a passion for helping others achieve their health and wellness goals, Rolwes—a student studying Exercise Science and Wellness at the University of Dubuque—noticed a missing piece in the local community: Cascade didn't have a dedicated fitness facility. Seeing an opportunity to make a real difference, she took the leap and opened Elavate Fitness at 244 First Street West on September 17. Rolwes reached out to MVEC last summer to apply for MVEC's Revolving Loan Fund to help round out financing for the project.



Right Time, Right Place
Juggling college coursework alongside business ownership is no small feat, but for Rolwes, waiting wasn't an option. She felt the timing was right for Cascade.

"Given my young age, I wasn't sure if people would accept my advice or take it seriously, but that has not been the case," Rolwes shared. "Many have reached out for help with their fitness plans and health journeys."

Rolwes feels particularly fortunate to have the support of area business owners Jake and Jackie McAllister, who own the downtown building Elavate Fitness calls home. With their support and her vision, a bright, modern, and welcoming space has come to life.

Designed for Every Body and Every Schedule
Elavate Fitness is fully equipped to meet members at any stage of their fitness journey. The space features:

- State-of-the-art cardio: Treadmills, stair step machines, stationary bikes and more
- Strength training: Free weights and targeted weight machines
- Flexibility & Group Space: A dedicated area for stretching and upcoming fitness classes
- Recovery: Finishing touches are currently being added to a new infrared sauna, offering members a safe, convenient way to relax muscles and boost recovery



Accessibility was a top priority for Rolwes when designing the gym. Recognizing that community members lead busy lives with diverse schedules, Rolwes installed door access technology to ensure the facility would be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

"I wanted the center to be available to all ages—people are busy and have different schedules," explained Rolwes. "If we are open 24/7, our members can work out when it's convenient for them."

What's Next for Elavate Fitness?
Rolwes is just getting started! Elavate Fitness will soon launch a variety of tailored group classes and services, including:

- **Sunrise Sweats** for early risers looking to kickstart their day
- **Silver Laces,** a dedicated class designed specifically for seniors
- **One-on-one Personal Training** sessions for customized guidance

To keep members fueled and refreshed, the gym also offers Elavate branded apparel and Fit Aid performance and recovery drinks on-site.

A Warm Welcome from Cascade
The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive.

"There have been a lot of people dropping by to check out the space and tour, and our memberships continue to grow," Rolwes said. "Several people have said that this is a great addition to the community."

MVEC CEO Jeremy Richert said of the new facility, *"A thriving community requires strong jobs, schools, healthcare, and amenities that support a healthy, active lifestyle. Elavate Fitness is a great addition to Cascade, and we are thrilled to support local entrepreneurs like Ellah who are dedicated to making her community a better place to live."*

Get Involved & Join Today!
Elavate Fitness offers flexible options tailored to any lifestyle, with memberships available on a drop-in, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. Membership could be the perfect holiday gift or a perfect way to achieve those New Year's health goals.

Stop by 244 First Street West in downtown Cascade to tour the facility, meet Ellah, and see how Elavate Fitness can help you elevate your health and wellness goals today! Or learn more at elavatefitness.net or follow them on Facebook.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MVlink FIBER INTERNET

2026 NEC CODE UPDATE

Attendees can earn CEUs for Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

Approved For **6 CEU'S of Code** By State Of Iowa

LOCATION:	Lawrence Community Center 600 East Main Street Anamosa, IA
CLASS DATE:	**Friday, February 5th, 2027**
TIME:	8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Continental breakfast & Lunch included)
INSTRUCTOR:	Dave Sullivan *Sullivan Training & Consulting, LLC*
COST:	**$110**/per attendee (checks payable to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative)
CLASS DETAILS:	This year's class will be based on the 2026 NEC andcover dwelling wiring, grounding at a dwelling, CSST piping, and common Electrical Inspector violations. We will also discuss what AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction) actually means to the electrical contractor. The class will be worth 6 CEU's. There will be ample time for questions, so bring any topics, questions or challenges that you've encountered and would like to address.
TEXT BOOK & CALCULATOR:	All students are required to bring 2026 NEC codebook and calculator. (Book is available for purchase on Amazon.com or at electrical supply stores.)
REGISTRATION DEADLINE:	January 15th. Space limited **SIGN UP TODAY!**
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:	Jeff White, Energy Advisor MVEC Phone: 800-927-6068 Email: jmwhite@mvec.com

Watts Green
Renewable Energy Program

Because you care...

