



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



*General Manager*

### **New Meters Being Installed**

We are in the process of replacing our Turtle Metering System with the Tantalus Metering System. You may notice a truck with a *NexGen Contracted by Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power*

*Association* placard on the door at your place. They will be changing out your meter. We hope to have the system fully operating and all meters changed out by late fall. As of this writing, they are well underway installing meters in the southeast part of our system.



Our present Turtle Metering System was installed in the late 90s and has served us extremely well over the years. We could have eked out a few more years, but the manufacturer stopped supporting the system several years ago and the supply of parts from other cooperatives that had previously retired their Turtle systems has been drying up. Anyway, we are moving on with the new \$1.7 million metering system. The new metering system will have many diagnostic features which will allow us to provide you with more consistent voltage and many other nuanced pieces of information that we can use to help us provide you with better power quality. We will be providing you with more information about the metering system and its capabilities available to you as we move along.

### **Contacts with Power Lines**

Harvest is just around the corner. For those of you in production agriculture, you know how harried the season can get. Please take some time to discuss working safely

around power lines with your family or those you will be working with to get the crop out and prep the land for next year's crop. Each year, there are more contacts with equipment and power lines. It is not just with Minnesota Valley, it is with all rural electricians across the country who serve power in production ag communities such as us.

So please, think overhead power lines this fall. We don't care about having to rebuild a line knocked down by equipment – that is our job. What we do care about is someone getting injured or killed. It happens and it happens fast. Please be careful and have a great harvest season.

### **Best Wishes to Mark Sweno**

Congratulations to Mark Sweno on a job well done! Mark has taken care of our building, grounds and substations keeping them in good order and shape for 17 years now. He has done a remarkable job day in and day out. Well done Mark and thank you! We wish Mark the best in his well-deserved retirement. You will be missed.



**Congratulations and  
Best Wishes on your  
retirement, Mark!**

# Stay Safe this Harvest Season



It won't be long until the fields are ready for harvest and all of the extra work that comes with it. While harvest season is a satisfying time of year on a farm, long hours in the field can result in workers getting tired and forgetting important safety precautions.

Minnesota Valley urges farm operators, family members and employees to be aware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. The most common types of equipment involved in power line accidents are portable grain augers, oversized wagons,

large combines and other tall equipment that comes into contact with overhead lines.

Safe Electricity notes how, "The increasing size of farm equipment, in particular grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allow operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It's vital to keep equipment safely away from them—at a minimum 10-foot safety radius around the electric line."

Please take the following measures to stay safe this harvest season:

- ✓ Use a spotter when moving tall loads near lines.
- ✓ Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- ✓ Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. *Jump* clear of the equipment—do not *step*—making sure both feet hit the ground at the same time. Never touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

## ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // ERIC WOLLSCHLAGER



Manager of Operations

Line crews are moving along with service upgrades, as well as other projects. The dry summer has brought on some very tough soil conditions for plowing and digging in underground cable. Karian Peterson has started on the Asbury to Gluek transmission line rebuild and things have been moving along very well.

This year's pole treating crew wrapped up the season on August 17<sup>th</sup>. L two fourteen zero two Approximately 3,000 poles were treated this year with about 60 being rejected. A special thank you to Bradyn, Isaac, Noah, Carter, Axton and Jace for all your hard work this year.

The installation of meters for the new Tantalus Metering System began on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Meter change outs began in the far southeast corner of the system in the

Echo Substation area. As of the middle of August, there is only one person from the NexGen company doing the installations. More installers are on the way in the near future to help with the installations. Tantalus and NexGen are still planning on having the installation of meters completed by November.

### Reminder:

You may be seeing vehicles with the NexGen logo and Minnesota Valley sticker on the door. They are working on the meter replacement project.



Contractor for



## Find Your Location Number and Receive a Credit!

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If you find your location number, you receive a \$10 bill credit (*Operation Round Up participants get a \$10 bonus*). If neither number is claimed before the 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

Find your number and claim by the 25<sup>th</sup> of September.

**\$10**

Congratulations to Lisa Moes, who identified her number to earn \$10 off her energy bill!



# NOTICE: Make Sure Your Heat 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.

**Digital meter:**  
make sure this display is lit up.



**Mechanical meter:**  
make sure this disc is spinning when system is operating.



## Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) helps protect and reconnect your heat from October 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>. 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. If you are having trouble keeping up with your winter heating bills, contact Minnesota Valley to sign up for a CWR payment plan. CWR protection ends on April 30<sup>th</sup>. If you still owe on your bill on April 30<sup>th</sup>, you may ask 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 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. 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 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 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 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, 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.

## Comparative Report

	Jan-Jul 2023	Jan-Jul 2022	Jan-Jul 2003
Kwh Purchased	132,466,084	136,919,469	86,861,439
Kwh Sold	125,228,879	129,818,520	80,881,794
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$6,614,424	\$6,613,664	\$2,244,023
Patronage Capital Margins	\$1,041,379	\$880,347	\$652,950
Reserve For Taxes	\$168,000	\$149,919	\$133,938
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	50.55	48.61	25.83
	July '23	July '22	July '03
Total Plant	\$95,894,114	\$90,302,315	\$36,158,978
Number of Active Services	5,312	5,320	5,226
Avg. Residential Bill	\$230.32	\$231.06	\$124.03
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,640	1,804	1,641
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	3,076	3,187	2,249
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	35,541	34,054	24,887





## MEMBER SERVICES // SCOTT KUBESH

Member Services Manager

### 4 Reasons Fall is the Best Time to Insulate Your Attic

The change of seasons is upon us. We are saying goodbye to summer and getting ready for cooler fall weather. I'm not really ready to think about winter, but fall is the best time to insulate your attic (or add insulation). Here are a few reasons why:

#### 1. Cooler Weather

Nobody wants to climb into their attic in the middle of summer when the temperature in the attic is over 100 degrees. Cooler fall temperatures give your attic a chance to cool down to a comfortable working temperature.



#### 2. Drier Weather

Along with the cooler weather, we are going into the drier time of the year. I three fifteen zero four This is important for insulating because you don't want to add a new layer of insulation and trap moisture below it. That lessens the effectiveness of the insulation and could lead to mold or mildew in your insulation.



#### 3. Prepare Your House for Winter

You are tackling a few other jobs around the house, like cleaning the gutters and checking the condition of your siding. While you're up on the ladder, look for signs of air leaks or water damage around the eaves that might be coming from your attic. Now you know where to look, so pay special attention to them while you're up in the attic.



#### 4. Keep an Eye Out for Best Prices

Insulation sells all year round, but now that you know why fall is the best time, you can keep an eye out for sale prices on insulation and then install it when you and the weather are ready.



## Furnace Inspections

It is that time of the year again. With the heating season upon us, it is time to take a serious look at your heating system. Many of us just turn up the thermostat and expect the furnace to work and that may be the case. The problem with that being many of our furnaces have not been properly serviced for quite some time. This lack of preventative maintenance could be *costing you money*. There are many things that could be robbing you of the full potential of every heating dollar.

You may need to arrange for a technician in some instances if you have furnace operation issues. Contact the *Minnesota Valley Cooperative Member Services Department* since a complete furnace inspection usually requires a professional technician. Call and arrange for a qualified technician to schedule a furnace inspection. Annual tune-ups have as important a value for furnaces as they do for cars. We would be happy to schedule your service work. Contact us at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

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

