Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

WATTS Current

April 2026

MVEC Board Approves Rate Increase

The Cooperative's Board of Directors approved a rate increase to take effect on May 1, 2026, which will be reflected on the energy bill you receive in June. This increase is approximately 4% above the existing rates. MVEC recognizes that it is our responsibility to serve our members with reliable electricity while working to keep energy bills as low as possible. Our team continuously focuses on operating as efficiently as possible to keep rates affordable by negotiating with suppliers for the best equipment pricing and streamlining our internal processes to ensure we operate as efficiently as possible.

Like many other sectors, the energy industry has faced rising costs for materials, equipment, and labor in recent years. To manage these challenges, MVEC actively leverages multiple vendor relationships and evaluates alternative sourcing options to ensure we secure the most competitive pricing for our essential equipment and materials. MVEC also works closely with our power supplier to make sure steps are being taken to include all sources of generation in an effort to manage power costs overtime. Power costs account for just over 50% of the Cooperative's expenses and the long-term power contracts that are in place help to provide stable pricing. The Cooperative also has several preventative maintenance programs in place that extend the useful life of our distribution system and avoid costly emergency repairs. In addition to the day-to-day efforts to control costs, MVEC's leadership and Board of Directors continually review long-term financial forecasts to ensure stability of rates while also supporting growth of the Cooperative.

MVEC recently completed a Cost of Service study to review how the actual costs of serving our membership align with the MVEC rate structures that are in place. This study serves as a guide when adjusting rates and ensures revenue collected from all members is consistent with the actual cost the cooperative incurs to serve each member. For this rate increase we will be adjusting both the basic service charge portion of the energy bill as well as to the energy rate. The basic service charge is a fee paid by all members and reflects the minimum distribution plant costs that are necessary to ensure each location is able to be served with electricity, whether or not any electricity is actually used. The energy costs include the cost for the cooperative to provide the energy our members consume on a month-to-month basis. MVEC's time of use rate further splits out the energy component into on peak and off peak periods based on the cost for the Cooperative to provide energy at different times of the day. Based on the Cost of Service study the Board and Staff chose to split the rate increase between the Basic Service Charge and the energy rate in an effort to accurately recover the costs of having service available to a member while also recognizing the day-to-day costs of providing energy to our membership has increased in recent years.

The majority of our membership utilizes either our residential single-phase rate, or a farm/commercial three-phase rate. The single-phase rate will see a $3.00 monthly increase as the Basic Service Charge moves to $45.00 per month. The three-phase rate will see a $7.00 monthly increase as that Basic Service Charge becomes $87.00 per month. Additionally, the single and three phase energy rate for on peak usage will be $0.185/kWh and the single phase and three phase energy rate for off peak usage will remain the same at $0.084/kWh. The monthly increase for the average single-phase member will be $6.95 and for the average three phase member the monthly increase is $19.98.

The Heat Plus rate will also be adjusted. The Heat Plus Basic Service Charge will increase $1.00 to $5.00 per month. The new Heat Plus energy rate will be $0.046/kWh for both on and off peak.

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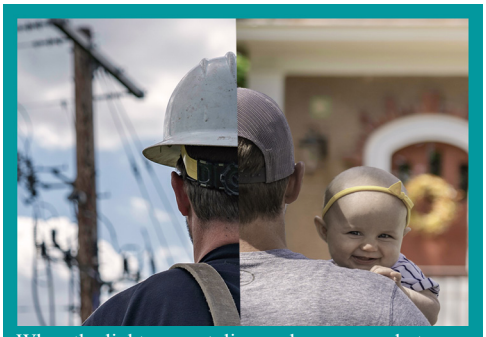
Watts Inside:



When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

Lineworker Appreciation Day April 13, 2026

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Being a member of a Cooperative like ours is of great value, especially when rate changes are needed. That's because the people making the decision to change rates are not only your Cooperative's board members, but they are also members who pay their own energy bills each month. The board and MVEC staff work hard to ensure your Cooperative is operated efficiently and that any rate increases provide the least impact possible to members. Raising rates for our members is never pleasant nor taken lightly. We continually work to balance preparing our Cooperative for growth while also keeping in sight our mission of providing members with reliable and cost-effective service.

