



MANAGER'S MESSAGE • PAT CARRUTH

General Manager



2018 Work Plan and Budget to Board This Month

This next year we will begin work on the projects in our recently approved four-year, \$10,750,000 Construction Work Plan. The 2018 plan calls for \$2.7 million in construction and system improvements. In addition to the construction projects, we will continue to work hard on our maintenance projects such as pole testing and treating and continue to work to catch up on our right-of-way clearing. We have had three right-of-way crews working full time on our system this past year and expect that to continue next year. They will be working in the northeast quadrant of the system next year. We will have a draft to the board for them to review by mid-month and will present the Work Plan and Budget at their regular board meeting this month.

As you know, we increased rates with usage effective this September 1st. We hope this increase will hold us for a few years. Everyone working here understands that we work for you, the member-owners. We understand that it is your money we are spending on your electric power cooperative from coal mine to the meter in your yard. We work hard to be good and effective stewards of both your money and your power grid. You, of course, elect your board to provide oversight and make sure that we are being good stewards.

Prepare for Winter

Get your heating system tuned up—whether gas, oil or electric. Give us a call to get on the schedule. A properly tuned heating system can not only save you money, it will also give you a better chance of making it through the winter without a problem.

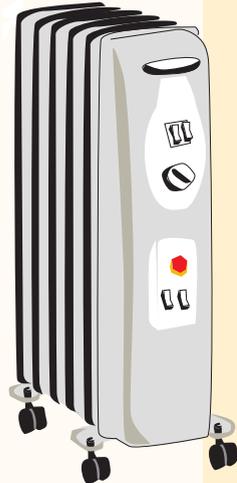
If you have a generator, it might be a good time to fire it up and make sure it's ready to go. We have had a number of ice storms over the years, but one of the worst ice storms for Minnesota Valley occurred in early 1977. The last member had power restored 11 days after the first outage. It can happen, so please be prepared.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Products to Avoid

When it comes to saving energy, caveat emptor is alive and well. We are all bombarded by claims that border on outright falsehoods, so it pays to view savings claims from third parties cautiously. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

Electric space heaters drain energy savings from your home if used incorrectly. Companies make elaborate claims about the amount of money you can save and charge exorbitant sums for their products. The advertisements frequently target people on a fixed income, presenting false hope while extracting precious dollars from their customers. I have seen a number of these space heaters and admit they appear to be well made, but they typically offer no better economy than any other 1,500-watt electric heater. Bottom line, electric space heaters should only be used to heat small spaces – not your entire home.



Black boxes that claim to clean up power, protect appliances and reduce energy use come and go. These often require an electrician to install and claim to improve power quality, smooth out power fluctuations and store energy so you can reduce your bills. Save your money. The concepts they present are already in use by Minnesota Valley Cooperative and require utility-size equipment to deliver them. Something that can fit in a shoebox is not going to deliver any value, at least not in the areas promised. If you are concerned about protecting your sensitive appliances and electronics, talk to Minnesota Valley Cooperative about surge protection.

When you see the ad that reads, "The power companies don't want you to know," skip it. These are generally claims around building your own renewable energy source from parts easily obtained at the local hardware store or a motor that produces limitless "free" electricity. I would equate these with the emails I get from foreign countries telling

(Products to Avoid continued on page 2)

Minnesota Valley Cooperative will be closed Thursday, November 23rd in observance of Thanksgiving.



Products to Avoid (continued from page 1)

me I can receive millions of dollars by simply sending all my banking information. At least in the case of the homemade renewables and limitless motor, you get some cool plans and parts lists. You decide if it's worth \$50–\$200. I'd give it a pass.

There is a product that claims it will **replace basement dehumidifiers** and save tons of money. It basically is a fan system that vents all the basement air outside. Yes, dehumidifiers can be expensive to run and are a nuisance when you have to empty the water. Knowing that, I asked the Cooperative Research Network (an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) a few years ago if these products delivered on their savings claims. They said no. The problem is that when you blow all the basement air outside, it is replaced with conditioned air from other parts of the house. Now your HVAC system works harder and dramatically reduces the promised savings. Here's my solution: I set my dehumidifier to 50 percent and run a hose to my floor drain.

Article by Tom Tate. Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

This resolves the water emptying hassle and really reduces the power use while keeping my basement acceptably dry.

I will close with a **non-technology warning**. Scammers love to call or stop by claiming they represent the local power company. Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be a Minnesota Valley Cooperative employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number from the caller, then check with the cooperative. If they really are a co-op employee, you'll be able to prove it by contacting our office. Remember, use a phone that you supply and not one that they give to you.

Most of us want to save energy and keep our bills manageable. Technology can help do this, but be careful. Call Minnesota Valley Cooperative at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 before making any investments in technology that seem too good to be true. You'll be glad you did.

Find Your Location for a \$10 or \$20 Bill Credit!

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If one of them is your number, you will receive a \$10 energy credit or \$20 if you are an Operation Round Up participant. Keep looking each month—it could be your number! If you find your number in the newsletter, call the office at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.



ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS • BOB KRATZ



Manager of Operations

This past month has been busy around here. The crews have been getting the last minute underground projects done before winter. Some of the poles that were rejected during our pole inspection this year were in fields and can now be replaced since the crops are out. Also, when the water dries up, a few will need to be replaced that have been sitting in all the rainwater we've had.

We have had to do repair work on transmission switches and line. The switches at Minneota and

AMPI Substations had to be de-energized to allow us to replace some parts and realign them so they operate smoothly. We also replaced approximately 90 insulators on the pole structures that come into the Chapman Substation. The crews were able to do this in coordination with the ethanol plant's semi-annual clean up and partial shutdown. The pictures below show the crews replacing strings of insulators on those structures.

