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

General Manager

Some High Points in Our KRTA

Each year, a report called the Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) is put forth by one of our bankers, the Cooperative Finance Corporation. The report produces several ratios we can use to track our performance against our peers in the state and across the country. We just got the 2020 numbers and again we think we have several good things going for us at Minnesota Valley. There are 43 cooperatives in Minnesota and of those only two have lower retail rates. This is notable in particular because we have the lowest member density in the state of 1.6 consumers per mile of line. This means we have to build and take care of more line to serve a member than any other cooperative in the state. We also have the lowest wholesale power cost in the state through our Basin Electric and Western Area Power Administration which, of course, is key in keeping retail rates low. Only one cooperative has a lower average interest rate on its debt portfolio. Only three have retired a higher percentage of capital credits than Minnesota Valley.

2022 Work Plan and Budget

Work is well underway on our Work Plan and associated budget for next year. We are fairly confident at this point, barring anything unforeseen, that we will be able to hold rates steady for the year.

Harvest Underway

Please stress safety in all aspects of your harvest activities again this year. Be mindful of power lines when moving big pieces of equipment around. Contact with power lines is our main safety concern. If you do happen to hit poles or guy wires with farm equipment, please let us know so we can fix those problems right away. That is what we are here for.

Please Think About Our Power Poles When Burning Ditches

Burning ditches has caused a lot of damage to expensive power poles over the years. Please be careful. If you do accidently burn poles, please let us know so they can be replaced.

(Manager's Message continued on page 2)

School Bus Safety Reminders

As students return to school, buses will once again become a common sight on the road. Whether you're a parent sending your kids to school on the bus or a driver sharing the road with buses, we can all do our part to keep kids safe this school year.

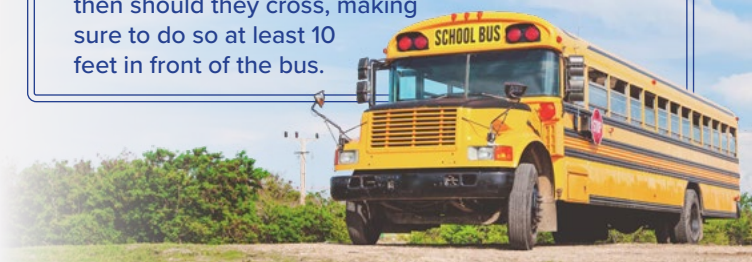
School buses are designed to be highly visible with safety features such as flashing red lights, cross-view mirrors and stop sign arms. If you find yourself following a bus with flashing yellow lights, this means it is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Make sure to reduce your speed and prepare to stop.

Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. State law requires all vehicles to stop for school buses with red flashing lights and the crossing arm fully extended. When you stop, leave at least 20 feet between your vehicle and the stopped school bus when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads.

Motorists are reminded to stay alert while driving and watch for kids who may be walking toward or waiting for a school bus. Slow down and pay close attention when driving through school zones or whenever you are near a bus stop.

Bus Safety Tips for Parents

- Arrive at the bus stop ahead of schedule and show your child where to wait for the bus. Kids should wait at least six feet away from the curb.
- Teach your child to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the door opens before approaching the bus. Use handrails to help prevent a fall.
- Remind kids to never walk behind a school bus. If crossing the street is necessary, make sure your children first make eye contact with the bus driver who can indicate when it's safe for them to cross. Only then should they cross, making sure to do so at least 10 feet in front of the bus.



Manager's Message (continued from page 1)

October is Cooperative Month

To recognize National Cooperative Month this October, we like to remember the first electric cooperative in the United States. It was formed in Stony Run Township near Granite Falls in 1914. Farmers in that area, after years of persuasion, could not get any investor-owned utility to run power lines to their farms let alone sell them power. Then the idea was born. Let's organize our own power company, build our own lines and get power from the municipal hydro-power plant in Granite Falls. A committee was formed to visit the Granite Falls municipal utility board. The municipal board listened and agreed to furnish the electricity.

