Minnesota Valley
Co-op News
Volume 88 • No. 10 • October 2026



Manager's Message // Pat Carruth

General Manager

Tech Bros Loved Green Energy - Until They Needed Power

For decades now, some of the biggest cheerleaders of green energy for curbing climate change came from America's biggest technology companies. They were all about wind and solar while trying to stop all carbon produced power from coal and gas, as well as nuclear. Microsoft pledged to match its electricity use with 100% renewable and become carbon negative by 2030. Meta joined the global corporate club *RE100*, whose members promised 100% renewable energy. Silicon Valley poured billions into renewable projects and lent its political muscle to the war against fossil fuels.

That was then, this is now. Now artificial intelligence is here and big tech can't get rid of wind, solar and the climate change narrative fast enough. Meanwhile, getting their hands on as much natural gas, nuclear and coal produced electric power as they can. Why? Because you can't run data centers on intermittent energy such as wind and solar. You need power not energy. The kind of always on 24/7/365 power that comes only from nuclear and hydrocarbons such as coal and gas.

AI runs on continuous power. Multi-billion-dollar server factories do not care whether the sun is shining, or the wind is blowing or what politicians promise. They need gigawatts of always on power. Watch what companies do with their money, not what they write in their sustainability reports.

About a quarter of the data centers under development across the country plan to build their own generation on-site. Big Tech is not just buying reliable power. They are buying their way off a grid that their own lobbying helped make less reliable and more expensive. Families, factories, hospitals and farms cannot do that. We are stuck with the system policy built, one that piled on weather-dependent generation while retiring coal and nuclear plants that ran on demand. Ratepayers pay for two systems and get one.

We understand that winning the AI race is a national security issue. We understand the need for these massive data server factories. We understand there will be many benefits, as well as costs, they will bring with them. One of the benefits of AI may be helping all ratepayers understand that electricity is only valuable when it is there the moment you need it.

CELEBRATING THE

Cooperative Difference

Each October, we celebrate *National Cooperative Month* and the difference it makes to be a member of an electric cooperative.

When you receive electricity from Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association, you are more than a *customer*; you are a ***member-owner***. That means the cooperative exists to serve you and your neighbors, not outside investors.

Being a member-owner also means you have a voice in how your cooperative is run. Members elect fellow members to serve on the board of directors, helping ensure the cooperative's decisions reflect the needs and priorities of the people it serves.

National Cooperative Month is an opportunity to celebrate the cooperative principles that help us provide reliable electricity while strengthening our communities.

Engineering & Operations // Todd Bolkema



Engineering & Operations Manager

Be Mindful of Safety This Harvest Season

It's that time of year again when combines are clearing fields and tractors with wagons are busy carrying loads to and from the grain elevator. It's time for the fall harvest and time for power line safety.

Please be alert when working with farm equipment. Many pieces of farm equipment, such as grain augers or elevators, can reach heights that exceed power lines. Before harvest even starts, it's a good idea to walk around your farm to see where overhead lines are located and check the height of farm equipment.

Other tips to remember this harvest season:

- Be alert to power lines and poles when you reach the end of your field.
- Inform family members and hired hands about safety procedures.
- Keep all objects at least ten feet away from power lines.
- Contact Minnesota Valley Co-op before you build or move a grain bin.

What to do if you're inside a tractor that touches a power line:

- Try to back away from the line.
- If you can, stay put and call Minnesota Valley right away.
- If you must leave your tractor, jump clear (putting both feet forward) so you won't make contact with the ground and the vehicle at the same time.

Being aware of the dangers could mean the difference between a safe harvest season and a disaster. Take that extra minute for safety – the life you save may be your own! Stay alert and stay alive!

In Other News

There are several woodpeckers with a headache near Lac qui Parle Village. The woodpeckers have been chewing up one of our wood transmission poles on County Road 31 near the river. After waiting nearly nine months for our new steel transmission pole to arrive from Valmont Utility Company in Valley, Nebraska, we were able to install the replacement pole in August. B one zero three zero two This new pole arrived in two sections that needed to be pulled together. It was installed just like any other pole, but will be impenetrable to bugs and the woodpeckers that ruin poles to find them.

This is not the only metal pole we will install in that river valley. Next year, we plan to rebuild the line on County Road 13 past the state park and dam. These 32 poles will be steel as well. The manufacturer claims they will last 70 years – some of our younger members can check those poles in 2096.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: *U.S. Dept. of Energy*

SAVE THE DATE

2027 Caucus Meetings

Thursday, February 4th, 2027

District 1: Don Fernholz
10:30 AM • Madison VFW

District 3: Mark Peterson
1:30 PM • Dawson City Hall

2027 Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 3rd, 2027

Lac qui Parle High School



Applications Available for Operation Round Up Funds

Is your service group or organization looking for monetary help? Or do you know a family that could use some assistance? L two fifteen zero one Minnesota Valley has money available through Operation Round Up for those who qualify.