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

Watts Green - Green renewable energy is electricity produced in an environmentally friendly manner. Sources of green energy include the sun, wind, and water, which are pollution free and naturally reoccurring.

Renewable electricity technologies are among the cleanest and have the least impact on the environment.

Some of the renewable energy that is sold to our members is purchased from other members who have renewable energy systems.

Costs - The price for new green power is slightly higher than power generated from conventional sources such as coal. MVEC's Watts Green Renewable Energy Program enables you to support renewable energy by paying a small premium on your bill. The extra cost is currently 2 cents per kilowatt hour, or $1 for a 50 kilowatt hour block, which is applied only to that portion of renewable energy that is chosen.

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

To participate in the Watts Green Renewable Energy Program, detach and complete the form below. The form can be returned with your energy bill or mailed separately to:

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

Account #:_____ Name: _____

Yes! Enroll me in the Watts Green Renewable Energy Program. I hereby request that Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative bill to my account _____ kWhs (blocks of 50 kWhs only) at the renewable energy rate each month according to MVEC's tariff. The current price is $1.00 per 50 kWh block above the standard rate. I will be notified at least 30 days in advance of any price change, and may terminate this enrollment at any time by notifying MVEC.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Watt's Up at MVEC: Improving Reliability with Grid Resilience Grant

By Nik Schulte, Distribution Engineering Manager

MVEC continually records and analyzes reliability data to inform our electric infrastructure investments. At the same time, we evaluate the benefits of these grid upgrades to ensure they balance cost effectiveness. In early 2024, MVEC applied for a cost-share grant called the Iowa Grid Resilience Fund, which offered grid upgrades funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), administered by the U.S. Department of Energy. Following a comprehensive and competitive application process, MVEC was selected for a $1,103,452 grant in the summer of that same year, with MVEC contributing an additional $319,905 cost share. In early 2025, we began the process of procuring the materials needed to complete the equipment installations.

To shape the grant application and project, MVEC reviewed five years of grid performance metrics to identify locations where we could realize significant reliability and resiliency benefits from the installation of intelligent devices. A further goal was to leverage our existing fiber network and integrate data into our master control center.

While we can't fully eliminate grid outages, our goal is to greatly improve our ability to identify problems, isolate the issue, and restore power quickly when outages are unavoidable. Additionally, the new technology will improve communications with our grid and allow MVEC to gather more data for analytics – to help us trend, predict, and plan for the ever-evolving future while at the same time, reduce maintenance costs. Historically, our legacy oil-filled equipment required three-year maintenance cycles, but new technology allows for 20-year maintenance cycles with a solid-dielectric and vacuum bottle system.

The grant ensures a "Win-Win-Win". More rapid deployment of intelligent devices will improve the MVEC system, reduce costs and interruptions to our members, and also minimize impacts and costs to government assistance such as FEMA. Ultimately, the selected project locations allowed us to distribute benefits across the entire MVEC footprint. From the most rural areas to the most suburban, reliability improvements improve our delivery of power to help members run their farming operations, small businesses, and comfort in their homes. MVEC employees also developed new skills and exposure to grid technologies, ensuring they are ready to tackle the decades to come.

Specifically, the project allowed MVEC to purchase:



Substation Switchgear: This equipment was installed at MVEC's largest substation, serving the most businesses and homes. The switchgear will allow us to provide several alternative routings for power during normal maintenance or substation outages. An added benefit was removing our lineman from manually performing the tasks, ensuring a safer switching procedure.



