

WATTS *Current*

September 2023

For Our Members

MVEC Nominee, Heather Weers, Receives Shine the Light Award

Through her work with Sleep in Heavenly Peace—Jones County, Heather Weers provides a comfortable place for Jones County children to lay their heads

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa, including MVEC, are driven by a commitment to community. To celebrate local volunteers, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives held its third annual Shine the Light contest earlier this summer. Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community. The judging committee had the difficult task of selecting three contest winners from 126 outstanding nominees, including three from MVEC's service territory. Caroline Bredekamp nominated by MVEC member Don Wentworth for her work with the Spragueville and North Bend Community Centers; Steve Supple, nominated posthumously by MVEC member and employee Al Reiter for his work with Camp Courageous of Iowa and Heather Weers, nominated by MVEC member and employee Megan Ruley for her work with Sleep in Heavenly Peace—Jones County.

Ultimately, Weers was one of the three winners selected for the statewide contest and was awarded a \$2,500 donation to her charity, Sleep in Heavenly Peace - Jones County.

Weers of Center Junction, Iowa, has dedicated her professional and personal life to improving the lives of Jones County children and residents alike. By day, she works for the Jones County Community Partnership for Protecting Children, which aims to improve the child welfare process. And on her own time, she is the President of the Jones County Chapter for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a non-profit dedicated to providing beds for children who would otherwise not have them. While the mission of the national organization is "No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town®," Weers likes to say, "No Kid sleeps on the Floor in Jones County."

When the Jones County Community Partnership for Protecting Children received a \$1,600 grant to buy beds for children, Weers was shocked to learn how great the need was in her community. While researching ways to help, Weers came upon the national organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace, and pursued starting a local chapter. She established the Jones County chapter in 2019, and since then has delivered more than 320 beds to local children.

Weers is humble and attributes the impact of Sleep in Heavenly Peace Jones County to the local volunteers who help build the beds and donate materials. "It's not about me, it's about what the community comes together to do to give children a comfortable place to sleep," she said.

She hopes to inspire others to make their own impact. "I want others to know that you can help people with the simplest gestures

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Photo credit: Zach Finn, CIPCO.

Pictured from left to right: Christie Remley, MVEC; Heather Weers, Sleep in Heavenly Peace - Jones County; Megan Ruley, MVEC



- sometimes it's just a thank you note or a letter that can have a profound impact on another person's life," says Weers.



Weers was nominated for Shine the Light by Megan Ruley, both a member and employee at Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC). "When I learned about the Shine the Light contest, the first person who came to mind was Heather," Ruley said. "Her work with Sleep in Heavenly Peace is heartwarming and I admire her dedication to improving the lives of our Jones County residents. The work outlined here doesn't even begin to encompass all of Heather's impact in our community as she seems to be behind many initiatives to make Jones County a better place now and into the future."



Photo credit: Zach Finn, CIPCO.
Top picture: Heather Weers, SHP—Jones County.
Bottom picture from left to right: Megan Ruley, MVEC; Heather Weers, SHP—Jones County.

Jeremy Richert, CEO at MVEC adds, "Maquoketa Valley is thrilled to recognize Heather's dedication to making Jones County a better place. Heather embodies the co-op principle, 'Concern for Community' by recognizing unmet needs and then rolling up her sleeves to meet those needs."

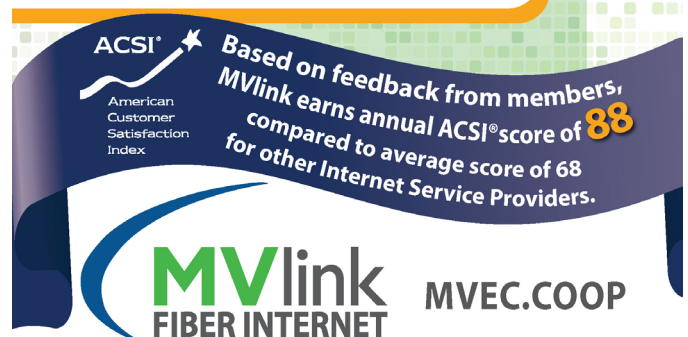
The \$2,500 award will help the Chapter purchase materials, tools, bedding and mattresses. With the goal of no Jones County child sleeping on the floor, Weers is seeing to that one bed at a time. You can learn more about Sleep in Heavenly Peace at www.shpbeds.org or learn about the Shine the Light contest at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.

