

# ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

October 2024

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL

CO-OP  
MONTH



## MVEC Delivers power with YOU in mind

CEO Update from Marvin Denzer

In October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. will celebrate National Co-op Month. It's a time to honor the power of co-op membership, whether an electric cooperative, credit union, grocery store, grain elevator, or another type of cooperative.



Your cooperative is focused on serving its member-owners (you) and the surrounding communities. Providing members with value-added services is important to us.

- 1. We offer money-saving options.** Nearly 50 percent of our members participate in EnergyWise programs that help you save money by reducing electric consumption. You can receive monthly bill credits or pay up to 50 percent off the general service rate depending on what electric heating, cooling, water heating or electric vehicle charging programs you participate in. Plus, members can add to their savings with energy-efficiency rebates of \$25 to \$500, depending on the programs you choose.
- 2. We help you understand your electric usage.** Your monthly bill shows your daily usage, and you can analyze in more detail for personalized information with a free SmartHub account. With SmartHub you can check your daily, monthly, yearly electric usage; report power outages; choose a bill pay program and make payments; and sign up for email or text alerts. Download the SmartHub app to conduct co-op business from your phone.
- 3. You get to share cooperative margins.** MVEC has returned \$32 million to member-owners. MVEC has a long history of refunding excess revenue, which we call Capital Credits, to current and former members. This is your share of the cooperative's margins. In

See CEO COLUMN on page 2

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a **co-op**, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

**That's the power of co-op membership.**

Additional resources and board meeting highlights available 24/7 at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net)



### Inside this issue:

MVEC assists with area house move/[page 2](#)

Celebrating co-op month/[page 3](#)

MVEC cautions about rise in solar scams/[page 4](#)

ORU seeks new board trustee/[page 4](#)

# MVEC

MINNESOTA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# MVEC line crews key to area house moves

In an unusual turn of events, an MVEC line crew had the opportunity to assist with not just one, but two major house moves within just a few days in September. While moving a house is always a challenging endeavor, it becomes even more complex when power lines are involved. Navigating this process requires careful planning and coordination between the movers and MVEC linemen, who play a crucial role in ensuring the homes can pass safely under or near electric lines.

During these house moves, the linemen performed clearance checks, de-energizing power lines when necessary, adjusting the lines for safe passage, and restoring power once the homes were successfully relocated. Each step demanded precise coordination with the moving teams to maintain safety and keep operations running smoothly.



Assisting with house moves is a request MVEC receives only a handful of times a year. And the planning of these projects is where most of the difficulty lies.

"It takes a lot of coordination on our part



Over the course of two days, MVEC linemen assisted with two house moves, one overnight in Credit River, and this one outside of Elysian.

assigning crews, working with contractors and timing out where we'll need to be and when," said crew supervisor Mike Otteson. "Each line crossing varies, so if the house is 20 feet at its peak, we need to make sure we know where those spans are, and if it's close."

The first move took place near Credit River, where the crew worked overnight to ensure everything went off without a hitch. Just over 24 hours later, they were back on the job, providing the same level of dedication and expertise for a second house move near Elysian.

## CEO COLUMN *cont. from page 1*

2024, we returned \$1.39 million to members.

- Your satisfaction is important to us!** Member satisfaction is a top priority for us. It's embedded in our mission to *create exceptional member experiences by delivering safe, reliable energy at cost*, and in our vision to *be a trusted, loyal energy partner for the community—now and for future generations*. To uphold these commitments, we live by our core values every day: Safe, Innovative, Accountable, and Connected. We are dedicated to exceeding your expectations and continually improving to ensure we meet the needs of both our members and the communities we serve.
- We are committed to community.** Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are invested in our local communities. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, local charities, safety demonstrations, and initiatives that make our community a better place to call home.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you recognize the many benefits that makes MVEC different than other utilities. We are always looking out for you!

