Minnesota Valley Co-op News
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Manager's Message • Pat Carruth

General Manager

"Move Over Law" Is Enhanced

In May, the Governor signed into law enhancements to the existing "Move Over" law. The original law was passed in 1990 after a highway patrolman was hit and killed by a vehicle in 1990, while conducting a routine traffic stop on Interstate 90. The law requires motorists who come upon emergency vehicles with lights flashing to move over an entire lane to provide a measure of safety for those workers on the side of the road. Utility vehicles, like ours, were added into the law in 2015.

The newly enhanced law expands the types of roads that fall under the law. Now drivers must slow down to a safe speed when passing emergency or utility vehicles stopped on roads with only one lane of travel in each direction.

These unnecessary accidents do happen. This past year, one of our linemen was injured while standing next to his bucket truck working on a power line along a county gravel road when he was struck by a passing car. When you see our trucks on the road, please slow down around them so they can work safely. Thank you.

Administration Working to Head off Blackouts Due to Overreliance on Renewables

The forced move to wind, gas and solar over the past two decades has put our electric grids reliability and resiliency in much greater risk of breaking down, causing long term brownouts and blackouts. In order to reduce this risk and assure critical baseload power such as coal and nuclear plants keep running, government is working on a "fuel secure" plan.

The plan is described as a stop gap measure which would also address cybersecurity threats to the grid in addition to assuring baseload capacity availability. Part of the plan will force us through mandates to keep baseload coal and nuclear online in in a similar way that we were forced by mandates to over rely on renewables. The administration, through the Department of Energy, is tasked to oversee this initiative over the next couple of years.

Students Tour Big Stone Power Plant

This May, Minnesota Valley sponsored two student tours to the Big Stone Power Plant in Big Stone City, South Dakota. Ninth graders from Lakeview Public School in Cottonwood and Montevideo High School toured the coal-fired power plant to learn more about electricity and how it is generated.

"Minnesota Valley is working with the local school systems in educating their students about what it takes to supply power to our consumer-members," explains Bob Walsh, Member Services Manager at Minnesota Valley. "We also want to show students the things that power companies do to make coal a safe, reliable and clean power source."

Representatives from Minnesota Valley joined the students on the tours. In addition to serving as chaperones for the tour, they also took some time to explain what Minnesota Valley does. The cooperative hopes that by sponsoring these tours, students will understand more about

(Big Stone Power Plant continued on page 2)

Students Tour Big Stone Power Plant (continued from page 1)

electricity, have an opportunity to see first-hand how a coal plant operates and consider the possibility of a career in the electrical field.

Teacher, Jay Meiners, and his ninth grade Earth Science class were one of the groups that toured the plant this spring. Meiners said one of the major units he covers in his class is electricity, including how power plants generate electricity from coal and then transmit that electricity over power lines.

"By going to the power plant, we get a chance to see first-hand how electricity is created. We can talk all we want and I can show them pictures, but nothing can match seeing it in person," said Meiners.

Adam Koplin, Plant Manager at Big Stone Power Plant, agrees, "We feel that it is important that students (and others) are able to understand where the generating of electricity all starts. We also want folks to understand what all has to happen to make sure that the product we provide (power) is done reliably, economically and as environmentally responsible as possible."

Koplin said students are typically surprised by the sheer size of the plant and all of the equipment that is needed to produce electricity. The plant currently employs 82 people and has a capacity of 500 gross MW (670,000 hp). The Powder River Basin coal used at the plant comes from Wyoming.

"One of the tour highlights for the students is typically being on top of the plant, which is about 250 feet tall," Koplin notes. "They enjoy watching the train unload and how fast we can dump large quantities of coal."

Meiners said the students also enjoyed the hard hats they wore as a part of the tour. The view from the top of the building and the inside look at the control room were especially interesting to his students. "Overall, every student finds this experience to be one of their favorite field trips of high school," he says.

Engineering & Operations • Bob Kratz

Manager of Operations

Another month has passed with weather cooperating for the most part. We have been doing service upgrades, locates, OCR change-outs, rebuilding lines and pole change outs.

One of Minnesota Valley's crews finished up with a line rebuild south of St. Leo. They will be starting another line rebuild west of the Watson Substation. These rebuilds are part of the four year work plan that replaces old poles and wire that have served their purpose and are in need of bigger strengths and sizes of each. In early June, we had Karian Peterson build a mile of three phase line north of the Rosen Substation for a new dairy barn.