Operation Round Up is a trust fund set up separately from all other Minnesota Valley business and is used solely for the purpose of helping organizations, service groups, projects and families in our service territory. This money comes from the members who have their bills rounded up every month.

If you know of someone, a group or an organization that would benefit from Operation Round Up funds, you can get an application by downloading it from our website at ***www.mnvalleyrec.com***, by calling Minnesota Valley at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 or by requesting one by mail to *Minnesota Valley R.E.C., P.O. Box 248, Montevideo, MN 56265*.

How it Works



Minnesota Valley members who choose to participate in Operation Round Up agree to have their monthly energy bills rounded up to the next highest dollar amount. For example, if your actual electric bill is $72.40, the cooperative will round it up to $73.00 and the extra 60 cents goes into the Operation Round Up Trust Fund. This fund is set up separately from all other Minnesota Valley business. The small amount of change donated by each member, combined with the change of fellow members, makes a big difference in our community!

Find Your Location for a $10 or More Bill Credit!



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

Comparative Report

	Jan-Aug 2026	Jan-Aug 2025	Jan-Aug 2006
Kwh Purchased	163,524,138	155,195,294	123,621,127
Kwh Sold	154,584,661	146,862,220	116,184,370
Cost Of Purchased Power	$10,504,602	$8,805,448	$3,305,580
Patronage Capital Margins	$2,116,405	$1,126,605	$540,783
Reserve For Taxes	$286,667	$226,664	$117,200
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	64.24	56.74	26.74
	August '26	**August '25**	**August '06**
Total Plant	$116,622,849	$110,781,856	$42,179,261
Number of Active Services	5,349	5,320	5,266
Avg. Residential Bill	$294.23	$270.13	$119.04
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,652	1,731	1,554
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	3,444	3,253	2,887
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	35,344	33,322	27,107

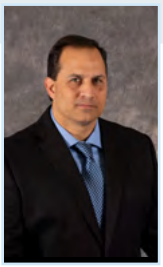
Congratulations to **Daryl Kuehn** who found his number last month and received $10. If you find your number, claim by the **25th of October** for:





Member Services // Scott Kubesh

Member Services Manager



Schedule a Furnace Inspection Before Winter

It is that time of year again. Cooler mornings are here and many members may have already turned on their furnaces for the heating season. Before winter settles in, take a few minutes to think about your heating system. Many of us simply turn up the thermostat and expect the furnace to work, but equipment that has not been serviced in some time may not be operating as efficiently as it could. Preventive maintenance can help protect your comfort, improve efficiency and make the most of every heating dollar.

If your furnace is not operating properly, you may need to arrange service with a qualified technician. A complete furnace inspection generally requires a professional and Minnesota Valley Cooperative's Member Services Department can help schedule your service work. Annual tune-ups are as valuable for furnaces as they are for vehicles, helping equipment run more safely and efficiently. To arrange a furnace inspection, contact Member Services at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

Your Heat Meter Can Save You Money

In our last newsletter issue, we encouraged members to check their heat meters to make sure the power was on. If a heat meter does not have power, it will not register the kilowatt-hours used by your electric heat source. Your heat is measured on a submeter that determines how much credit you receive on your bill. If your meter is turned off, it could be costing you money. Please verify that your heat meter is on and registering kilowatt-hours so you receive the credit you have coming.

Low-Interest Financing is Available

Minnesota Valley offers low-interest loans for energy conservation improvements such as weatherization and the installation of windows, doors and insulation. Loan funds are also available for the purchase and installation of electric heating and cooling products, including air-to-air heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, electric heating equipment and central air conditioners. In addition, funds may be used to replace old electrical wiring that may be unsafe or unreliable.

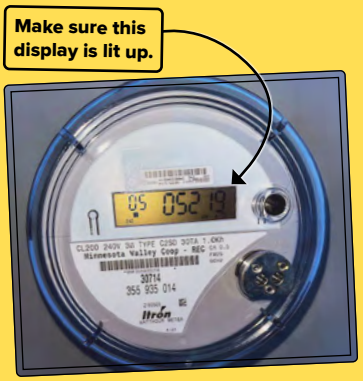
To qualify for a loan, you must be a member of Minnesota Valley REC, have a good credit rating with Minnesota Valley and submit a credit application to our office. All applications are completely confidential and can be processed within a matter of days. A very reasonable rate of 5% simple interest is charged.

A qualifying member is eligible for one loan or any combination of the loans described above, up to an aggregate total of $15,000. For more information about these programs, please contact the Member Services Department during normal business hours at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

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. The meter is operating correctly if the **electronic display is lit up**. Failure to verify that your meter is powered up may result in a higher electric bill than normal.



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320.269.2163
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