The idea went over well with the Stony Run farmers. They organized a cooperative under which they built lines and they did get electric light and power to their farms. For decades to follow, this simple idea of forming an electric cooperative proved hard to duplicate in the area, as well as across the country for a multitude of reasons. It wasn't until the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 made federal loans available that electric cooperatives started to spring up around the country.

By 1936, our area farmers had already worked many long and hard hours to finally form our cooperative. It would be December of 1938 before the first group of members of Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association would have electric lights. It is hard to imagine that Stony Run Light and Power had been operating for the 25 years prior. It was in January of 1952, after 38 years of operation, that Stony Run Light and Power joined Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power. Minnesota Valley had almost 2,700 miles of line and 5,000 members and had only been in operation for just 16 years at that time.

The Stony Run Light and Power story is an inspirational part of our electric cooperative history. Electric cooperatives across the country play a crucial role in their rural communities by providing reliable electricity and so much more. Nationwide there are now over 800 electric cooperatives serving over 40 million people.

Engineering & Operations // Bob Kratz

Manager of Operations

The Summer Pole Treating crew has wrapped up for the year while inspecting/treating about 3,100 poles. There was about a 1.33% reject rate on the poles they treated. This program helps to extend the life of power poles on our distribution/transmission system.

The rains have been very spotty as to who gets what amount. This has not hampered our underground crew by shutting down the plow. The calendar shows still quite a few underground installations (like in the picture to the right) to go, with a few consumers inquiring about having theirs put in the ground. From now until the ground freezes, we refer to it as crunch time around here. We want to get as much plowed in as possible to serve your needs if you decide to do an upgrade on your service this fall.

Contractor, Karian/Peterson, is starting a three phase line rebuild in late August along County Road #5, just north of the Lisbon Substation. This is a three-mile stretch that will be upgraded to bigger poles and a larger conductor to ensure more capacity and durability in that area of the system.

Fall harvest will be in full swing soon, so stay safe and alert during your long days in the fields. We still have power poles we will be changing out in some fields once the crops are harvested due to being rejected. There are also some poles to retire due to conversions from overhead to underground construction that was done throughout the summer this year.

Again, be safe and have a good harvest season.

Find us on

Comparative Report

	Jan-Jul 2021	Jan-Jul 2020	Jan-Jul 2001
Kwh Purchased	119,925,709	120,480,262	70,775,684
Kwh Sold	112,338,736	113,055,705	66,548,207
Cost Of Purchased Power	$5,602,935	$5,536,744	$1,384,507
Patronage Capital Margins	$1,407,331	$684,415	$232,104
Reserve For Taxes	$154,583	$178,304	$46,900
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	46.72	45.96	19.56
	July '21	**July '20**	**July '01**
Total Plant	$83,003,041	$79,084,661	$13,191,426
Number of Active Services	5,344	5,288	5,517
Avg. Residential Bill	$225.17	$225.18	$44.77
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,740	1,835	1,191
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,928	3,031	1,296
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	32,404	30,655	21,156

Find Your Location Number for a Bill Credit!

There are two account numbers hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 to receive a bill credit. The bill credit starts at $10, but if neither number is claimed before the 25th of the month, *the unclaimed amount rolls over to the next month!* If both numbers are claimed, the recipients split the credit, then it starts again at $10.

FIND YOUR NUMBER AND CLAIM BY THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER TO RECEIVE: $70

Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) helps protect and reconnect your heat from October 1st through April 30th. CWR protection is for residential customers only.

All electric and natural gas companies must offer CWR protection. Different types of payment plans are available, depending on your household income. D three seventeen zero one A If you are having trouble keeping up with your winter heating bills, contact your electric company to sign up for a CWR payment plan.

CWR protection ends on April 30th. If you still owe on your bill on April 30th, you may ask your electric company to continue your payment plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

YES. You must make and keep a CWR payment plan with your electric utility to receive protection between October 1st and April 30th. This is true for all residential customers, including senior citizens and families with young children. Payment plans can be established at any time during the CWR season. If the payment plan is broken the electric company is not required to offer additional arrangements. If you are unable to agree on a payment amount, you may request an appeal from your electric company.

How do I sign up?

