

### MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

#### Board Approves 2024 Work Plan and Budget

At their November meeting, the Board approved the Work Plan and Budget for the coming year. The approved budget allows us to hold our retail rates steady for 2024. It also allows us to complete the last year of improvement projects laid out in our 2021-2024 Four-Year Construction Work Plan. We will make about \$8.6 million in system improvements in 2024. The Four-Year Construction Work Plan is just under \$23 million. We will begin work on the 2025-2028 Construction Work Plan right after the first of the year. They typically take at least a year to put together and get all of the different parties involved signed off.

In addition to the construction projects, the set budget for next year includes all of the annual maintenance activities that we need to do to keep your system operating at a high level of reliability. The tree cutting, trimming and spraying to keep our lines clear when the load of the ice and wind comes; or the inspection and maintenance of the 652 oil/vacuum enclosures spread

throughout our 3,270 miles of line and 16 substations. They are basically big circuit breakers that trip and reset when things such as lightning or contact drop out the line. The inspection and maintenance of the supervisory controls for our transmission line switches, which allow us to switch line from the operations office when we have problems or need to work on different sections of line. We also need to maintain the 150 voltage regulators spread throughout the system, which are constantly adjusting to keep the proper voltage at your place. The 2,000 plus poles we test and treat each year to get more life out of them and changing out the 50 or so poles the treating crews reject. These projects and many other maintenance activities must be performed on our system each year to make sure we provide you good voltage while keeping your lights on.

Anyway, we are excited to get into another year of work on your system and to do it without a rate increase. The weather or other unforeseen events can always throw a wrench into the best of plans, as you well know. We are still healing up from the 2022 spring storms.

*(Manager's Message continued on page 2)*

## Merry Christmas from all of us at Minnesota Valley Cooperative



### Directors

- Darryl Bursack
- Don Fernholz
- Gary Groothuis
- Steve Norman
- Wayne Peltier
- Mark Peterson
- Tim Velde
- Matt Haugen, Attorney

### Employees

- Pat Carruth, General Manager
- Tony Bednarek
- Brandon Bjelland
- Stacey Boike
- Mitch Christensen
- Tyler DeZeeuw
- Trevor Diggins
- Brody Kimberlin
- James Hughes
- Andy Johnson
- Collin Kar
- Scott Kubesh
- Eric Landmark
- Matt Leese
- Blake Lymburner
- Cole Mertens
- Scott Monson
- Duane O'Malley
- Jerrad Perkins
- Tracie Peterson
- Jill Rothschild
- Jill Sand
- Logan Schmidt
- Kent Smith
- Don Snell
- Darwin Strand
- Lacey Wintz
- Eric Wollschlager

## Manager's Message (continued from page 1)

### Ending 2023 in Good Financial and Operational Shape

As of this writing, we have closed the financials through October and continue to be confident that we will end the year in good financial shape. Through October, we have a total margin year to date of \$1,758,000 compared to budget of \$828,000. Overall operating expenses, including purchase power, are down about \$150,000 year to date compared to budget. Our 2024 budget calls for a year-end total margin of \$2,020,000 and we expect to end the year ahead of that.

Operationally, we are closing in on finishing all of the maintenance projects planned for the year to keep your system operating properly. Anyway, we feel like we are in pretty good shape operationally and financially at this point for 2023.

### From All of Us to You

The Board and employees of Minnesota Valley want to let you know that we appreciate your business this past year. Thank you! We also want you to know that we appreciate working for you and for your cooperative. We look forward to working hard for you this next year at being good stewards of your system to assure you continue to get the reliable electric service you have rightfully come to expect from your cooperative.

We wish you a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Minnesota Valley will be closed  
Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday,  
December 26<sup>th</sup> for **Christmas** and  
Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 for  
**New Year's Day.**

# 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

## \$2,000 Scholarship Available

Minnesota Valley R.E.C.— along with our power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, North Dakota—will again be offering \$2,000 in scholarship money to a student or students from our service area. In order to qualify for this scholarship, a student must be a dependent child of a Minnesota Valley Cooperative member-consumer. They must be at least a senior in high school and enrolled in or planning on enrolling in a full-time course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college or university or in a vocational/technical school program for the 2024-2025 school year. All applications must be in our office by **February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

If any senior is interested, please contact Minnesota Valley at 320.269.2163 or 1.800.247.5051 and we will send you an application or go to our website at [www.mnvalleyrec.com](http://www.mnvalleyrec.com) and download an application.