Line Reclosers: This equipment provides system protection and allows for better isolation of issues and rerouting power. Deployed reclosers were strategically located on each substation feeder to restore the most members during contingencies. This project replaced reclosers on 27% of MVEC feeders. The grant allowed us to bring these benefits to our members sooner.

Line Sensors: New to the MVEC system are load and fault recording line sensors. Sensors continuously collect data and report if there's an issue on the grid and to pinpoint that location. This passive technology also supports our real-time and planning analytics to understand outage causes, predict future issues, and improve system modeling used to plan our grid investments.



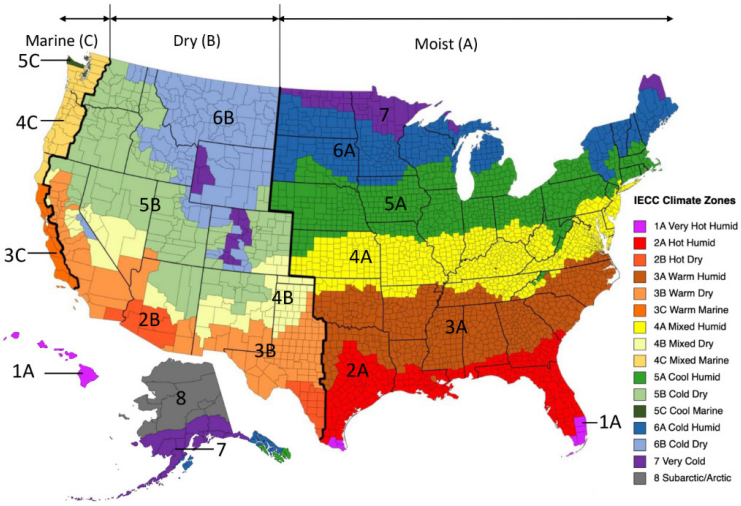
SCADA Upgrades: The grant also allowed us to improve our technology infrastructure – strengthening the IT/OT relationship. All equipment communicates through our fiber network to relay data for rapid analysis and response. It allows our Operations and Dispatch center to remotely confirm grid health, operate devices, and send crews. An added benefit was installing new fiber in some areas not previously available, which better allows more members to enjoy our MVlink services.

The first installations began early this year with the last completed weeks ago! Several devices have already been used to improve our reliability through the summer storms. Our goal is these devices will help reduce outage time by 50% and the grant requires us to report performance metrics as well. It was a true team effort across every department at MVEC: from Engineering and Operations to Technical Services and Fiber – not to mention the accountants keeping us in budget! All were critical in the planning and execution of this project, and we remain focused on delivering reliability improvements to you, our members.

Our Energy Working for You: Weatherization Tips

By Jeff White, Energy Advisor

When freezing temperatures arrive, a poorly sealed house can feel like a money pit. Cold drafts sneak in, warm air escapes, and your heating system has to work twice as hard to keep you comfortable. Weatherizing your home is one of the most effective ways to lower your energy bills and improve your indoor comfort.



Stop the air leaks: Air leaks are the primary culprit behind high heating bills. Tracking down and sealing these gaps is the fastest way to see a return on your investment.

a.) Seal gaps around movable joints on windows and door frames. Replace worn thresholds.

b.) Fill stationary gaps around window trim, baseboards, and exterior wall penetrations.

c.) Install foam sealers behind outlet & light switch plates on exterior walls to block hidden wall cavity drafts.

Boost your insulation: Insulation acts like a warm blanket for your house. If your insulation is thin or degrading, your heating system will constantly fight against radiant heat loss.

a.) Check the Attic: Heat naturally rises. Iowa is located in climate zones 5 and 6, where ENERGY STAR recommends R60 for an uninsulated attic, or R49 when adding to an attic that already has three to four inches of insulation.