MVEC's rates compare very favorably to those of our neighboring co-ops and utility peers across the state with our residential rates being approximately 17% below the average Iowa electric cooperative and 25% below investor-owned utility rates near our service territory. Over the last ten years, MVEC's rates have increased at an annual rate of 1.7% which is significantly lower than the U.S. average of 3.1%. We are proud of the work we have done to maintain affordable rates for our members and are committed to continuing to do so in the future.

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 20, 2026, 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 1**
- **Region 2**
- **At Large**

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.

Safety Matters: Utility Worker Protection

By Jenna Curtis, MVEC Safety Director

This April, we aren't just celebrating Line Worker Appreciation Month—we're honoring the entire MVEC family. Our employees work tirelessly every day to keep your lights on and your fiber internet running smoothly.

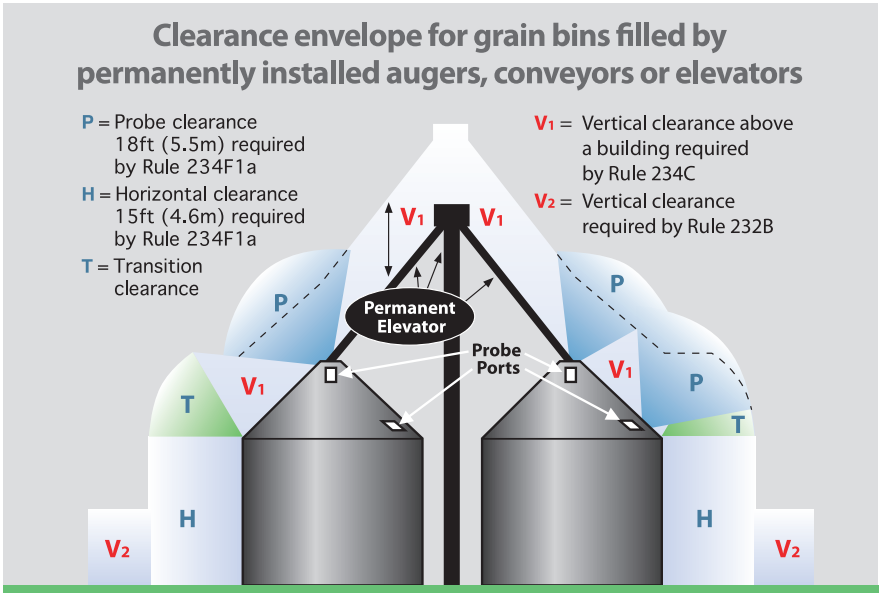
Beyond words of thanks, we believe in taking action for and prioritizing our employees' safety. During this current legislative session, RECs championed the Utility Worker Protections Act. While the bill did not pass, our efforts successfully raised critical awareness regarding the threats, harassment, and assaults our teams face in the field. Our goal remains clear: to secure the same legal protections already afforded to first responders and healthcare workers. At MVEC, we continue to prioritize de-escalation training for our staff, but we also ask for your help. Every worker deserves to return home safely; please help us protect those who keep your lights on.

April is also Work Zone Safety Month.
Warmer weather also brings road construction and utility projects along the roadways and right of way. Please slow down and move over if you see any utility or construction vehicles on the side of the road—not only is it respectful and safe, but it's also the law. Our crews are valued at work and loved at home—let's all do our part to get them home safely each day.