## Comparative Report

|                                  | Jan-Oct 2023 | Jan-Oct 2022 | Jan-Oct 2003 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Kwh Purchased                    | 188,222,218  | 189,976,064  | 124,625,578  |
| Kwh Sold                         | 177,902,900  | 180,146,546  | 115,790,066  |
| Cost Of Purchased Power          | \$9,638,622  | \$9,573,609  | \$3,137,294  |
| Patronage Capital Margins        | \$1,758,919  | \$908,415    | \$1,146,312  |
| Reserve For Taxes                | \$240,000    | \$214,170    | \$191,340    |
| Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)   | 52.85        | 50.62        | 25.17        |
|                                  | October '23  | October '22  | October '03  |
| Total Plant                      | \$98,370,270 | \$91,714,193 | \$36,244,106 |
| Number of Active Services        | 5,308        | 5,319        | 5,232        |
| Avg. Residential Bill            | \$323.15     | \$290.95     | \$142.76     |
| Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption | 2,508        | 2,424        | 2,064        |
| Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers     | 3,840        | 3,723        | 2,631        |
| Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)       | 40,454       | 39,271       | 29,010       |

## Find Your Location Number

If you find your location number in this newsletter, you will receive a \$10 bill credit (*Operation Round Up participants get a \$10 bonus*). If no 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 starts again at \$10. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.



Make sure to claim by the 25<sup>th</sup> of December to receive a \$10 bill credit! Congratulations to Corey Hoffman who identified his number to earn a credit on his energy bill!

**\$10**



# 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

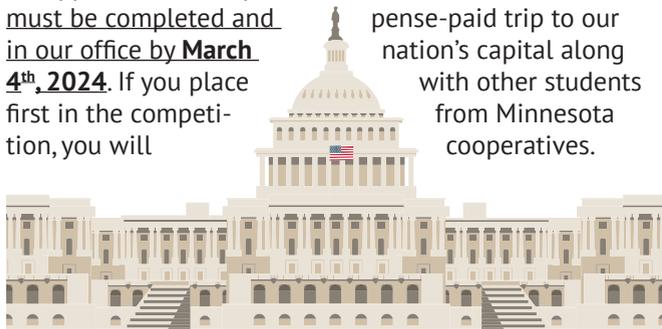
Minnesota Valley is again sponsoring a youth trip in 2024. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. is scheduled for **June 18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**. The students will join other young people from across rural America given the opportunity to see American government in action, tour our nation's capital, visit historic places of interest and meet many new friends.

The program is open to all high school sophomores and juniors in Minnesota Valley's service area, whether or not their parents are members of the cooperative. To qualify, you will need to submit an essay and application form, which are available by calling Minnesota Valley.



All applications/essays must be completed and in our office by **March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. If you place first in the competition, you will

be awarded an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital along with other students from Minnesota cooperatives.



If you are a high school sophomore or junior living in Minnesota Valley's service territory and would like to go on this all-expense-paid trip, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 and we will email you the complete application or go online at [www.mnvalleyrec.com](http://www.mnvalleyrec.com) and download the application.

## ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // ERIC WOLLSCHLAGER

*Manager of Operations*



It's the middle of November and it looks like the harvest has been completed for the most part. We have been having a really nice fall and getting a number of projects wrapped up before it gets too cold. Crews are still pushing to get underground cable installed. One mile

of single phase underground was replaced in the middle of November west of Dawson around the Highway 212 and 75 intersection. This was older cable and has been the cause of a few outages over the years. One extra project that came up in the last couple weeks is the replacement of one mile of three phase underground cable going south out of the Lisbon Substation. This cable is also showing its age and has been the cause of a few outages over the years and a couple of line outages this year alone.

Karian Peterson transmission line crews are moving forward with the Asbury to Gluek line replacement. Most of the poles have been set and they are now working on poles that require more time and manpower, such as corner poles and double dead-end structures.

The installation of the new Tantalus Meters continues. The installation process has been moving along slower than planned by the installation company. As of the middle of November, we only have two meter installers on the system. We will continue to move forward with the project as fast as we can with the limited number of meter installers that are available to us.



