

WATTS *Current*

October 2020

For Our Members

Power On: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy and broadband services to you, the members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community, and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” This principle is the essential DNA of MVEC, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities. It’s one of the reasons MVlink fiber internet became a key service.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, we recognize the essential role we play in serving special communities like ours.

Who would have fathomed in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and MVEC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.


As an essential service, and to ensure service reliability, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our line crews and other employees began working on staggered schedules to maintain separation. Some staff worked remotely. In the office, we limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We also adjusted our walk-in office availability and in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. In addition, we increased internet speeds for no additional cost to allow members to work and learn remotely. For the health and safety of everyone, we think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements.

While we certainly missed visiting with you in person, we managed to stay connected through increased social media engagement, eblasts and phone calls.


We care about our communities - because we live here too. We’ve seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that’s what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, we’re heartened to see how everyone is pulling together.


In 1935, MVEC was built by the community to serve the community, and we look forward to continuing to serve you – Power On.



PATRONAGE DIVIDENDS

Retirement of patronage dividends is what makes the Cooperative business model unique. Patronage checks will be mailed during Co-op Month. Watch the November Watts Current for details.

	Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative	DATE <u>XX/XX/XX</u>
Pay to the order of	<u>MVEC Member</u>	\$Amount <u> </u>
	<u>Amount here</u>	
Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative		





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Derecho Impact On Our Power Supplier

MVEC's power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), was also significantly impacted by the Derecho that hit Iowa in August. CIPCO is a minority owner of the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) in Palo. A week after a rare derecho blew through Iowa with hurricane-force winds, NextEra Energy (majority owner) announced its decision not to restart the reactor at DAEC and to proceed with the previously announced decommissioning plans. The storms that hit the area caused extensive damage to the nuclear plant's cooling towers and repairing those towers before the site's previously-scheduled decommissioning on October 30, 2020, is not feasible.



While the immediate loss of energy from DAEC was unexpected in August, it was not unexpected in CIPCO's long-range planning after the announcement by NextEra in 2018 that the plant would close late in 2020, according to CIPCO Executive Vice President and CEO Bill Cherrier. "CIPCO has been laying a plan for the future when DAEC goes offline. We planned for energy purchases to get us through to the completion of new generation resources coming online as soon as the end of 2020," he said. "Work continues on our Summit Lake Expansion project, adding 55 MW of natural gas reciprocating engines by the end of the year, and 100 MW of power purchased from Wapello Solar is expected to come online by early 2021. We continue to pursue new opportunities that are efficiently-priced and will serve the needs of our members."

The 75-day loss of energy from DAEC is one of a myriad of losses experienced by CIPCO and other transmission providers across the State resulting from the

August Derecho. Unprecedented winds not only decimated over 10 million acres of Iowa's corn crop but left several hundred thousand people without power in the hours after the storm passed. Storm impacts to the CIPCO system also included the loss of 575 poles spread over 26 transmission lines and more than 100 substations. According to MVEC CEO, Jeremy Richert, "The damage from this storm impacted all levels of the electric delivery system including generating stations, transmission lines, distribution lines, and even member owned facilities. Transmission outages affected nine of MVEC's substations, which resulted in outages to 25% of MVEC's service area. It truly took a joint effort of cooperative's helping cooperative's at both the transmission and distribution level in order to restore power to our members in a timely manner." 2020 has posed many challenges and the response to the derecho amidst the COVID-19 pandemic is just one more example of our focus on serving the needs of our members and the communities they live in.

Is Solar Right For You?

You've seen other homes, farms and businesses put up solar arrays so it's natural to wonder if it's right for you, too. MVEC has one of the highest concentrations of solar systems among Iowa cooperatives and continues to incorporate more systems each year.

There are several factors to consider before making this decision and you'll find a few resources on our website at www.mvec.coop/EnergyCenter/On-SiteGeneration. Some members may be eligible for a variety of state and federal incentives.

As you do your homework prior to any purchase, you should understand how and when you use energy; factoring in both time of day (on-peak and off-peak) and time of year. MVEC's robust metering system, online payment/energy portal and knowledgeable staff can explain how your bill is calculated and how those kilowatt-hours you pay for transfer to KW used for solar sizing (see insert). We can also discuss energy efficiency options and incentives to ensure you are not buying an alternative energy system larger than you need just to offset inefficiencies.