Contact your electric company and request a CWR payment plan. Once you make and keep a CWR payment plan, the utility will turn on your heat. As long as you make your payments, you are protected until April 30th.

When and how do I file an appeal?

If you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan, you can request an appeal from your electric company. You have 10 days to submit your appeal to the Commission. The Commission will help you set up a payment plan. Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

What are the utility requirements?

Before disconnecting service between October 1st and April 30th, electric companies must provide you with:

- Notice of disconnection.
- Payment plan options to stop a disconnection.
- Appeal rights if you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan.
- A list of local energy assistance and weatherization providers.
- A list of no-cost and low-cost methods to conserve energy.
- A Third Party Notice form.

What if I can't make my scheduled payment?

If you can't make your payments, call your utility immediately to make a new CWR payment plan. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.

What if I rent and pay my own utility bills?

If the natural gas or electric service in your name affects your primary heat, you are eligible for CWR protection.

Need help reading and understanding notices?

If you have trouble with utility bills and notices, fill out a Third Party Notice form and the utility will send copies to the person you choose so you don't miss important dates. The Third Party is not responsible for paying any bills.

smart hub

Thank you to all who filled in the new contact information or registered on SmartHub!

Congratulations to *Ronald Meulebroeck* who received a $10 credit to his energy bill for returning the updated contact form and to *Samuel Raap* who registered on SmartHub and received a $25 credit to his energy bill!

Member Services // Scott Kubesh

Member Services Manager

Unruly Trees and Power Lines: We're On It

We love trees. They beautify our landscape, provide shade and are an essential part of nature. J three thirty one zero four When you see us out trimming trees, know that we are doing so to keep you safe and prevent service issues.

Too Close for Comfort

Although most trees do not present a problem, some of them grow into or crowd power lines or other utility equipment. When greenery becomes too close for comfort, we have to address it because overgrowth can interfere with power distribution and create a fire hazard.

Power lines can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite. Additionally, the lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during high winds. Stormy weather can also cause limbs to break off and land on lines.

In fact, the majority of power outages are caused by tree-related issues. It is our job to ensure trees, branches and limbs are a safe distance from power lines.

Clear power lines make it easier and safer for lineworkers to access lines and fix problems that may occur. When clearing around lines, we make sure proper pruning techniques are used to preserve tree health as much as possible. Pruning is the first line of defense against unruly trees, although sometimes a tree must be removed. This is a last resort for certain scenarios: when a fast-growing tree is located directly under a power line or for trees that are leaning, in decline, or cracked or split.

In Your Own Yard

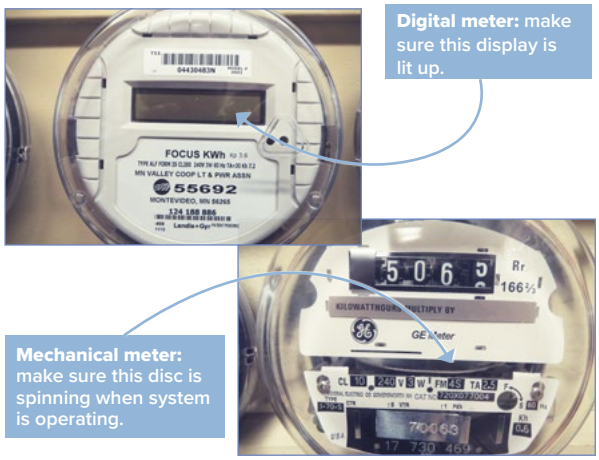
When hiring someone to trim trees on your property, know that most tree-care workers are not qualified to work around energized power lines. By law, only OSHA-certified utility line clearance workers are allowed to work on trees or branches within 10 feet of a power line.

Contact Minnesota Valley Cooperative at (320) 269-2163 with questions about trees around power lines.

NOTICE: MAKE SURE YOUR METER IS 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. 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.



Furnace Inspection Program

- Preventive Maintenance
- Thorough Inspection and Maintenance
- Fossil Fuel or Electric Heating Systems

Contact our Member Services Department at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 to schedule your inspection.