



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



*General Manager*

### **What a Nice Fall**

It has been great weather to enjoy this fall rolling off a very nice summer. Harvest is coming to a close and the system held up well under light load drying conditions. As you know, Mother

Nature did most of the corn drying this year. We continue to work on the balance of our maintenance and construction projects that were in our Work Plan for the year and are making good progress on those. We will have our Work Plan and Budget proposal for 2024 to the board for its review at the end of the month.

### **Trimming Future Problems**

As you probably know, for electric utilities, most outages are weather related. Minnesota Valley is no different. We do the best we can to control the effects of weather on our system by the way we take care of it. One way we do that is by working to keep up on our vegetation management/tree trimming right-of-way maintenance program.

We try to rotate through our system at least every five years and like to be closer to every four years. With 3,000 miles of distribution line and 240 miles of transmission line, keeping trees out of it is a pretty big project for us. Our goal is to trim trees back far enough so they will not have grown into the line by the time we get back around. When the trimming crews come through and ask permission to trim the trees,

please let them take what they need. The payoff is that you and your neighbors will have a better chance of having lights on during and after ice storms and heavy windstorms.

The contractor we use is our solely owned Minnesota Valley Tree Service based out of Granite Falls. They have a certified arborist on staff and are skilled in their craft. We feel maintaining proper right-of-way clearance is one of the most effective steps we take around here to keep your power reliable. For the balance of this year, our trimmers are on the southeastern quadrant of our system. When planting your trees, choose varieties with care and please plant with power lines in mind. As a rule, do not plant trees within 25 feet of a pole to give the power lines plenty of space.

### **Prepare for Winter**

Get your heating system tuned up—whether gas, oil or electric. Give us a call to get on the schedule. A properly tuned heating system can not only save you money, it will also give you a better chance of making it through the winter without a problem.

### **Veterans Day Observed on November 11<sup>th</sup>**

Thank you to all Military Veterans who have served our country in the U.S. Armed Forces, we appreciate your service and sacrifice.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Minnesota Valley Cooperative will be closed on  
**Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> for Thanksgiving.**





Manager of Operations

As of the middle of October, the surrounding area received some much needed rain. Anywhere from 2-3 inches fell across the system. Harvest appeared to be moving along well until the rain started and settled the dust.

With harvest going on, please remember to watch out for poles and overhead power lines, as well as any underground power line equipment.

Minnesota Valley line crews continue to push forward with overhead and underground projects. Karian Peterson has been doing a lot of the cable installation, staying ahead of the line crews to get the underground services completed before the ground freezes. There is still a list for underground projects and we will continue with underground cable installation as long as the weather allows. Pole change outs and OCR maintenance are also still ongoing at this time.

The transmission line rebuild from Asbury to Gluek continues to move along well. The crews left the job for a couple weeks to assist at other jobs, but have returned. N two twenty-nine zero two There are still a lot of poles to be set before stringing in the new wire can begin.

The Tantalus Metering Project also continues to move forward. In the beginning of October, two more meter installers arrived with another two to four scheduled to arrive by the middle of the month. Weekly meetings with both Tantalus and NexGen continue to keep the project moving forward.

**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



## 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

FEBRUARY

1

MARCH

23

### 2024 Annual Meeting

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

Lac qui Parle High School

## Are You Ready For Winter?

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. 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 that can be overlooked 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.

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.

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

- Perform Preventive Maintenance
- Receive a Thorough Inspection and Maintenance as Needed
- Important for Fossil Fuel or Electric Heating Systems

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: What You Need to Know

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that can kill you. It is colorless, odorless and tasteless, so it is difficult to detect. CO is produced when any fuel that contains carbon is burned, such as gasoline, natural gas, wood and coal.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), at least 420 people die in the U.S. from accidental CO poisoning annually. Many more visit the emergency department each year due to accidental CO poisoning. There are steps you can take to help protect yourself and your household from CO poisoning.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can vary depending on the amount of CO you have been exposed to and the length of time you have been exposed. Symptoms can include headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, weakness, confusion, shortness of breath, chest pain and loss of consciousness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, leave the area immediately and get fresh air. Call 911 or your local emergency number. Do not try to re-enter the area until it has been cleared by emergency personnel.