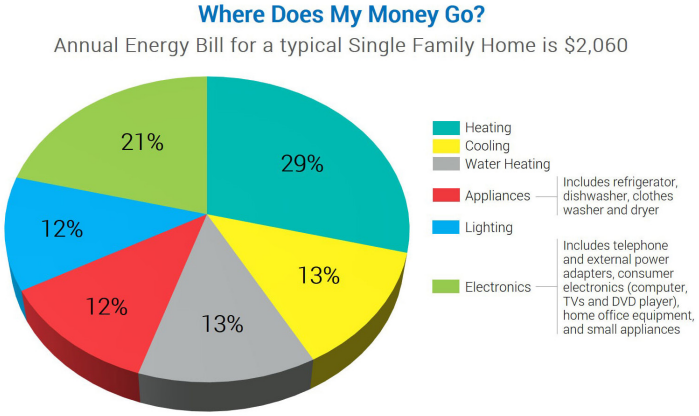
b.) Insulate Exposed Pipes: Wrap hot water pipes in foam sleeves. This prevents them from freezing and reduces standby heat loss, meaning your water heater won't have to work as hard.

c.) Seal Crawlspaces: Cover dirt crawlspace floors with a heavy plastic vapor barrier to keep cold moisture from rising into your floorboards.

d.) Utilize Thermal Curtains: Keep heavy curtains open during sunny days to let natural sunlight warm your home, then close them at night to trap the heat inside.

Don't forget the maintenance: Remember to replace your furnace filter to ensure proper airflow and system efficiency. Schedule a certified HVAC technician twice a year, in the fall for your heating system, and in the spring for your cooling system.

On a tight budget? Look into your local Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Administered by local community action agencies such as Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation. This program may help cover attic/wall insulation, air sealing, and furnace repair or replacement. Applying for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) often serves as your application for free weatherization services through agencies like the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Visit www.mvec.coop/iowa-liheap-guidelines for details and qualifying requirements.



Rebates: MVEC offers rebates for weatherization and heat pump check-ups. Please visit https://mvec.coop/rebates for more information.

October Board Meeting Update

- Approved the annual write-off of uncollectible accounts.
- Reviewed and discussed CFC's key ratio trends financial report.
- Approved the final Strategic Plan and Key Initiatives following September's strategic planning session.
- Received an update on activities at CIPCO, MVEC generation and transmission provider.

MVEC's 2026 rebate program will end on January 31st, 2027, for purchases made in 2026 (*note: members must apply for rebates within 6 months of the purchase date*).

Don't forget to send in your

2026 REBATES

TECH LINK

Be Safe While Shopping Online This Holiday Season

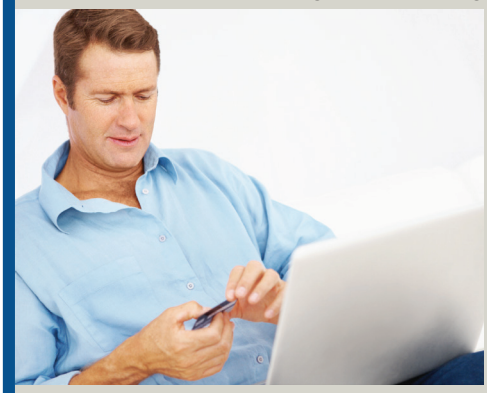


If you can't find that certain something from your local retailer, you may find yourself shopping online this holiday season. While checking off your gift list from the comfort of home is convenient, holiday shoppers are prime targets for cybercriminals.

To keep your holiday season merry, bright, and secure, follow these essential online shopping tips:

1. Stick with Trusted Retailers
Shop directly with well-known retailers or businesses you already trust. If you are ordering from a new website, do a quick check: look for contact information, clear return policies, and online reviews from reputable sources before clicking "buy."

2. Protect Your Payment and Personal Information
Ensure any website you visit is secure before entering sensitive details—look for https:// at the beginning of the URL and a lock icon in the address bar. Whenever possible, use credit cards instead of debit cards, or rely on secure payment services like PayPal or Apple Pay, which offer extra fraud protection. Avoid storing your credit card information on shopping sites for long-term storage.



3. Secure Your Account
Protect your shopping and financial accounts with strong, unique passwords—never reuse the same password across multiple sites. Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) wherever available; that extra code sent to your phone or authentication app acts as a powerful second lock on your accounts.