Next you will want to determine what happens with any excess power you generate. Will you be purchasing a battery for storage or will you want to sell

continued on page 3



Is Solar Right For You? continued from page 2

excess generation back to MVEC? When MVEC buys excess electricity, we pay a fair rate known as 'avoided cost'. This amount fluctuates and is based on the same cost we pay when we purchase wholesale power from CIPCO. We do not offer net metering as it would pay a member the retail price for wholesale electricity only and raise costs for members who choose not to own solar or other alternative generation systems.

For members who are not interested in their own generation investment, you will be happy to know that you are already receiving green power economically thru MVEC. Our power supplier, CIPCO is finishing construction on the largest solar project in Iowa, allowing their portfolio to include an additional 100 megawatts of solar. Their power portfolio includes a diverse mix of hydro, wind, natural and landfill gas, coal, oil and solar.

If your homework leads towards a purchase, your dealer will help you fill out the appropriate utility application forms. Once we receive the application, we will complete an engineering study to determine if existing MVEC facilities can safely accommodate the alternate source of power. Once approved, and the electrical inspection is completed, we will install a meter for those members who wish to sell their excess generation to MVEC. A monthly bill credit will be applied relative to the metered generation returned to our system.

Measuring Energy

One KW (kilowatt) is equivalent to 1000 watts and it is a measure of instantaneous demand. Total kWh (kilowatt-hours) is the sum of all of those KW demands across the time of one hour.



**You Care, We Care,
RECare,** a way for
members to help members

MVEC's RECare program allows members to contribute to a fund that assists low-income members with weatherization to help improve their heating and cooling costs or supplement energy assistance. Funds collected are distributed by local community action agencies.

Yes, I care and want to contribute.

☐ **I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is closed.**

☐ **I will contribute \$_____ per month to RECare.**

I understand that this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill. (Even one dollar shows you care.) Monthly pledges may be cancelled at any time by notifying MVEC in writing.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Account Number: _____

Email: _____

Please mail to MVEC or include with your electric bill payment.



**Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative**

109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa IA 52205

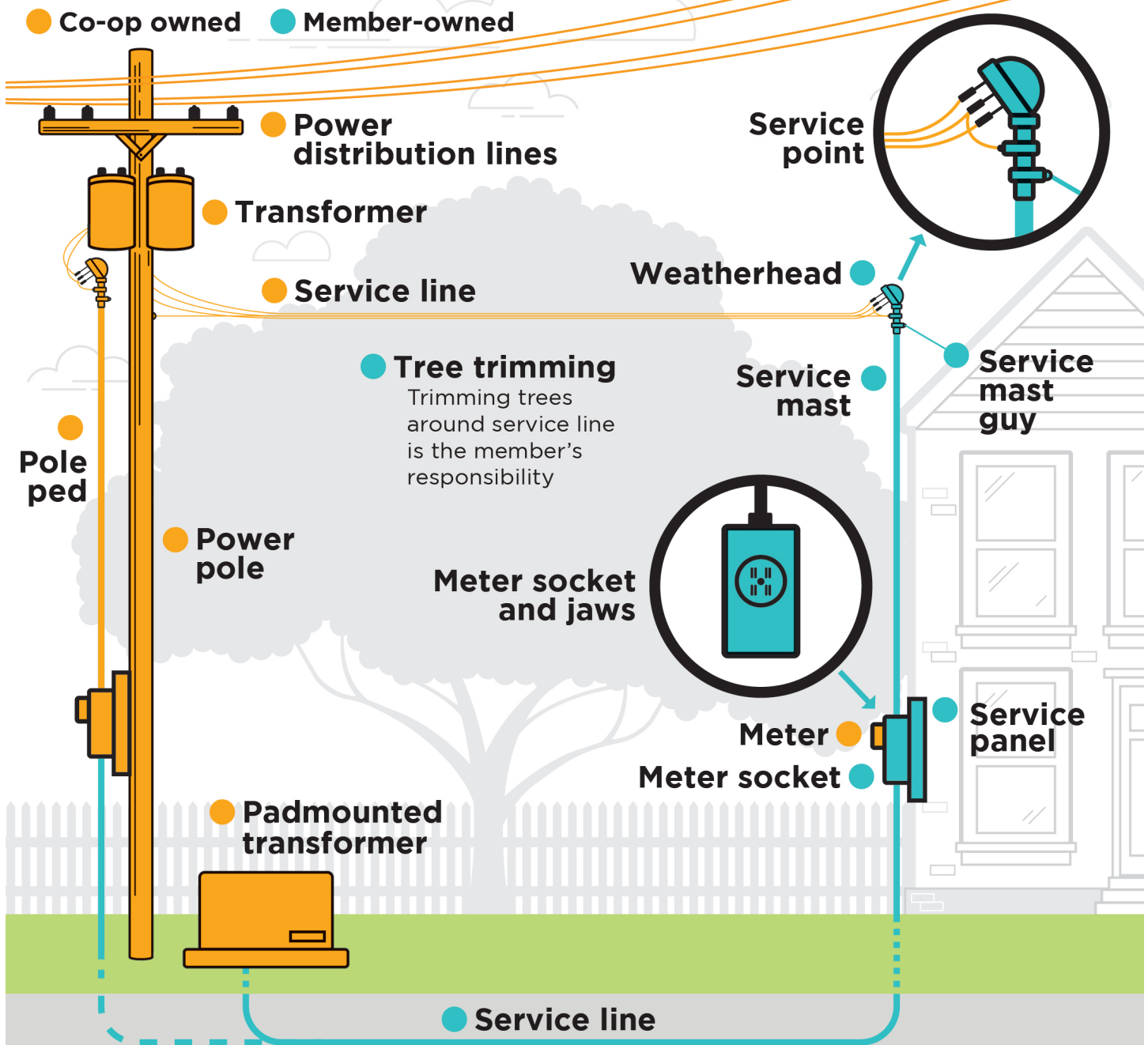


What's On The Pole

There are a variety of service options including a) the meter is mounted on a pole-mounted pedestal below the transformer; b) the meter is mounted on a meter pole (not shown); or c) a padmounted (ground) transformer may provide an underground connection to a nearby meter which may or may not be on the home or building. If members have damage to the blue areas in the graphic, or any apparatus on the meter pole, those members will need to contact a licensed electrician to make necessary repairs.

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Note: This graphic depicts overhead and underground service. Please be aware of which type of service you receive at your home or business.



Iowa LIHEAP 2019-2020 Guidelines

ATTENTION: RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?

The 2020-2021 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled
October 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021
- All other households
November 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021

WHAT TO TAKE:

- Proof of Income (for all household members age 19 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- Social Security numbers for **all** household members (documentation required)
- Most recent heat bill
- Most recent electric bill

WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

FIP RECIPIENTS:

Please bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptance document information.

If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified. Additional income not listed here may be required.

Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$22,330
2	\$30,170
3	\$38,010
4	\$45,850
5	\$53,690
6	\$61,530
7	\$69,370
8	\$77,210

Note: For households with more than eight members, add \$7,840 for each additional member.

Contact the local community action agency in your area as listed below, or

Hawkeye Area Community Action Corporation (HACAP)

Delaware County:	Manchester	563-927-4629
Dubuque County:	Dubuque	563-556-5130
Jackson County:	Maquoketa	563-652-5197
Jones County:	Anamosa	319-462-4343
Linn County:	Hiawatha	319-393-7811

Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N.

Cedar County:	Tipton	563-886-3191
Clinton County:	Clinton	563-243-5220
	DeWitt	563-659-8492

Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation

Clayton County:	Decorah	563-382-9608
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Operation Threshold

Buchanan County:	Independence	319-334-6081
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The Fiber Download

Power Strips and Surge Protectors Are Different But They Often Look A Lot Alike

Some differences:

—— A Power Strip is basically an extension of a wall outlet that just provides more outlets for multiple devices. It may have a switch to quickly shut off power to the outlets but doesn't necessarily do Surge Protection.