*You can help protect yourself and your loved ones from carbon monoxide poisoning.*

## Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- ◆ **Install carbon monoxide detectors** in your home and check them regularly. Place CO detectors on every level of your home, including the basement and attic. Check the batteries in your CO detectors every month and replace them as needed.
- ◆ **Make sure your appliances and heating systems are properly installed and maintained.** Have your appliances and heating systems inspected and cleaned by a qualified professional every year.
- ◆ **Never use charcoal or gas grills inside** your home or garage. CO fumes can build up quickly in enclosed spaces, leading to poisoning.
- ◆ **Keep generators outside and away from windows and doors.** CO fumes from generators can enter your home through open windows or doors and cause poisoning.
- ◆ **Never leave a car running in a garage,** even with the door open. CO fumes from a car can build up in a garage and poison you.
- ◆ **If you have a fireplace, have it inspected and cleaned regularly.** CO fumes from a fireplace can enter your home and cause poisoning.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen! When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy. When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

Source: Dept. of Energy



## 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 November:



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

## Comparative Report

	Jan-Sept 2023	Jan-Sept 2022	Jan-Sept 2003
Kwh Purchased	166,597,501	169,203,118	109,932,964
Kwh Sold	157,520,024	160,343,960	102,022,431
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$8,515,368	\$8,462,170	\$2,912,028
Patronage Capital Margins	\$1,441,160	\$732,201	\$788,707
Reserve For Taxes	\$216,000	\$192,753	\$172,206
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	52.52	50.26	26.49
	September '23	September '22	September '03
Total Plant	\$97,454,410	\$90,879,337	\$36,221,596
Number of Active Services	5,303	5,316	5,230
Avg. Residential Bill	\$231.77	\$183.32	\$102.23
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,605	1,351	1,311
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,865	2,712	1,857
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	33,857	32,246	22,052



## MEMBER SERVICES // SCOTT KUBESH

Member Services Manager

### Space Heaters

Space heaters can be an attractive way to heat up a room or area when the weather is cold. However, space heaters can be dangerous if used incorrectly. According to Harvard University Environmental Health & Safety group, more than 25,000 residential fires and 6,000 emergency room visits are caused by space heaters in the U.S. every year.

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide occur during the cold home-heating season from November through March. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the major cause of these winter fires can be attributed to faulty, improper use and maintenance of supplemental heating equipment, such as space heaters.

### Portable Heater Checklist

- ✓ Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved. Make sure the unit is equipped with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards. Read and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.
- ✓ Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke detectors are in good working condition.
- ✓ Check to make sure the heater is clean and in good condition and have all problems professionally repaired.
- ✓ Place heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface-- NOT on carpets, furniture or countertops.
- ✓ Space heaters have one purpose – to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food or dry clothing or towels.
- ✓ Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- ✓ Never allow pets or children near an electric heater. Accidental contact could result in serious shock or burns.
- ✓ Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.
- ✓ If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until it can be checked by a professional – if not, a serious shock could occur.
- ✓ Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from all combustible liquids like fuel, spray cans and paint, as well as flammable items such as draperies, blankets and sofas.



### Pass on the Portable and Go Permanent

We spend many hours every heating season answering questions about high bills and this season has not been any different. Sometimes those high usage concerns come down to the homeowner using portable space heaters to try and save money. There is nothing wrong with using a portable space heater, but you have to expect a corresponding increase in electric consumption with the use of space heaters.

Minnesota Valley has offered discounted electric heat rates for years and will continue to do so. An excellent way to reduce your heating bills would be to permanently install electric heat and have it separately metered to take advantage of these discounted rates. Cord connected portable space heaters are not allowed on the heat rates, but permanently attached electric heaters are.

Please call our office and ask for the Member Services Department. We will gladly explain the advantages of electric heat, the economic comparison of electric heat and ways you can take advantage of our special heat rates.

#### Office Hours

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

#### 24-Hour Telephone Answering

320.269.2163  
800.247.5051

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[www.mnvalleyrec.com](http://www.mnvalleyrec.com)

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