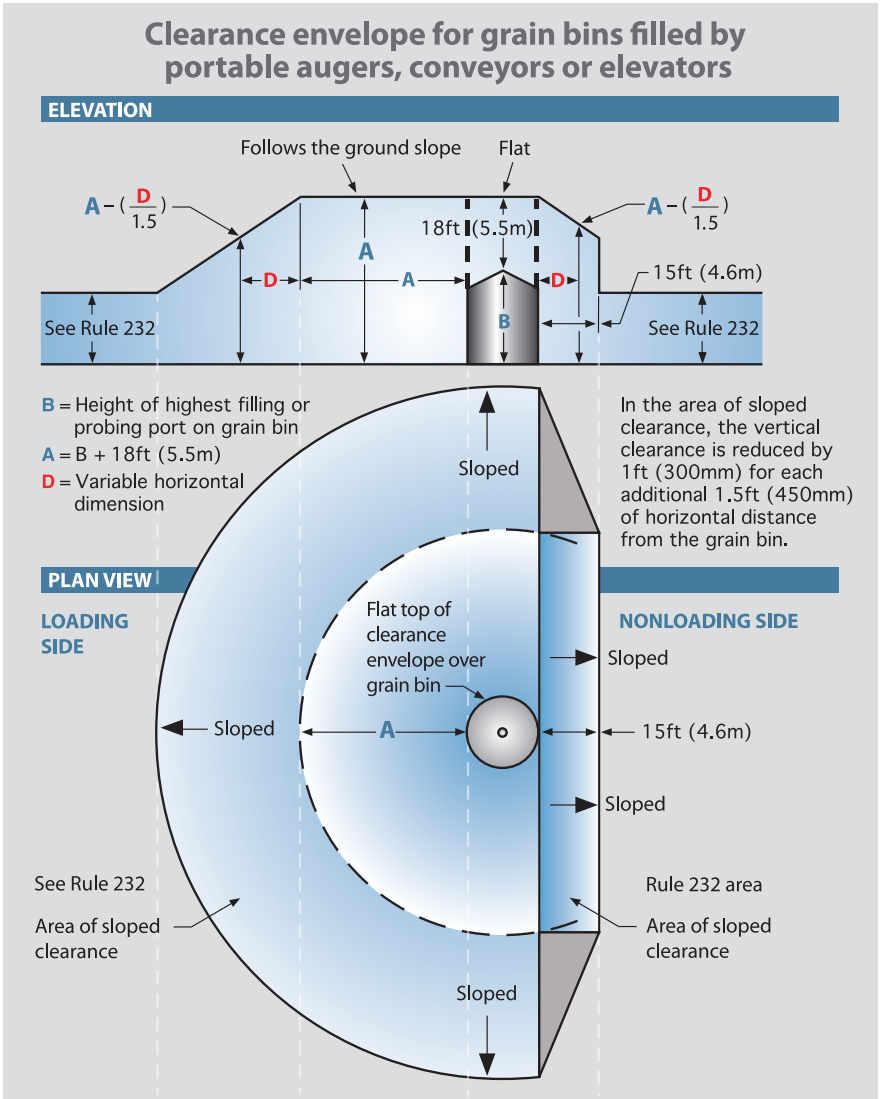
Key actions for drivers in work zones:

√ Eliminate distractions: Keep your eyes on the road and your phone out of reach.
√ Slow down: Reduce your speed immediately and move over a lane whenever possible to give crews space.
√ Obey signs: Temporary signs and flaggers are there for your safety—obey them without exception.
√ Watch for workers and their vehicles: Look out for workers and utility vehicles on the road, the shoulder, or even in the ditches.
√ Practice Patience: Remember, these crews are working to keep your services running. Give them time to work safely.

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



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



Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2023 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. 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) C2-2023 "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 Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers,conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997. The Iowa Utilities Commission has adopted this language.

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.

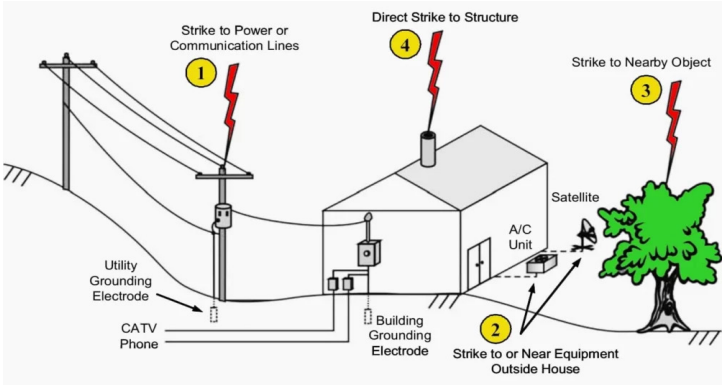
Our Energy Working For You: Importance of a Proper Grounding System

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

This month's energy advisor column focuses on safety, specifically the grounding system in an electrical installation. The majority of the electrical systems in the United States are grounded installations. Grounding primarily is installed for safety. Like a lot of home or building's electrical system, the ground is working all the time to maintain a consistent reference between two points and prevent imbalances. Grounding also serves as a safe path during electric faults or lightning strikes. Ensuring adequate grounding is crucial to a safe operating electrical system.