Happy Co-op Month,

Marvin

## Electric safety poster contest winner



In our ongoing commitment to safety awareness, we asked some of our youngest members to create safety posters artwork for the co-op.

We're celebrating co-op month with the last of our winners. Here is 13-year-old Charlie's safety message to stay clear of playing near power lines.

*Whether assisting a member's house move, educating the public, growing our communities or electrifying homes, there's power in being an electric cooperative member.*

# The power of Co-op membership

## Annual Meeting Elections

As a member of MVEC, you have a voice. Cooperatives are unique because they are owned by you. This means you have a voice in the way the co-op operates. Members elect the MVEC's board of directors and can run for a seat on the board if they wish to do so. Your vote and participation help shape the direction of the cooperative. Each year, one director seat in each of our three districts is up for election with ballots mailed to the membership in March and results announced at the Annual Meeting in April. For more information on the Board of Director application process, visit [www.mvec.net/your-cooperative/board-of-directors](http://www.mvec.net/your-cooperative/board-of-directors).

## Here to Serve You

As a not-for-profit cooperative, we exist to serve you. Our Energy Services experts support businesses and homeowners alike in finding reliable, affordable and efficient energy solutions for members. Supporting the everyday needs of our members is our Member Services team, which handles a wide-range of inquiries, from billing and account management to service request and outage reporting.

## Safety Training

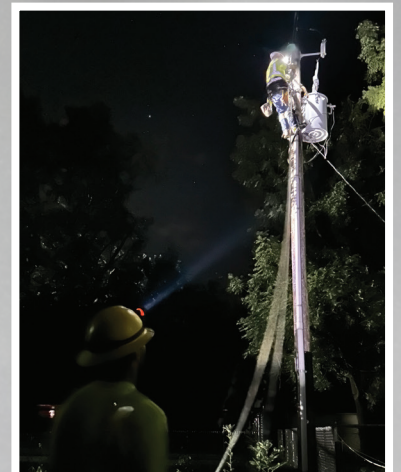
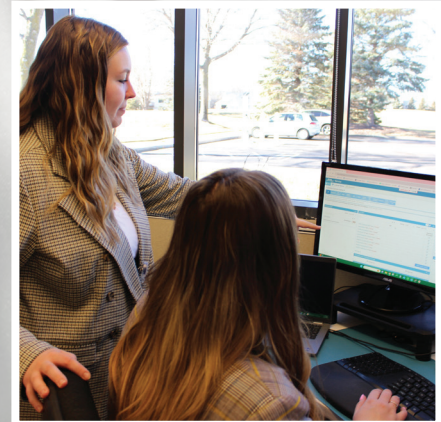
Safety comes first at MVEC, and we are here to support electrical safety training in your community. Staff from the co-op are happy to visit area classrooms, events or trainings throughout our service area to talk electricity with our members. From our PowerTown presentation to EV safety and distribution electricity training, MVEC is here to support kids, adults, first responders, EV owners and others to help keep the community safe.

## Supporting the Community

With more than \$2.5 million donated since its inception at MVEC nearly 30 years ago, Operation Round Up is a success that continues to grow. ORU allows members to round up their monthly electric bill, which is combined into a charitable fund that makes a big difference in local communities. Pictured above is the Rice County Historical Society's Pioneer Barn, which was outfitted with new lighting using an ORU grant, allowing RCHS to host events there at night. Want to add your cents to the program? Sign up at [www.mvec.net/operation-round-up](http://www.mvec.net/operation-round-up).

## Outage Response

Whether it's a severe storm or an unexpected outage, our linemen are on the front lines, ensuring your lights are back on as quickly and safely as possible. MVEC line crews remain on-call 24/7, regardless of conditions. If you find yourself without power, we have two convenient ways to report an outage: phone 952-492-8255 or text OUT to 855-963-3830.



# MVEC cautions members about rise in solar scams

Misleading claims of no electric bill. False promises of free solar panels or tax rebate checks. Posing as an electric cooperative representative or co-op partner.

