



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

### Make Safety First This Harvest Season

Long hours, powerful equipment and the rush to get the crop out of the field

can all add to the risk of an accident. Most electrical contact accidents can be prevented with a few simple safety steps.

First, make sure you and your farm workers know the location of overhead power lines and plan out ways to avoid them when moving equipment. Make sure—don't assume—everyone understands that any contact with these lines creates a path to the ground for electricity and carries the potential for a serious, even fatal, accident. Everyone should know the height of all your farm equipment and how high power lines are to prevent accidental contact. A good rule of thumb is to stay at least ten feet away from power lines. Be extra careful when moving grain augers. Many electrical accidents on farms occur when augers are accidentally raised into power lines or implements are folded or unfolded into power lines. These rules also apply to guy wires, which support power line poles. Damaging guy wires can weaken the poles and even cause them to topple, bringing live power lines down onto the ground and creating an extremely hazardous situation.

If your farm machinery or any other vehicle hits a power pole or comes in contact with electrical wires, follow these rules to stay alive:

**Do not get out of the vehicle unless it is on fire.** The safest place is to stay in the vehicle and call for help or wave to someone passing by. Motion them not to come near you, but to call for help for you. There have been several occasions when equipment operators have called on a cell phone from inside the cab when their equipment has become entangled in power lines. They stay put until our linemen arrive to safely handle the situation.

**Always assume a power line is electrified!** Do not let others get close to the farm equipment or vehicle until our linemen have arrived and cleared the equipment. Do not attempt to move a downed power line with anything. If your vehicle is on fire, jump out and away from the vehicle so that no part of your body touches the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Continue jumping away from the vehicle for quite some distance. Be sure to visually check for any wires on the ground or in your path before jumping. Please share these safety rules with everyone in your family and those who work on your farm. Make regular safety discussions an ongoing part of your harvest season. Have a safe and prosperous harvest!

## October is National Cooperative Month

When you purchase electricity from Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association, you are more than a customer – you are a **member-owner**. That is because Minnesota Valley is a member-owned cooperative created to serve the specific needs of the people it serves.

This distinction is just one of the ways Minnesota Valley is structured differently than municipal or investor-owned utilities. Cooperatives are uniquely designed to meet the local needs of their members, with the members themselves having a say in how the business is run. To celebrate this difference, each October is recognized as *National Cooperative Month*.

**Minnesota Valley  
will be closed Friday,  
November 10<sup>th</sup> in honor  
of Veterans Day and  
Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>  
for Thanksgiving.**

**October is National Cooperative Month**

Cooperatives are member-owned businesses and are part of the self-help tradition of America. Cooperatives are businesses organized by people to provide needed goods and services.

**Cooperative businesses:**

- Are owned by the people who use their services.
- Provide an economic benefit for their members.
- Are democratic organizations, controlled by their members.
- Are autonomous and independent.
- Recognize the importance of education about cooperative business and organizational practices.
- Support cooperation among cooperatives, which has resulted in the growing importance of cooperatives in today's global economy.
- Exhibit concern for their communities.

Electric cooperatives across the country play an important role in their rural communities by providing reliable electricity and so much more. Minnesota has 44 electric distribution co-ops that serve 730,000 customer meters or about 1.7 million people of Minnesota's 5.7 million residents. Electric cooperatives cover 85 percent of the geographic area in Minnesota. Cooperatives also operate the largest distribution network in the state by far, with more than 121,000 miles of electric distribution lines.

**The Nation's First Electric Cooperative Was Born Here In 1914**

The first electric cooperative in the United States 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 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 line and brought 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 cooperation. 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.

**ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS**

**ERIC WOLLSCHLAGER**



*Manager of Operations*

The dry weather continues throughout the area and Minnesota Valley crews continue to

take advantage of it to get work completed. Underground cable installation and other service upgrades are being pushed to be completed before harvest. With harvest coming up soon, I would like to remind everyone to watch out for overhead power lines, poles, guy wires and any underground power line junction boxes or transformers. Damage to power line equipment is not only dangerous, but can be very costly to repair.

On Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, the line department had pole top rescue training. This training is done annually and all the linemen participate. It involves climbing up a pole, retrieving a rescue dummy hanging near the top of the pole and lowering it to the ground safely. This is a good skill to stay proficient at and, hopefully, something we never need to do in the field.

The Tantalus Metering System installation is moving along. As of the middle of September, there are approximately 800 new meters installed. We still only have one person from the NexGen company working on the meter installs. Additional personnel from NexGen were supposed to be onsite by the end of August, but have not arrived yet. Shortage of workers have pushed back more help arriving. Hopefully they can get more meter installers here in the near future.