One of the goals for a grounded system is to provide a low resistance path for an electrical fault to trip a breaker or fuse. An example would be if an electric appliance had a bare energized wire in contact with the outside metal case. The metal case is connected to an equipment grounding conductor and provides a safe path for the fault to trip the circuit off.

Another important reason for grounding is for high current events like a lightning strike. You may be familiar with a ground rod that is likely buried in the soil near your main electrical panel. This also could be connected to the rebar in your foundation, copper water pipes supplying your house, and MVEC's grounding system at our poles and equipment. These all work together to provide an alternate and safer low resistance path for lightning, with the goal of minimizing damage caused by the strike. An added layer of protection is also installing surge protection to sensitive or important equipment.

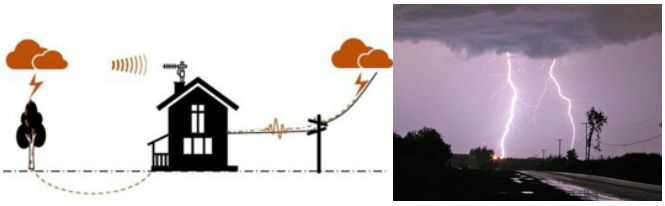


Be aware that problems can occur with the grounding system that reduces the safety that it provides. Here are some common issues with proper grounding.

1. Electrode Grounding Conductor not connected or corroded.

2. Equipment grounding conductors for electrical equipment or outlets missing or not connected correctly.

3. The grounding system as a whole is not bonded together. When there are multiple grounds not connected together, events like lightning may cause damage when a strike "jumps" from one ground to another. In the example below, an antenna is not connected to the ground system.



Grounding is a key defense against property damage, injury and fires. Routinely checking the grounding system is an important step in preventing problems before they occur. If you notice any of these issues or have concerns with your grounding system, contact your qualified local electrician to assist you in correcting any problems.

This will be my last Energy Advisor article as I am preparing for retirement in April. While I have been familiar with MVEC since I was a kid on the farm, working for the cooperative has reinforced my appreciation for the important work that everyone does here. Over the last four years, I have enjoyed talking with our members, traveling around this beautiful part of Iowa, and hopefully have helped members in some way. It will be hard to leave, but Linda and I are looking forward to the next chapter of our life. Thanks, and stay safe.

Heat Plus Rate Reminder

The Heat Plus rate ends with energy used through May 31, 2026. 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, 2026. If you have questions about the Heat Plus rate and qualifying heating systems, contact Jeff White, Energy Advisor at 800-927-6068 or jmwhite@mvec.com.

Watt's Up: A Day in the Life of an MVEC Lineman

By Jared Howard, Anamosa Foreman

Each April, electric co-ops across the country celebrate Lineman Appreciation at some point during the month. What better topic for this month's Watt's Up at MVEC than a day in the life from a lineman's perspective. Jared Howard, Anamosa Foreman, has been with MVEC for 24 years. Below, he shares a glimpse behind the scenes of what it takes to keep the lights on for MVEC members.

Growing up in Estherville and going to line school at Minnesota West, I learned early on that this job is about perseverance—but these days, it's just as much about strategy and teamwork.

On a typical day, we kick things off with a morning meeting. It's our time to make sure everyone is on the same page regarding who is doing what and where we'll be. We load up our poles and materials, head to the site where the first thing we do is set up signage (Caution Utility Work) alerting the public that we are working. Safety for the drivers passing us is just as important as the work we do on the poles.

Before we start, we hold a "tailgate" session. We map out the job, check the weather, and identify which breakers and lines are affected. It's not just the foreman calling the shots anymore; we get our apprentices involved and let them take the lead. It builds confidence in our younger linemen and keeps everyone engaged.