MVlink Achieves High Customer Satisfaction Rating

For years, MVEC has surveyed electric members on their satisfaction with MVEC's electric service to acquire an ACSI® score (American Customer Satisfaction Index, a company that measures customer satisfaction across multiple industries throughout the US). Most recently, MVEC received an ACSI score of 87 for the electric side. This year, for the first time, MVEC gathered feedback from MVlink Fiber Internet members to earn an ACSI® score for fiber service. For 2023, MVEC's MVlink received an ACSI® score of "88" out of a max score of "100". MVEC's score is higher than all 2023 Fiber Internet Service Provider and Internet Service Provider scores and places MVEC's MVlink 13 points higher than the average Fiber Internet Service Provider score of 75, as well as 20 points higher than the average Internet Service Provider score of 68, per the industry ratings in the 2023 ACSI® Internet Service Provider Report.

"As a member-owned coop, 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 wanted to gather the same feedback on our internet product. The high score is indicative of the level of service our cooperative provides to ensure a reliable, fast connection backed by responsive, local member support."

"MVlink has been super reliable and stable. Rarely have I had any issues with the network being down. Really stellar product. Far better than what I used to have in Cedar Rapids with another big ISP."





Annual Meeting Held

MVEC's annual meeting of the members was held in Monticello on August 17th. Through mail-in ballots and in-person attendance, 797 members participated in the governance of the Cooperative they own. Voting members were entered into a drawing for cash prizes totaling \$2,000 and those who attended in-person were treated to a roasted pork meal. During the meeting, CEO Jeremy Richert discussed how the Cooperative works behind the scenes to deliver affordable and reliable electricity, as well as the cooperative's commitment to safety. Richert also provided members an update on the MVlink broadband efforts and its impact on service reliability while continuing to maintain affordable rates for both electricity and internet services. President Ron Thielen reported on the results of the director election indicating Gene Manternach and Charlie Peters were re-elected to regions 1 and 2, respectively, and that Judy Gotto was re-elected to serve At Large. During the Board of Directors re-organizational meeting, the following directors were elected to office positions as follows: President, Ron Thielen; Vice President, Tom Stewart; Secretary, Gene Manternach and Treasurer, Judy Gotto. Charles McCullough was elected to be the Assistant Secretary.



Annual Meeting Prize Winners

MVEC awarded \$2,000 in cash prizes to randomly-selected members who returned their Annual Meeting ballot.

*Rose Mary Breitbach, Farley
Phil Deshaw, Dyersville
Aileen Dondinger, Bellevue
Thomas/Julie Dunne, Cascade
Elaine Edwards, Maquoketa
Craig Ehlinger, Monmouth
Neal Engel, Maquoketa
Lorraine Gaffney, Ryan
Mary Jane Gansemer, Durango*

*Susan Glasser, Bernard
Carey Graybill, Dubuque
Arlan Hammerand, Sherrill
Mary Kalb, Peosta
Duane/Mae Kluesner, Holy Cross
Jason/Lisa Kurt, Cascade
Paul Ludovissy, Holy Cross
ElmerMayers, Manchester
Mary Marin, Farley
Vincent Medinger, Maquoketa
Mitchell Ryan, Manchester
Albert Neyen, Epworth*

*Michaela Otting, Cascade
Richard Pfab, Bernard
Albert/Linda Ruley, Earlville
John Schechtman, Manchester
Cletus Sieverding, Bellevue
David Sieverding, Bellevue
David Steiner, Maquoketa
Betty Thill, Dubuque
Duane Wennndt, Wyoming
John White, Anamosa
Ed Wille, Holy Cross*



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Thank you for adding a special touch to our Annual Meeting!

*We Offer.....
LOCALLY grown flowers
Unique arrangements
Plants
Gifts
Home decor*





2022 Central Iowa Power Cooperative Power Supply Report: Bridging the Gap

By: Gene Manternach, MVEC Director - Representative on the CIPCO Board of Directors

In 2022, the American electric utility industry raised significant concerns about the stability of our electric grid amid rising calls for the early closure of dispatchable generation sources.

Dispatchable generation, namely from fossil fuel resources, can be fired up and dispatched to the grid on demand at the request of power grid operators, according to market needs. In 2022, our power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), continued to study ways in which it could reduce the risk of purchasing energy in a volatile market and bridge the resource gap left by the early closure of Duane Arnold Energy Center in 2020. To do this, CIPCO won't be able to rely on the dwindling dispatchable generation supply across the industry in the next decade, but rather seek out new, intermittent renewable energy assets to meet this need.

The stability of the grid and the ability of regional grid operators to meet power demands were put to the test not once, but twice in 2022, when the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO) forecasted potential capacity shortfalls during both the summer and winter months. MISO warned of a potential summer peak electricity demand of 124 GW, or 5 GW more than what was projected to be available, prompting CIPCO and MVEC to stress the importance of energy efficient practices among our members like you.