—— A Surge Protector, or sometimes called Surge Suppressor, will look a lot like a Power Strip. It will have an extension cable to plug into the wall outlet with multiple outlets to plug in extra devices. Though the Surge Protector is going to have electronics built into it to help protect against power surges that can damage your equipment.



Surge Protectors will sometimes include a dollar amount that it will cover for the equipment that is plugged into that Surge Protector. If that equipment is damaged, the manufacturer may cover the cost of the damage up to the amount listed. The catch is that the Surge Protector must be used correctly. We recommend reading the documentation included on the proper usage of the Surge Protector. Using it in any other manor than what is instructed will void any coverage damage.

Surge Protectors will have a Joules Energy Rating listed on the packaging. It is recommended not to exceed the usage the Surge Protector is designed for. Meaning you would not want to get the least expensive and lowest Joules Rating and then use it for a high end home theatre system that would have a Joules Rating much higher than the rating on the Surge Protector.

Surge Protectors are going to be a little more expensive than a simple power strip.

Most Surge Protectors will have a light next to the word protected or protection. If the light is on, it usually indicates the Surge Protector is still good and is protecting the devices plugged in. If the light is not on, then the unit could be bad and might need to be replaced.

Sites to See

Watch this section for new or popular internet sites you may want to explore.

- www.staysafeonline.org
The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) builds strong public/private partnerships to create and implement broad-reaching education and awareness efforts to empower users at home, work and school with the information they need to keep themselves, their organizations, their systems and their sensitive information safe and secure online and encourage a culture of cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity Tips:

If you connect it, protect it: Your best defense is to keep device security software, web browser and operating systems up to date.

Spotting Email Phishers: 1) They often disguise themselves as someone you know. 2) They offer financial reward, threaten you or claim to need help. 3) They ask for your personal info. 4) They want you to download a file or click a link.

Public Wi-Fi is not secure: Avoid logging in to personal accounts, like email and financial sites when you don't recognize the connections. If you must connect to public Wi-Fi, consider using a virtual private network (VPN) or personal hotspot.

We can all play a part in making our interconnected world safer.



Do Your Part.
#BeCyberSmart.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.
Visit staysafeonline.org for cybersecurity tips.





Lighting Rebate Changes Coming

All LED indoor lighting fixtures for residential, commercial and agriculture rebates will end December 31, 2020.

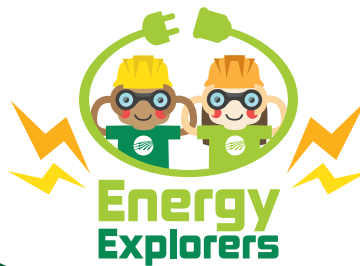
2020-2021 Heat Plus

The 2020-2021 Heat Plus rate with Power Cost Adjustment is \$0.049 per kilowatt-hour for electricity used during the winter months. The bill you receive in November will reflect your first months usage for this heating season. MVEC strives to keep this rate as low as possible to encourage the installation of highly efficient heat pump systems. If you are planning a building or remodeling project, contact us at 800-927-6068 for energy efficient ideas.

CO-OP MONTH FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?

Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about a few ways co-ops are unique! Use the word bank if you need help.



1. Co-ops and their members work together toward a common _____.
2. Co-ops are _____ organizations, so they understand the communities they serve.
3. All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative _____.
4. Concern for _____ is the seventh cooperative principle.
5. Co-ops don't have customers; we have _____.
6. Co-ops are _____ by the members they serve.

WORD BANK

LED	GOAL	MEMBERS
LOCAL	PRINCIPLES	COMMUNITY

Answer key: 1) goal 2) local 3) principles 4) community 5) members 6) led

Watts The Answer?

1. It's one of the reasons MVlink fiber _____ became a key service.
2. MVEC has one of the highest concentrations of _____ systems among Iowa cooperatives and continues to incorporate more systems each year.
3. If members have damage to the _____ areas in the graphic, or any apparatus on the meter pole, those members will need to contact a licensed electrician to make necessary 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 _____

August winners:

Janet Cocayne, Dubuque
Ruth Bies, Bellevue



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

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Then. Now. Always.
We're proud to power your life.
October is National Co-op Month.



#PowerOn

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR® - certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

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.

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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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