When Mother Nature hits or an accident happens, our pace changes. We move as fast as safety allows to assess the damage—counting broken poles and downed wires to figure out if we need the digger derrick or other major equipment. If a vehicle is involved, our first priority is the people. We de-energize the lines immediately so first responders can do their jobs safely.

Storm recovery is exhausting but rewarding. I still remember the 2020 derecho near the Rome substation. We had double circuits down, which meant seven wires on the ground. Dragging those out of standing corn was brutal work, but I actually enjoy the problem-solving that comes with storm season. It takes us to different areas of MVEC's service territory and tests what we're capable of.

The industry has evolved a lot since I started at MVEC 24 years ago. We used to work all night and then pull a full shift the next day—which was difficult. Now, with better safety protocols, we have the rest we need to stay alert.

Even the tools we use are different. I used to use a hacksaw; now it's a Sawzall and cordless impact drills. When I started, you could free-climb, but now everything is "belted off." I actually had to relearn how to climb, though the new guys coming out of school now don't know it any other way. The "hierarchy" has changed, too. It used to be that the "old guy" ran the truck while the young guys ran the shovel. Now, everyone on our crew is informed and everyone gets a turn behind the controls.

One of the most difficult aspects of my job as foreman isn't the line work or storm repair, it's making sure our apprentice linemen are properly trained and staying safe. We work closely with our Safety Director to develop protocols and invest in ongoing training to equip our crews with the best tools and knowledge to do their jobs efficiently and safely. People think being a lineman is a thankless job, but the public is usually amazing—kind, grateful, and helpful. At the end of the day, I'm thankful to get home safely and confident in the work we did on behalf of our members.

See lines or poles down?

What You Need to Know Your safety is our priority. If you see downed lines or poles:

- Stay Back: Never touch a downed wire.
- Assume the Worst: Always assume wires are energized until MVEC staff confirms otherwise.
- Call 911: Even if you aren't sure which utility owns the pole, let EMS and the professionals sort it out.
- Don't Move It: Never use a tool or object to push a wire out of your way.
- Move Over: If you see our crews working roadside, please slow down and move over. You are an important partner in our safety!

Shrimp Down Yonder: From Port-a-Potties to Prawns

By Christie Remley, Manager of Communications & Public Relations

Randy Harter isn't your typical Iowa farmer. You won't find his livestock grazing in a pasture or his crops swaying in the breeze. Instead, his "herd" lives in climate-controlled tanks inside a pole building on his property in eastern Iowa.

After 20 years of the physical grind and grueling schedule of owning a port-a-potty business, Randy's health was telling him it was time for a change. Attending a seminar on aquaculture in Ames four years ago sparked a "what if" moment that turned into a full-blown shrimp operation.

Randy's process starts with "Post Larvae 17" baby shrimp. Originally sourced from Florida, he now gets them 20,000 at a time from a patented supplier in Minnesota. Raising shrimp in the Midwest is a delicate balancing act of chemistry and temperature:

- The Heat: While 86°F is the "sweet spot" for growth, Randy maintains a steady 80°F to balance energy costs.
- The Size: Most "jumbo" shrimp are 20 grams. Randy goes the extra mile, growing his to a massive 40–45 grams.
- The Care: Every day is a learning curve. From upgrading air blower systems to ensure oxygen levels stay high, to monitoring a 3-degree temperature drop that could signal disaster, Randy's research and computerized feeding systems keep the operation afloat.

"Waste Not" Philosophy

In true farming fashion, nothing goes to waste.

- The Shells: As shrimp grow, they molt. Randy grinds the skins to enrich his garden and feed his chickens.
- The Heads: With a new processing license, Randy dehydrates the heads for pet treats or tilapia feed.
- The Water: The water is reused—never dumped.

Local is Better

Randy's wife Kathy came up with the name, Shrimp Down Yonder, as a nod to the local nature of their business.

One might ask why should I buy shrimp from a pole building instead of the grocery store? The answer recently became a matter of safety.

In late 2025, the FDA issued a massive recall on frozen shrimp imported from Indonesia due to contamination with Cesium-137, a radioactive isotope. The recall affected major brands like Great Value (Walmart), Kroger, and Publix.