We also have Minnesota Valley Tree Service cutting trees in the northeastern part of our system. It is necessary that they cut back as much as possible so they do not have to return so often. Also, this eliminates a lot of blinking lights and outages from the branches getting in the line, especially when they are wet from rain or snow. Q four zero one zero one They have also been spraying for weeds in the pole yard, 16 substations and tower site. Minnesota Valley Tree Service also sprays the underbrush where needed.

The pole treaters continue to check the system for reject poles and as of June 15th, they have tested approximately 1,000 poles.

We are still seeing quite a few machinery and vehicle contacts with poles and wires. So, remember to be aware of your surroundings and look up when near these structures. Be safe and enjoy the summer.

Find us on

Youth Tour Students Return from Washington, D.C.

For over 50 years, rural electric cooperatives across the country have sponsored students on the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Each participating co-op selects a high school student from their service area for the trip. This year, **McKenna Rose Nelson** represented Minnesota Valley. She spent June 9th-14th in our nation's capital for an unforgettable week of activity. While there, the group had the opportunity to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today's pressing issues in the energy industry.

The trip combines leadership opportunities, sight-seeing tours and just plain fun. One of the days is spent on Capitol Hill questioning senators and representatives on issues that affect all of us. Students witness the grandeur of monuments to our greatest leaders; reflect on the true cost of freedom by seeing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, the World War II Memorial and row upon row of white crosses at Arlington Cemetery; watch the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; listen to inspirational speakers and gather as a group to learn about other parts of our nation.

Comparative Report

	Jan-May 2018	Jan-May 2017	Jan-May 1998
Kwh Purchased	98,378,486	87,779,038	56,989,607
Kwh Sold	92,996,101	83,350,203	53,516,839
Cost Of Purchased Power	$4,371,123	$3,989,534	$1,702,767
Patronage Capital Margins	$970,094	$344,947	$40,083
Reserve For Taxes	$97,862	$114,583	$141,600
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	44.43	45.45	29.88
	May '18	**May '17**	**May '98**
Total Plant	$72,493,163	$70,050,327	$30,696,852
Number of Active Services	5,283	5,268	5,175
Average Residential Bill	$198.24	$172.47	$96.31
Average Residential Kwh Consumption	1,542	1,454	1,237
Average Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,693	2,498	1,690
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	30,707	24,332	21,136

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.

There were no winners last month. Keep looking!

Member Services Manager

The Deal Can't Get Any Better Than This!

With the reinstatement of a Federal Tax Credit, a double rebate from Minnesota Valley, low interest loans and electric heat rates, the installation of a geothermal heat pump this summer may be the most attractive it has ever been. Geothermal heat pumps are among the most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling technologies currently available, because they use the earth's natural heat to provide heating, cooling and often, water heating.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed in February 2018, reinstated the tax credit for geothermal heat pumps. The tax credit now features a gradual step down in the credit value. A taxpayer may claim a credit of 30% of qualified expenditures for a system that serves a dwelling unit located in the United States that is owned and used as a residence by the taxpayer. Expenditures with respect to the equipment are treated as made when the installation is completed. If the installation is at a new home, the "placed in service" date is the date of occupancy by the homeowner. F two twenty zero two Expenditures include labor costs for on-site preparation, assembly or original system installation and for piping or wiring to interconnect a system to the home. If the federal tax credit exceeds tax liability, the excess amount may be carried forward to the succeeding taxable year.

What is the Tax Credit?

The renewable energy tax credit covers 30% of the total system cost, including installation of GeoThermal heat pumps meeting the requirements of the ENERGY STAR program. This tax credit applies to residential installations only.

- *There is no maximum credit for systems placed in service after 2008.*
- *Systems must be placed in service on or after January 1st, 2008 and on or before December 31st, 2021.*
- *The geothermal heat pump must meet federal Energy Star criteria.*
- *The home served by the system does not have to be the taxpayer's principal residence.*

Over time, there is a gradual step down in the tax credit value:

30% Tax Credit	26% Tax Credit	22% Tax Credit
for systems placed in service by *12/31/2019*	for systems placed in service after *12/31/2019* and before *01/01/2021*	for systems placed in service after *12/31/2020* and before *01/01/2022*

Minnesota Valley Low Interest Loans

*Minnesota Valley offers low interest loans on installations of any type of electric heating system or central air conditioner. You can borrow up to $15,000.

Minnesota Valley Double Rebate Days

Memorial Day through Labor Day, get **double rebates** on air source or geothermal heat pumps!

Act Fast for an Extra Bonus

The first twenty ASHP or GeoThermal installations will qualify for a $100 **BONUS** on top of the double rebate.

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

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