4. Watch Out for Scams
Be on high alert for phishing emails, fake order updates, and text messages claiming there is a problem with a delivery. Be skeptical of deals that look "too good to be true" or urge you to act immediately. Never click on unsolicited links or download attachments from unknown senders.

5. Monitor Your Accounts
Regularly review your bank and credit card statements throughout the holiday shopping rush rather than waiting for the end of the month. Set up instant transaction alerts through your online banking app so you are notified immediately of any unfamiliar charges.

6. Stay Safe While Shopping on Social Media
Social media feeds are full of targeted ads during the holidays, but not all of them lead to legitimate storefronts. Be cautious when buying directly through social media platforms. Verify the merchant by visiting their official website directly rather than clicking ad links.

Keep the Cyber Spirit All Year Long!
Cyber safety isn't just for the holidays. Carrying these smart digital habits into the new year will keep your personal information and hard-earned money safe 365 days a year.

Supporting the Heart of Our Community This Holiday Season

At Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC), our commitment to you goes well beyond delivering safe, reliable power to your homes and businesses. As a cooperative, we are guided by the 7 Cooperative Principles and Principle #7, Concern for Community, is right at the core of everything we do.

We continuously put this principle into practice by volunteering with local organizations, donating to area causes, and supporting regional growth through our Revolving Loan Fund, which helps small businesses start, expand, and thrive (see Elavated Fitness article on page 2). Whenever possible, MVEC prioritizes buying locally because we know that strong businesses build vibrant, resilient communities.

Mark Your Calendar: Small Business Saturday
On Saturday, November 28, we all have a wonderful opportunity to show that same concern for community by participating in Small Business Saturday.



MVEC's service area is blessed with charming Main Street shops, cozy coffee spots, family-owned restaurants, and delicious bakeries. But the magic doesn't stop in town—sprinkled across our rural landscape are just as many unique small businesses, craftsmen, and local producers offering one-of-a-kind products.

Can't Make It in Person? Shop Iowa Online!
If you prefer to browse from the comfort of home, you can still keep your dollars local. Did you know about Shop Iowa?

Visiting Shop Iowa (***www.shopiowa.com***), you can discover and buy directly from hundreds of Iowa's small businesses in one convenient place. It's an effortless way to discover local treasures and have them shipped right to your door or easy pickup.







Keep Your Holiday Spending Local
As you check off your holiday shopping list, choosing local first:

- **Gift Cards:** A gift certificate to a neighborhood restaurant, spa, or hardware store makes a thoughtful stocking stuffer while providing immediate support to local owners.
- **Holiday Catering & Meals:** Order your holiday pies, meats, or catering platters from local bakeries, meat lockers and grocers.
- **Unique Gifts:** Skip the big-box items and give hand-crafted, locally curated goods that carry a special meaning.

When you shop locally, your hard-earned money stays right here in Eastern Iowa—funding local schools, maintaining amenities, and supporting your neighbors. Plus, supporting the local businesses that make our communities special will certainly put you at the top of Santa's "Nice" list this year!

Watts The Answer?

1. Weatherizing your home is one of the most _____ ways to lower your energy bills and improve your indoor comfort.

2. Carry these smart digital habits into the new year will keep your _____ information and hard-earned money safe 365 days a year.

3. Whenever possible, MVEC prioritizes buying _____ because we know that strong businesses build vibrant, resilient communities.

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

_____

_____

September winners:
Lisa Harmon, Zwingle
Jerry Marbach, Manchester

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

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

Adjust your water heater settings to save energy. As cooler weather arrives, your water heater may be working harder to keep up with longer, hotter showers. Check its temperature setting and consider lowering it to 120°F, which the U.S. Department of Energy recommends for most households. Lowering the temperature can reduce energy use while also helping prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



Understanding Your Electric Bill

ON-PEAK hours are 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.
OFF-PEAK hours are
Midnight - 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. - Midnight

These times are in effect every day.

Watts Current

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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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