While the risk was deemed a precaution, it highlighted a major issue: you don't always know what's in imported seafood. Randy's shrimp offer a clear alternative:

- Zero Contaminants: No metals or radioactive isotopes.
- Peak Freshness: Sweeter, larger, and never frozen.
- Traceability: Farm-to-table no longer just to beef & pork.

What's Next for Shrimp Down Yonder?

Randy currently sells directly to consumers via Facebook, serving Dyersville, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, and Waterloo. But he's not stopping there. His goals include:

- Obtaining a wholesale license to get into local stores.
- Developing a delivery system and automated liquid feeding system.
- Potentially partnering with his MN supplier to form a co-op and launch a regional brand.
- Marketing his custom "jerk" seasoning for pre-seasoned options.

Ready to try the freshest shrimp in the Midwest? Randy's tip for the perfect meal:"C is for Cooked; O is for Overcooked." Drop them in a rolling boil, but don't let them curl into a tight "O"!

Support Randy and Shrimp Down Yonder by:

- Following his page on Facebook (facebook/Shrimp Down Yonder Sells Shrimp to Eat) & sharing his posts.
- Providing contact info for local marketing opportunities.
- Buying a batch for your next family dinner!

If you would like to learn more or place an order, contact Randy at 563-599-2253 or Kathy at 563-599-2808.

TECH LINK

Fiber Installation New Construction Checklist

Spring and summer bring warm weather and construction season. If you are building a new home, we can't wait to connect you to the fastest, most reliable internet in eastern Iowa! But, first things first, to help our crew be efficient and use our time wisely, please make sure the following are complete before you schedule your installation appointment with MVlink fiber technicians:

- ✓ Exterior conduit
- ✓ Exterior siding must be on the home/structure
- ✓ Electricity must be run and connected
- ✓ Make sure utilities & private, member-owned utilities are marked **Please note:** Prior to starting construction, MVEC will be staking the approximate location of the MVEC equipment, this may vary some once locates are requested and existing facilities are marked. If you have any private utility lines or invisible dog fences in the right-of-way, please let MVEC know so we can notify the contractors of the possible conflicts. Iowa One Call will NOT mark private facilities. We will ask that you mark their locations if they are located in the public right of ways to avoid damage.
- ✓ Make sure our techs can access where the router should be located within the home (clear, safe path)

Seasonal Re-Connect

As we get ready to enjoy those Iowa summer days, if you need to re-connect a cabin or summer home to MVlink Fiber Internet, simply contact our friendly fiber team (800-927-6068). No advance notice is required but our MVlink team can only do reconnects for fiber internet members during business hours: Monday - Friday.

March MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Approved the allocation of 2025 margins to reserves and member patronage. $1.2 million was allocated back to the membership for future retirement.
- Approved a 4% rate increase that will take effect on May 1, 2026.
- Approved the 2026-2028 Construction Work Plan that was completed by the Cooperative's Engineering Department. This plan details capital projects that will need to be completed over the next three years.
- Approved 2026 line construction costs.

Watts The Answer?

1. Our _____ work tirelessly every day to keep your lights on and your fiber internet running smoothly.

2. One of the _____ for a grounded system is to provide a low resistance path for an electrical fault to trip a breaker or fuse.

3. If you have any _____ utility lines or invisible dog fences in the right-of-way, please let MVEC know so we can notify the contractors of the possible conflicts.

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:

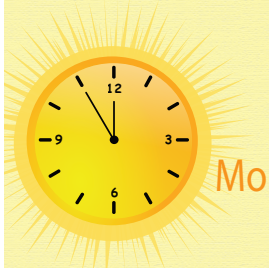
Norma Bormann, La Motte

Chris Domeyer, Manchester

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

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

MVEC will observe summer hours



May 4th to October 5th

Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In winter months (or whenever your home heating system is running), fan blades should rotate clockwise, which produces an updraft that pushes warm air down. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings.

Source: energy.gov

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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109 North Huber Street • Anamosa, IA 52205
319-462-3542 or 800-927-6068

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998

www.mvec.coop

Email direct to the following departments:

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

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