Later in the year as many of us were readying for the holidays, we faced Winter Storm Elliott, a "bomb cyclone" of intense wind, snow and frigid temperatures that settled in across Iowa over the course of several days.

The skyrocketing demand during those times sent energy market prices soaring. The electric industry's reaction to two instances of extreme weather over the course of one year underscored the value of an "all-of-the-above" strategy that includes coal generation as one of many options during times of intense demand. Using all its available resources – including coal – CIPCO met all capacity requirements set forth by MISO.

CIPCO's commitment to reliability led to a system-wide outage rate of 20 minutes per consumer in 2022. For that same time period, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's was 57 minutes per member. MVEC

works closely with CIPCO to prepare to meet the energy needs of MVEC's members now and into the future. Additionally, MVEC has invested in our own technologies and systems to improve the reliability and capability of our electric system. This investment has allowed us to decrease outage time by just over 50%.

In addition to maintaining a reliable system, CIPCO remains dedicated to sound financial practices that allow margins to be returned to its members in the form of patronage, a key component of the cooperative business model. In 2022, CIPCO returned patronage totaling \$846,604 to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

As a CIPCO director, I'm committed to guiding the organization through the industry challenges we anticipate in the coming years. I'm confident CIPCO is well-positioned to navigate these challenges, allowing both CIPCO and Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative to thrive. As a member-owner, you can rest assured your electricity needs will be met now and in the years to come with safe, reliable and cost-effective power when you need it most.

July MVEC Board Update

- Discussed potential application for Iowa OCIO Broadband Grant opportunity
- Was updated on potential application for USDA's New ERA funding opportunity.
- Discussed and approved the annual wage adjustment for Cooperative employees.
- Discussed and approved proposed changes to employment policies recommended by staff.

August MVEC Board Update

- Elected Board Officers for the next year in the reorganization meeting that immediately followed annual meeting.
- Reviewed the monthly financials and year to date comparison to the 2023 budget.
- Reviewed outage information for the July 28th major outage event as a result of thunderstorms and tornadoes in the Cooperative's service area.
- Reviewed outage data that was collected by the Iowa Utility Board for 2022. Maquoketa Valley's average outage time over the last five years is 49% lower per member than the average Iowa rural resident.



Our Energy Working for You: Top Five Electrical Hazards Outside the Home

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

Following up on the previous article about electrical hazards, this month's Energy Advisor column highlights five common electrical hazards that occur outside the home and on the farm. When you consider all the areas of your farm, or property outdoors that require electric power, generally, the electric service performs its work reliably, safely, and almost unnoticed. However, to ensure safety, keep these hazards in mind:

1. Electrical equipment and wiring approved for the conditions of use. The majority of electrical equipment is listed by recognized agencies like UL to be used under approved conditions. For example, an electrical disconnect switch installed outdoors should be at least rated rain-tight, but it is not uncommon to see a rusted indoor-rated switch used outside. Additionally, electrical equipment and wiring for fuel dispensing has a specific rating (hazardous locations) and required installation methods.

2. Live electrical parts not protected.

As equipment ages, covers go missing from use or damage, which leaves bare electrical parts unprotected and posing a shock or fire hazard. A missing 'knockout' on an electrical box is an invitation for a rodent to set up house inside.



3. Electrical conductor overhead clearance or inadequate burial depth. Overhead electrical wires should have adequate clearance to meet the minimum safety code standards. And likewise, the underground conductors should also be buried to the safe minimum depth required to reduce hazards for digging. As always, if considering any digging or excavation, call Iowa One Call (811) at least 48 hours in advance of the project starting. Always be aware of overhead lines when moving tall or large equipment.

4. Missing or inadequate grounding. The grounding system is an important part of your electrical installation. Over time, ground rod wires can become damaged or corroded, which impedes current flow during an electrical fault or lightning strike.



5. Electrical outlets near, or unprotected from water. Water and electricity never mix, and while improvements have been made over the years to reduce the risk of shock or injury from an electrical contact, they do still occur. Ground fault circuit interrupters and receptacles have prevented many of these injuries and deaths.

We need and use electrical power in a variety of ways (and locations) to make our lives better. Properly installed and maintained electric power will provide us many years of safe and reliable service. As an investment in your home, business, or farm, addressing electric safety issues reduces risk of injury, downtime, and increased costs of emergency repairs.

THANK YOU

Members for moseying
over to our booth at the
Dubuque
County Fair for
MVEC Member
Meetup in July






TECH LINK

Is your internet BACK-TO-SCHOOL READY?

