



MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

Our Commitment to Safety

Working with electricity is dangerous... period. That's why Minnesota Valley spends a lot of time, energy and money on safety training for our employees. We devote an average of 40 hours per employee per year to safety training. Linemen receive much more than the average.

We treat our investment in safety as a top priority for not only our employees, but the public. We make it a priority to educate children about electrical safety in particular. Each year, we ask elementary schools in our area if we may come in and provide safety demonstrations to their third and fourth graders. We gear towards that age group because our industry feels that is the age in which we have the best chance of getting our message across. As well as schools, we give demonstrations to 4-H clubs, fire departments, scout groups and any other organization interested in learning more about electrical safety. We spend quite a bit of time and money on general electrical safety messages with the entire public in our service area, as well. We not only feel public education about electrical safety is important; we feel it is our duty.

The foundation of our employee safety initiative is a continuing education program for our line department

personnel. These safety meetings are coordinated and taught by loss control instructors from our statewide association and our cooperative owned insurance company, Federated. Typically, the line department has 10 half-day safety meetings per year with the instructor. We also send our line crews to at least one trade meeting each year that includes safety courses. Special employee certification training is also provided each year in first aid and CPR. We have a formal Safety Committee that reviews and updates our Job Procedure Manual. This 70-page document covers general and detailed safety rules aimed at keeping our people safe. The committee is responsible for communicating the document to all employees at least once a year.

Every three years, Minnesota Valley goes through a process called the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program or RESAP. This is a program through our national association. The program culminates in a panel of safety professionals going through our building, trucks, equipment and documentation. The documentation alone is very extensive. It must prove that we have been complying with the regulations and reporting requirements of OSHA, MN DOT, US DOT, EPA and MPCA rules. They also watch our people work out in the field on the jobsite. At the end of the day, they determine if our overall com-

(Manager's Message continued on page 2)



Minnesota Valley Cooperative will be closed on
Thursday, November 24th for Thanksgiving.

Manager's Message (continued from page 1)

mitment to safety passes their standards. Minnesota Valley has always passed this program and we did again this year. Along with the candid assessment, they let us know areas we could improve on to help strengthen our safety program.

We not only invest in the human side of the safety equation, but also in the equipment necessary for our employees to conduct their work in a safe manner. Maintaining equipment in prime working condition is critical. Each day our linemen go through a visual check of their equipment. They depend on non-conductive (dielectric) tools such as protective rubber gloves and sleeves and fiberglass hot sticks, to insulate them from the lethal force of electricity. Our vehicle fleet is also subject to on-going scrutiny. The fleet is highly maintained and inspected annually by a MN DOT certified inspector. The bucket trucks and diggers are also subject to annual dielectric testing.

Working with electricity is one of the most dangerous occupations one can take up. Not just for the fact that electricity is dangerous by nature, but most of the time when linemen are working with electricity the weather is “just

plain old nasty”. This compounds the danger. Throughout your cooperative, you have a dedicated group of people here. They know their job is to provide you, the member-owners, with the best possible electric service they can. To help them to that end, you, the members of Minnesota Valley, provide them with very good trucks, equipment and educational opportunities. More importantly, you provide them with your commitment to their safety.

Work Plan and Budget

The 2023 Work Plan and Budget is in draft form and will soon be in the hands of the Board. They will be discussing it at their regular meeting later this month. There is a lot of work that goes into a Work Plan and Budget and most of the heavy lifting is done by the department heads. Fortunately, they have all had some experience in budget making, so we always have pretty high expectations on ending the year pretty close to where we plan. Of course, the volatile variable in budget making is weather. Weather can either make things happen or make things miserable operationally and financially.

Finish your harvest out safely!

ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // ERIC WOLLSCHLAGER



Manager of Operations

We continue with summer work that had been stopped this spring because of storms. The dry conditions and warm weather have enabled us to chip away at these projects through the middle of October. Work will continue on service upgrades, underground cable and other projects as long as the fall weather allows. We are down to around 10 broken distribution poles to be replaced from the May storms and approximately 1,700 poles yet to be straightened. OCR maintenance continues with approximately 109 scheduled to be taken down and sent in for maintenance. Voltage regulator readings are also being taken and testing completed for normal operations.

On October 5th, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) conducted its Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) at Minnesota Valley. This involves a group of five inspectors from MREA and neighboring co-ops who visit us and do a safety inspection of our facilities. There are also field inspections of crews working and substations. The overall outcome was very

good and they were pleased with how we manage our facilities. Minnesota Valley participates in this evaluation every three years.

