

ElectricEye

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

November 2024

Gratitude and the power of mutual aid

CEO Update from Marvin Denzer



As we move into November and approach the season of gratitude, I am reminded of how much we have to be thankful for. Being part of a cooperative brings a deep sense of belonging, support, and shared purpose. At the heart of it all is the cooperative spirit — one that values working together, lifting each other up, and ensuring no one is left behind. This spirit is something we can all be grateful for.

On October 1st — the first day of National Cooperative Month, fittingly — MVEC received a call for mutual aid. As we witnessed Hurricane Helene's devastating impact on the Atlantic Coast, we knew our fellow cooperatives needed help. Within 24 hours, four of our MVEC linemen were on the road to Pickens, South Carolina, equipped with bucket and digger trucks. Our linemen joined others from Wright-Hennepin and McLeod County co-ops, embarking on a 20-hour trek to assist Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, where 64,000 out of 73,000 members had lost power and 800 poles were downed.

While MVEC serves nearly 48,000 members, the conditions in South Carolina made the work incredibly difficult, with each pole replacement taking 2-3 hours. Yet, our team didn't hesitate. MVEC was one of 18 Minnesota co-ops that answered the call for help, some even coming from as far as South Dakota. This dedication is the power of cooperation — one of the core principles we live by.

When disaster strikes, we don't stand idly by. Mutual aid is not just an obligation; it's a cooperative tradition rooted in the values of service and community. Our linemen — Bruce, Kevin, Bill, and Chad — left their families and homes for more than a week to work tirelessly in flooded conditions, restoring power to devastated areas. Their selflessness is a powerful reminder of what we stand for at MVEC: it's not just about the electricity we provide, but about the people, neighbors, and communities we serve.

As we reflect on this season of Thanksgiving, let us not only give



MVEC linemen Chad, Kevin, Bill and Bruce gathered at MVEC headquarters before hitting the road with bucket and digger trucks and pole trailers for mutual aid work assisting Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative following Hurricane Helene. The South Carolina co-op needed help after 64,000 of its 73,000 members lost power during the storm.

thanks but also embrace the importance of giving back. MVEC exemplifies this through our mutual aid efforts, volunteer work such as highway cleanup, and safety demonstrations. Whether it's volunteering, lending a hand to a neighbor, or simply being there for those in need, each of us has the opportunity to serve our community in meaningful ways.

As we gather with our families this Thanksgiving, let's take a moment to appreciate the blessings we have and the opportunities we've been given to help others. From all of us at MVEC, we wish you and your loved ones a safe and joyful Thanksgiving. And to our entire MVEC team who continue to embrace the spirit of service — thank you for your unwavering commitment. You make us proud every day.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Marvin

Additional resources and board meeting highlights available 24/7 at www.mvec.net



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MVEC

MINNESOTA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MVEC linemen reflect on providing help

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, electrical linemen from across the country traveled to South Carolina to provide mutual aid, including four from MVEC. While Kevin, Bill, Chad and Bruce saw first-hand the devastation a hurricane can bring, they also had a common theme when talking about mutual aid work: the locals' appreciation. Here's what our MVEC line crew had to say about their time on the ground during the recovery effort.



Bill

It was a great experience with how appreciative everyone was down there. That's what really shined through. **Locals had been out of power for a week when we got there** and it felt like they had been out for five minutes. I think that eased our minds a little bit and it just became about the work, and getting as many people powered as we could.



Bruce

I was so impressed with how the co-op handled the situation and how they still took care of us on such short notice. It really felt like they had gone through it before. Within three days, that tent city was set up. The food was good, tents were ready, and we were treated with a lot of respect from everyone. The people down there were living through that devastation and they still really treated us well.

Kevin

It was absolutely incredible how organized the little town we stayed in was. **In the field we had all the supplies we could ever need**, but in that self-contained little town we were in, they had everything, and that was the most impressive part. It didn't dawn on us until we were leaving, but we didn't stop for snacks, drinks, food or laundry the whole time. They even gassed up our trucks while we were sleeping.



Chad

It was great to be able to help. To be honest, it was tough leaving because not everyone was powered back on, and we drove through other areas that were still out and **you just wanted to help as many people as possible**. Part of that was how appreciative and welcoming everyone was while we were working. It made you want help them that much more.



Over the span of a week, MVEC line crews assisted Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative in South Carolina. **LEFT: Crews encountered broken poles throughout the region, with BREC reporting over 800 poles damaged.** **TOP RIGHT: Although most of the terrain consisted of hilly areas, similar to Henderson, MN, linemen also worked near a cow pasture that resembled the landscape of southern Minnesota.** **BOTTOM RIGHT: Tents were set up to provide mutual aid crews with areas to sleep and eat, and trucks supplied hot water for showers and laundry.**

Celebrating Veterans Day early at Sutton Ridge Farm

Every September, our agricultural member Sutton Ridge Farm of Jordan, holds Military Appreciation Family Day, a wonderful recognition event for military families, local law enforcement, and retired service people. MVEC Team Members brought a bucket truck to the annual event and hosted a station to interact with attendees. A memorable flyover of WWII fighter planes was held, and at the end, a helpful veteran showed MVEC CEO Marvin Denzer how to officially refold our flag.



Military Disconnection Protection

The state of Minnesota provides protection against utility disconnection if a member of your household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty.

To be considered for military service personnel service protection, you must meet requirements as outlined in the statute, and enter into a payment arrangement plan with Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative.

For details, visit www.mvec.net/financial_assistance.

Attention High School Seniors! Apply now for 1 of 20 \$1,500 MVEC scholarships

\$1,500 High School Scholarships Five recipients from each of MVEC's three districts are randomly selected. Recipients must be a graduating high school senior whose parents/legal guardians are active members of MVEC.