These are some of the deceptive practices that co-ops and the federal government are warning consumers about under a growing number of residential solar scams.

On Aug. 7, the Treasury Department issued an advisory noting a rise in consumer complaints about such practices as rooftop solar installations surge, emphasizing that scams are against the law.

The complaints involve "a small number of unscrupulous solar companies" that consumers say deceived them on the costs and savings of the systems and relied on aggressive sales and marketing tactics, the advisory stated.

This is a reality for MVEC members as well. Several instances have been reported to the co-op, with some needing authorities involved. The most common practice the co-op has seen is companies claiming to represent MVEC, or assuring members they've already spoken with Minnesota Valley regarding the members' property.

"They come to members misrepresenting an exclusive deal between (MVEC) and their company, when in fact we're neutral in which contractor the member chooses," said Kyle Neal, a distribution engineer and distributed energy resources expert at MVEC.

Neal added that this is especially harmful to members, who may stop looking for a better deal or contractor once they believe MVEC is involved.

Because the homeowner is led to believe MVEC is already aware

of these exclusive rights, they may not feel the need to reach out to the co-op at all until it's too late, which can lead to further issues down the line.

"It's really a safety issue," said Neal. "We have specs on our system that a solar panel system needs to meet. Certain equipment may not be certified to shut down in the case of an outage, which becomes dangerous for our linemen."

Ultimately, it's recommended that members do their research prior to signing the dotted line. MVEC has set up a Solar Options webpage where members can find what the co-op's processes are, how to choose a solar contractor, frequently-asked questions, and more.

Start your solar journey today at [www.mvec.net/solar-options/](http://www.mvec.net/solar-options/).

## MVEC SOLAR OPTIONS

### Is your proposed project 40 kW or larger?

- If yes: Contact MVEC at 952-492-2313 or email to speak with a Team Member about the details of your project.
- If not: Read on for pertinent information to get your project started

Minnesota Valley Electric is here to support you with your solar-related inquiries, projects, and questions. We offer member-focused programs, ensuring you the options needed to align your system with the products you may want to support behind your meter.

MVEC does not sell solar equipment, and solar vendors are not affiliated with MVEC. Be sure to investigate the needed due diligence on the economic benefits, legal issues, zoning regulations, maintenance, and operating costs of your project. There is more to solar than just installing the panels, and members should seek vendor references before purchasing.

*The State Board of Electricity requires renewable energy sources to be installed by a qualified licensed electrician, and MVEC requires members to apply to connect to its electric lines. The installation must meet the State of Minnesota Distributed Generation Interconnection Standards through a witness test.*

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Choosing a Solar Contractor

#### Option One:



## Unclaimed Capital Credits

A list of member names with Unclaimed Capital Credits is posted at [www.mvec.net](http://www.mvec.net). This list represents members who purchased electricity in 1994 and 1995. Names will remain published online until Feb. 1, 2025, to allow members time to request their unclaimed dollars.

Under state guidelines, MVEC can donate Unclaimed Capital Credits to MVEC's scholarship program and qualifying organizations as approved by the Board of Directors. MVEC considers the last uncashed check as the final attempt to contact a member. MVEC requests forwarding addresses when a member stops their electric service. Before donating the funds related to Minnesota and nine other states, MVEC will list the names of these members on our website.

## Seeking District II ORU trustee

Are you interested in giving back to the cooperative community by volunteering your time to serve on the Operation RoundUp Trustee board, there is an opening in District 2, which includes portions of Carver, Scott, and Sibley counties.

This nine-person team of MVEC members helps research and decide how to distribute grant money. You must be able to attend one evening meeting per quarter (usually the third Monday of February, May, August, and November) and have time to research three or four grant requests before each meeting.

Those interested may apply at [www.mvec.net/operation-round-up/](http://www.mvec.net/operation-round-up/).



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