Karian Peterson is back to work on the Minnesota transmission line rebuild south of Clarkfield. Work stopped back in May for emergency storm repairs on Minnesota Valley's system, as well as work for East River. Poles and hardware taken for storm work was re-ordered and have arrived. Approximately 3.5 miles need to be framed and set before they begin stringing in new conductor. New switch poles are also part of the project and need to be completed before the job is done. A separate crew is being assembled to take on the job of straightening the more than 150 transmission poles still leaning from back in May.

Minnesota Valley Tree Service continues the right-of-way clearing on the system. As of October, they are mostly cutting in the area south of Clarkfield and the east Minnesota and Vallery Substation areas.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days. If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to boost efficiency.

Source: Dept. of Energy

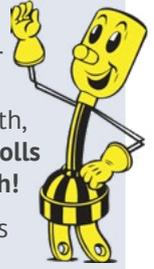


Comparative Report

	Jan-Sept 2022	Jan-Sept 2021	Jan-Sept 2002
Kwh Purchased	169,203,118	149,895,322	104,142,868
Kwh Sold	160,343,960	140,263,792	96,530,117
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$8,462,170	\$7,217,598	\$2,836,340
Patronage Capital Margins	\$732,201	\$1,514,473	\$372,743
Reserve For Taxes	\$192,753	\$198,750	\$201,402
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	50.26	48.15	27.23
	September-22	September-21	September-02
Total Plant	\$90,879,337	\$83,566,129	\$34,739,462
Number of Active Services	5,316	5,334	5,226
Avg. Residential Bill	\$183.32	\$194.60	\$98.15
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,351	1,407	1,290
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,712	2,452	1,725
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	32,246	27,637	22,635

FIND YOUR NUMBER AND CLAIM BY THE 25TH OF NOVEMBER TO RECEIVE:

Congratulations to **Steven Londgren** of **Clarkfield**, who identified his number to earn \$30 off his energy bill, plus an additional \$10 for being an Operation Round Up participant!



Find Your Location Number for a Bill Credit

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If you find your location number, you receive a \$10 bill credit. If neither number is claimed before the 25th of the month, **the unclaimed amount rolls over into the next month!**

If both location numbers are claimed in a month, the recipients will split the credit. Once claimed, it will start again at \$10. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

Fire Safety and Prevention

With the holidays soon approaching, family and friends will be gathering together, cooking up delicious recipes and decorating for the season. As you prepare for the season's festivities, it is a good idea to take a few moments to consider these fire safety and prevention tips.

As temperatures dip, many people turn to space heaters to help warm a specific area of their home. It is important to follow each manufacturer's directions to reduce the risk of a burn or fire hazard. When selecting a space heater, look for one that stops heating if it is tipped over. Place it on a hard, level surface where it will not tip over, out of high traffic areas and away from flammable materials. When leaving the room, make sure to turn it off.

Electrical cords can also pose a fire risk. Before installing decorations, look for



signs of wear on cords, sockets and plugs. Do not use appliances that have frayed, cracked, wire-exposed, taped or otherwise questionable cords or plugs.

Unattended cooking equipment is another common cause of home fires. When preparing a meal or snack, remain in the kitchen to supervise the cooking process. Keep oven mitts, food wrappers, towels and wooden utensils away from the stovetop or cooking surface.

For your own safety and the safety of your family, make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home. It is especially important to have fire alarms installed near bedrooms to protect you while you sleep. Test the alarms at least once a month to ensure they are working properly, and replace the batteries every six months.

Have a safe and enjoyable fall!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2023 Caucus Meetings

Thursday, February 9th

District 5: Darryl Bursack
- 10:30 AM at Clarkfield City Hall

District 7: Wayne Peltier
- 1:30 PM at Cottonwood Community Center

2023 Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 25th

Prairie's Edge Casino



Member Services Manager



Five Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: *high winter bills are never fun.* Minnesota Valley Co-op is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

- 1) Mind the thermostat.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 62 and 65 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.
- 2) Button up your home.** The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.
- 3) Use window coverings wisely.** Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.
- 4) Consider your approach to appliance use.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Be aware of electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.
- 5) Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. N three zero four zero four A By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at (320) 269-2163 or (800) 247-5051 to take advantage of our free home energy audits. Minnesota Valley's energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Are You Ready For Winter?



Minnesota Valley Cooperative offers a furnace inspection program to allow you to rest a bit easier when it comes to the operation of your heating equipment. Please contact our office to get scheduled for an inspection. While scheduling a furnace inspection is a smart move in the fall, it isn't the only thing that needs attention. There are many things we sometimes overlook before entering the heating season. Perhaps you could use some weatherization, new windows, new heating equipment, insulation or any one of many other things in your home. The Member Services Department is here for your energy needs. Please contact our office at (320) 269-2163 or (800) 247-5051 to see how we can help you prepare for the colder days ahead.



Office Hours

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

24-Hour Telephone Answering

320.269.2163
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