As you're going through your back-to-school checklist, is your internet going to make the grade this school year? Depending on your student's requirements, your internet will likely need to handle the demands of streaming educational videos, downloading large files and uploading homework assignments. A reliable internet connection with enough bandwidth is essential to getting homework, group projects, research, and assignments done.

Important questions to ask:

- How many students are in your home? The larger your family, the more bandwidth you'll need to handle all of the devices connecting.
- Is your Wi-Fi up to the task? You can have a fast internet plan but issues with your router can severely impact your experience. Tips to improve your Wi-Fi:
 - Place your router in a central location in your home so that the signal can easily reach all of your devices.
 - Make sure your router firmware is up to date.
 - If you have a dual-band router, switch to 5GHz instead of the more common 2.4GHz band.
 - Don't want to worry about your Wi-Fi? Add MVlink's Wi-Fi to your internet plan for blazing fast and reliable speeds throughout your home backed by local support.
- Do you have enough speed? Equal download and upload speeds are essential for Zoom calls, fast assignment uploads for those last minute submissions and an overall better internet experience! If you're trying to get work done while your kids are gaming, submitting homework or streaming, you can easily be maxing out your internet speeds and may need to move to another plan.

The internet and Wi-Fi in your home can impact your student's success, so choosing the right plan for your household is important. Our Fiber team is here to help you find the best plan to set your student up for success this school year, so give us a call at 800-927-6068 or email fiber@mvec.com.



Friendly Reminder from Our Fiber Team

When you sign up for MVlink Fiber Internet service, we are just as excited as you are to get you connected to our fast, reliable service! Whether you are scheduling a first-time installation or require a maintenance service call, our friendly Fiber team will schedule your appointment and make reminder calls the evening before the scheduled appointment. If we are unable to reach you, an attempt will also be made by email to confirm the installation (or maintenance) date and time. We provide a two-hour window for scheduled appointments out of respect for your time. While we have had requests from members to call when our service techs are enroute, we have had issues with our service techs waiting for members to arrive at their homes for the scheduled appointment. So, going forward, we will only provide the two-hour estimated time for arrival window. We do our best to accommodate member schedules while trying to maximize our installation and maintenance team's time. *Thank you for your understanding!*



Farmers Urged to Look Up this Harvest Season

By Safe Electricity

For farmers across the nation, harvest brings long grueling hours in the field. This can cause workers to be weary and prone to forget safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average 62 farm workers are electrocuted in the United States and many more are injured, according to Labor Department statistics.



Safe Electricity and MVEC urge farmers, family members, and farm employees to beware of overhead powerlines, to keep farm equipment safely away, and to know what to do if contact is made with powerlines. The increasing size of farm equipment, with higher extensions, allow operators to come dangerously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from them - a minimum 10-foot safety radius around the electric line.

The most common equipment involved in power line accidents are portable grain augers, oversized wagons, large combines, and other tall equipment that come into contact with the overhead lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Farmers, family members, and farm employees are urged to take these measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height, and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if contact is made with powerlines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

If your equipment comes into contact with power lines, it's almost always best to stay in the cab, call for help, and wait until the electric utility arrives to ensure that the line is de-energized. If the powerline is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path for the electricity to flow through, resulting in electrocution. Even if a powerline is on the ground, there is still potential for the area nearby to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there is fire or imminent risk of fire.

In that case, the proper action is to jump - not step - with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Jump clear, without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time, and continue to shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Attention Snowbirds: New MVlink Seasonal Security Package Available!

Just in time for your winter travel (or for your summer cabin), MVEC is offering a new seasonal security package for MVlink members. Pay just \$19.95/mo. for 3 Mbps upload and 1 Mbps download—just enough bandwidth for your home security devices to continue monitoring your property while you're away. If you are interested in this new package, contact our Fiber department today (fiber@mvec.com or 800-927-6068).

Watts The Answer?

1. The judging committee had the difficult task of selecting three contest winners from 126 outstanding nominees, including _____ from MVEC's service territory.

2. For 2023, MVEC's MVlink received an ACSI® score of _____ out of a max score of "100".

3. As an investment in your home, business, or farm, addressing electric _____ issues reduces risk of injury, downtime, and increased costs of emergency repairs.

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

June winners:

Rosemary Noonan, Bernard
Shirley Koltes, Sherrill



Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative
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Anamosa, Iowa 52205

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**Happy
LABOR DAY!**

MVEC will be closed Monday, September 4th
in observance of Labor Day

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

MVEC will observe summer hours
May 1st-September 29th, 2023

Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

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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www.mvec.coop



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Electric Billing: billing@mvec.coop

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Internet/Phone Service: fiber@mvec.coop

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