*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.*

**Comparative Report**

|                                  | Jan-Aug 2023 | Jan-Aug 2022 | Jan-Aug 2003 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Kwh Purchased                    | 150,325,528  | 154,011,045  | 99,457,862   |
| Kwh Sold                         | 142,325,803  | 145,928,384  | 92,308,320   |
| Cost Of Purchased Power          | \$7,598,488  | \$7,578,941  | \$2,615,351  |
| Patronage Capital Margins        | \$1,416,819  | \$708,426    | \$755,294    |
| Reserve For Taxes                | \$192,000    | \$171,336    | \$153,072    |
| Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)   | 51.59        | 49.49        | 26.30        |
|                                  | August '23   | August '22   | August '03   |
| Total Plant                      | \$96,530,265 | \$90,600,370 | \$36,154,900 |
| Number of Active Services        | 5,313        | 5,325        | 5,224        |
| Avg. Residential Bill            | \$241.57     | \$203.58     | \$119.37     |
| Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption | 1,738        | 1,552        | 1,580        |
| Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers     | 3,218        | 3,025        | 2,187        |
| Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)       | 35,390       | 34,038       | 27,289       |





Office Manager

## Convenient Bill Payment Options

In today's fast-paced world, convenience is paramount. That is why we're excited to share with you the numerous advantages of paying your bills through our secure online and auto draft channels.

### 1) Say Goodbye to Mail Delays

One of the most significant benefits of online bill payments is the elimination of mail delays. Weather, postal service issues or other unforeseen circumstances can sometimes cause significant delays in the delivery of your payments. With online payments, your transactions are instant, ensuring your bills are paid on time, every time. No more fretting about late fees or service interruptions due to postal hiccups.

### 2) 24/7 Accessibility

Our online payment portal is open 24/7, 365 days a year. You no longer need to rush to make payments during business hours or wait until a convenient time to call. Pay your bills whenever it suits you, whether it's early in the morning, late at night or during your lunch break – the choice is yours.

### 3) Save Time and Resources

Paying bills online is a time-saver. It eliminates the need to write checks, find envelopes, purchase stamps or make trips to the mailbox. Plus, you can set up recurring payments, so you never miss a due date. This automation can free up valuable time for you to focus on more important tasks and enjoy the things you love.

### 4) Enhanced Security

Rest assured that your financial information is safe when paying bills online. We employ state-of-the-art security measures to protect your data, ensuring that your transactions are confidential and secure. Compare this to the potential risks of mailing a check or sharing credit card details over the phone.

### 5) Environmentally Friendly

Online bill payments are eco-friendly. By reducing the need for paper checks, envelopes, and postage, you're contributing to a more sustainable future. It's a small step, but every effort counts in reducing our carbon footprint.

### 6) Convenient Record-Keeping

When you pay bills online, you have a digital record of all your transactions readily available. No more shuffling through stacks of paper receipts or statements. Simply log in to your account to review your payment history, making budgeting and tax time a breeze.

Switching to online bill payments is hassle-free and takes just a few minutes to set up. Visit our website, app or contact our customer support team for assistance in getting started.

We're committed to providing you with the best possible experience and we believe that embracing the convenience of online bill payments is a step in that direction. As always, our customer support team is here to answer any questions or provide guidance should you choose to make the switch.

## 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.



## MEMBER SERVICES // SCOTT KUBESH

Member Services Manager

### Fall is in the Air

It is that time of year again to prepare for the colder weather to come. Many of us seem to forget about one of the most important pieces of equipment in your home when preparing for winter. Your HVAC system is called upon to work many hours keeping your home at a desirable temperature. The many hours can tend to take a toll on these heating systems. Fall is an ideal time to have your heating equipment maintained to make sure it is at its peak.

Minnesota Valley has had a *furnace inspection program* in place for many years, and will continue that program this fall. We will do preventative maintenance on your residential main heating system no matter what type of fuel source it may be. Please contact the Member Services Department at our office to schedule an appointment today.

#### Are You Remodeling?

Winter can also be a good time to remodel or upgrade things around the house. If you are thinking of doing anything this fall or winter in regards to heating system upgrades or an energy efficiency project, please give us a call. D three twenty zero four We can help with system design, lay out and installation. The Member Services Department can hopefully answer some of those questions that always come up. Please call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

#### How About Some Financing?

If you do decide to go ahead with some of those home improvement projects, Minnesota Valley offers low interest loans for energy conservation practices like weatherization and installation of windows, doors and insulation. Conditions of the loan are that you must be a member of Minnesota Valley REC, have a good credit rating with Minnesota Valley and submit a credit application to our office. All applications are completely confidential and can be processed within a matter of days. A very reasonable rate of 5% simple interest is charged. Up to \$15,000 can be borrowed for a period of up to seven years. Over the years, these loans have enabled many people to do work to their homes at a very affordable rate.

SAVE THE DATE

### 2024 Caucus Meetings

Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

District 1: Don Fernholz

10:30 AM • Madison VFW

District 3: Mark Peterson

1:30 PM • Dawson City Hall

### 2024 Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Lac qui Parle High School

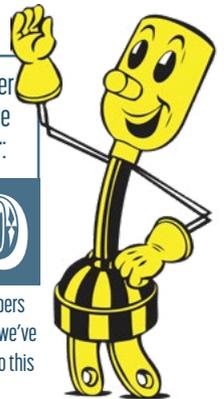
### Find Your Location Number and Receive a Credit!

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 October.



There were no numbers found last month, so we've rolled the amount into this month's prize!



#### Minnesota Valley Co-op News

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## Furnace Inspection Program

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. However, if your furnace hasn't been properly serviced for quite some time, the 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.

Contact the *Minnesota Valley Cooperative Member Services Department* and arrange for a qualified technician to schedule a furnace inspection. Annual tune-ups are as important for furnaces as they are for cars. We would be happy to schedule your service work. Contact us at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

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

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