\$1,500 at-large Scholarships Five at-large scholarships will be available in a random drawing for students attending MVEC's Annual Meeting with a parent.

\$1,000 Basin Scholarship from our wholesale power provider available for high school seniors and college undergraduates. The recipient is chosen by Basin Electric.

Further details and applications can be found on our website at: www.mvec.net/high-school-scholarships/

The deadline to apply is Feb. 18, 2025. Recipients will be recognized during MVEC's 88th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.



Sales tax exemption for residential heat

Your electric heat bills may be exempt from Minnesota sales tax for the months of November through April, if 50 percent or more of your energy costs are for using electricity to heat your home. Separately metered off-peak systems are also eligible for the sales tax exemption. Fill out the exemption form online at www.mvec.net/stay-informed/find-a-form/. If you have filed for an exemption in the past, there is no need to file again and it is in effect until you notify us otherwise.



SMARTHUB

Create a free SmartHub account today! It's simple and quick to make a payment or view your hourly meter data. You can compare bills and find out what day of the week or hour of the day you typically use the most electricity.

www.mvec.net

smart hub



Interested in serving on our Board?

The filing period for the cooperative's 2025 election process is now open with a deadline of **Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025**. On the ballot are the seats currently held by:

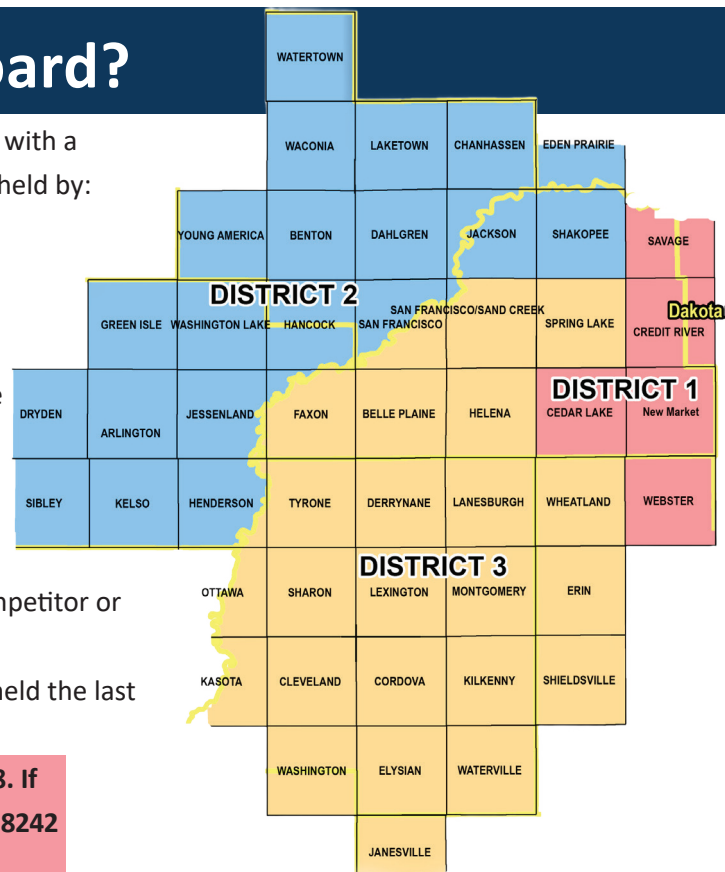
- **Deb Erickson of Savage (District 1)**
- **Gary Haberman of Chanhassen (District 2)**
- **Jim Connelly of St. Thomas (District 3)**

Directors are MVEC members who represent the membership as a whole in making co-op decisions, establishing policies, developing budgets and setting rates.

Qualifications

- Candidates must be members who reside within MVEC's service area.
- Candidates may not be employed by or financially involved with a competitor or business selling electric energy or supplies.
- If elected, directors must be able to attend board meetings, typically held the last Wednesday morning of each month.

Election results will be announced at MVEC's Annual Meeting on April 8. If you are interested in running for one of the open board seats, call 952.492.8242 or email elections@mvec.net before Jan. 28, 2025.



Outdated net metering laws need reform to ensure fair, cost-effective renewable energy

This article is from Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) who is the statewide association that represents 50 not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperatives in Minnesota.

Net metering reform is a priority MREA has identified for the 2025 legislative session.

Net metering allows homeowners and businesses with solar panels to generate their own electricity, requiring cooperatives to pay them more for excess power than it would cost to buy power elsewhere. As Minnesota shifts towards cleaner energy, some of the state energy policies, particularly net metering, are outdated and ineffective as it stands today.

The policy, first introduced in 1984, needs to be updated to reflect advancements like energy storage. Minnesota's goal of carbon-free electricity by 2040 makes net metering

incentives unnecessary, as utilities are already required to reduce carbon emissions.

Net metering is expensive. Cooperatives are required to pay retail rates for small-scale solar energy, which is more expensive than large utility-scale projects that is faster and more efficient way to decarbonize the grid.

Net metering is also inequitable because those without solar systems need to help cover costs of maintaining the grid. Reforming policy could protect low-income residents from higher bills while promoting a fairer energy system.

Updating net metering policy will make the grid more stable and dependable, integrating both traditional and renewable energy sources more effectively. By reforming outdated policies, Minnesota can lead the way in creating a modern, equitable energy future for everyone.



What is Net Metering?

- Net metering is a billing method in which the consumer is charged for any electricity used from the grid, and credited for excess electricity the consumer generated and sent back to the electric grid.
- Under net metering, whenever their solar system generates more electricity than their home uses, the electric utility must compensate the homeowner for the excess electricity.

The Electric Eye is the official publication of Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative
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MVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer

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