Have a great Thanksgiving!



Comparative Report

	Jan-Sept 2017	Jan-Sept 2016	Jan-Sept 1997
Kwh Purchased	147,775,456	147,194,527	101,279,111
Kwh Sold	140,231,556	139,650,857	95,417,745
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$7,454,017	\$7,029,738	\$3,158,330
Patronage Capital Margins	\$109,481	\$976,689	\$(86,829)
Reserve For Taxes	\$206,250	\$206,250	\$280,000
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	50.44	47.76	31.18
	September-17	September-16	September-97
Total Plant	\$70,679,096	\$68,640,748	\$29,611,464
Number of Active Services	5,278	5,265	5,185
Average Residential Bill	\$179.90	\$165.45	\$95.06
Average Residential Kwh Consumption	1,396	1,362	1,343
Average Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,510	2,462	1,765
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	28,751	25,746	19,218

Save the Date

Minnesota Valley Cooperative's Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 24th, 2018

Lac qui Parle High School



Protect Your Family from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Often called the “silent killer” because of its odorless, tasteless and colorless nature, carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisonings in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning claims nearly 500 lives and causes more than 15,000 visits to hospital emergency departments.

Carbon monoxide can be found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, coal and wood-burning stoves, gas ranges and heating systems. Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, poisoning people and animals who breathe it.

Portable electric generators are a source of carbon monoxide poisoning if used improperly. Many people rely on these units during extended power outages, but special care must be used. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for example, the misuse of generators caused five deaths and dozens of cases of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The most common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. A two twenty zero two High levels of carbon monoxide inhalation can lead to loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses like the flu.

To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home, follow these tips:

- ✓ Have your fuel-burning appliances – including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition and not blocked.
- ✓ Choose appliances that vent fumes outside whenever possible, have them properly installed and maintain them according to manufacturers’ instructions.
- ✓ Read and follow all instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. If you cannot avoid using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the cautions that come with the device. Use the proper fuel and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window to ensure enough air for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.
- ✓ Don’t idle your car in a closed garage. Fumes can build up quickly.
- ✓ Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- ✓ Never use a charcoal grill indoors or charcoal briquettes in a fireplace.
- ✓ Do not sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- ✓ Do not use any gasoline-powered engines (*mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chainsaws, small engines or generators*) in enclosed spaces.
- ✓ Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. Look for Underwriters’ Laboratory (UL) certification on any detector you purchase.

If a carbon monoxide detector in your house goes off, check to see if anyone in the house is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If so, get them out of the house immediately and tell your doctor you suspect poisoning from the gas. Regardless of whether anyone in the home has symptoms, ventilate the house, turn off all potential sources of carbon monoxide and have a qualified technician check your gas appliances.





Member Services Manager

Electric Heating is Still the Way to Go

As in the past, Minnesota Valley has set its heating rates to insure the best electric heating prices for those members who have electric heat systems. Minnesota Valley Cooperative is going to tell you right up front what your electric heat rate for the whole winter is going to be so that your heat bills with any type of electric heat will be cheaper than those of any fossil fuel heating systems. You won't have to play any guessing games with heating fuel prices if you are heating with Minnesota Valley's **Electric Heat** or **Dual Fuel Heat** rates.

Our heat rates are comparable to #2 fuel oil (60% efficient) and L.P. (90% efficient) heating systems if the price of those two heating fuels were roughly \$1.15-\$1.20 per gallon. A recent check with local fuel suppliers found those numbers to be higher than that. Yes, electric heat is the way to go for a **CLEAN, SAFE** and **CHEAP** heating energy source.

Your comparable heating costs can be even lower with the use of a heat pump system. Heat pumps use sealed refrigerant systems to move heat from one place to another. This makes the efficiency of the heat pump system over 100 percent. A heat pump system can move more Btu's than are

required to power the unit. This means you would have to be able to purchase fossil fuels for \$.60 or less per gallon to be comparably priced to electric heat per Btu.

Contact your local HVAC contractor, electrical contractor or the Minnesota Valley Member Services Department to get in on these savings.

There are many types of electric heat to meet all of your heating demands.

✓ Geothermal Heat Pumps

✓ Air Source Heat Pumps

✓ Electric Plenum Heaters

✓ Radiant Slab Heating

✓ Radiant Wall and Ceiling Heat

✓ Fan-forced Heat Units

✓ Baseboard Heaters

Now is the season to reflect on the many things we should be truly thankful for!



How About Some Financing?

Home Energy Loans Available Through Minnesota Valley

Loans for electric heat installs, weatherization practices and wiring upgrades are available for Minnesota Valley members. Contact our Member Services Department at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 for more information.

- ✓ Loans available at 5% interest
- ✓ Loans up to \$15,000
- ✓ 3-7 year loan terms

NOTICE: Your Heat May Be On, but is Your Meter On?

Minnesota Valley would like to remind all members on either our electric or dual heat rates, that the power must be turned on to your heat meter for it to operate properly. A two zero two zero three If the meter does not have power, you will not be getting your heat usage at a discounted rate. All electric heat installations have power supplied to the heat meter from your electrical service. If that meter power has been turned off, all of the KWhs that are used for heat **will be at our higher general rate.**

Please turn on your electric heat power and verify that your meter is operating. If you have a digital meter, the **electronic display will be lit up.** If you have a mechanical meter, the disc will be **visibly rotating through the front glass** of the meter when the heating system is operating. Failure to verify that your meter is powered up may result in a higher electric bill than normal.



Make sure this display is lit up.

Make sure this disc is spinning.



Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

24-Hour Telephone Answering

320.269.2163
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