Contractor for



*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.*

## Staying Safe: Winter Weather Safety Tips

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures plummet, the allure of winter's beauty beckons us outdoors. However, it's crucial to remember that winter weather can pose significant risks, from icy roads to extreme cold. To ensure your safety and enjoyment during the winter months, follow these essential tips:

### Prepare Your Home

- ❄️ **Insulate:** Seal up any drafts or cracks around windows, doors and pipes to prevent heat loss and potential water damage from freezing pipes.
- ❄️ **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** E three seventeen zero four Regularly check and replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for early warning of potential hazards.
- ❄️ **Emergency Supplies:** Assemble a winter emergency kit with items like flashlights, batteries, non-perishable food, bottled water, first aid supplies and blankets in case of power outages or travel disruptions.

### Travel Safely

- ❄️ **Monitor Weather Forecasts:** Check weather forecasts regularly and avoid travel during or immediately after winter storms.
- ❄️ **Prepare Your Vehicle:** Ensure your car is in good working condition with proper tire pressure, tread depth and antifreeze levels. Keep a winter emergency kit in your car.
- ❄️ **Drive Cautiously:** Reduce speed, increase following distance and avoid sudden maneuvers on icy or snow-covered roads.
- ❄️ **Stay Informed:** Keep a charged cell phone with you and inform someone of your travel plans and expected arrival time.

Remember, winter weather can be unpredictable, so it's always better to be prepared. By following these safety tips, you can enjoy the beauty and excitement of winter while staying safe and warm.



## Energy Efficiency in December

Saving energy in December can be particularly important as the colder weather often leads to increased heating costs. Here are some tips to help you save energy during the winter months:

- 1) **Adjust Your Thermostat:** Lowering your thermostat by just a few degrees can make a significant difference in your energy consumption. Consider wearing warmer clothing and using blankets to stay comfortable.
- 2) **Seal Leaks and Gaps:** Check windows and doors for drafts and seal any gaps or cracks with weather-stripping or caulking. This will prevent warm air from escaping and cold air from entering.
- 3) **Use a Programmable Thermostat:** Set your thermostat to automatically lower the temperature when you're not at home or at night when you're asleep. This can lead to substantial energy savings.
- 4) **Maximize Natural Sunlight:** During the day, open curtains and blinds to let in natural sunlight, which can help warm your home naturally. Close them at night to retain heat.
- 5) **Upgrade to LED Lights:** If you haven't already, switch to LED bulbs. They are more energy-efficient and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.
- 6) **Unplug Electronics:** Many electronic devices continue to use energy even when they're turned off. Unplug chargers, appliances, and electronics that are not in use.
- 7) **Maintain Your HVAC System:** Regular maintenance, such as cleaning or replacing air filters, ensures that your heating system runs efficiently. A well-maintained system uses less energy.
- 8) **Insulate Your Home:** Proper insulation in your attic, walls and floors can make a big difference in how well your home retains heat.
- 9) **Use Energy-Efficient Appliances:** If you're purchasing new appliances, look for ones with the ENERGY STAR label, which indicates they meet high efficiency standards.
- 10) **Limit Hot Water Usage:** Set your water heater to a lower temperature and consider taking shorter showers. You can also wash your clothes in cold water.
- 11) **Cook Efficiently:** When cooking, use lids on pots and pans to retain heat and try to use smaller appliances like microwaves or toaster ovens when possible.
- 12) **Upgrade Windows:** If your budget allows, consider investing in energy-efficient windows, which can help reduce heat loss.
- 13) **Utilize Ceiling Fans:** In reverse mode, ceiling fans can help distribute warm air throughout the room, making it feel more comfortable without needing to raise the thermostat setting.

Remember that every small effort can add up to significant energy savings over time. By being mindful of your energy usage, you can still live comfortable and save on your energy bills.

## Heat with Electricity

Minnesota Valley offers Electric and Dual Heat Rates that are very competitive with fossil fuels. To get the comparable heat content as is available with our electric heat rates, you would have to purchase propane and fuel oil for approximately \$1.20 per gallon. This makes any type of electric heat very competitive on the energy market.

Electric heating systems include the following:

- ▶ *Ground water source heat pumps*
- ▶ *Air to air heat pumps*
- ▶ *Baseboard heaters*
- ▶ *Cove heaters*
- ▶ *Plenum heaters*
- ▶ *Furnaces*
- ▶ *Boilers*

Please contact the Member Services Department at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 if you have any questions about heating with electricity.



### 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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### Website

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

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