

# WATTS *Current*

November 2023

For Our Members



## Your Co-op. Your Share.

*MVEC retires  
\$800,000  
to members*

At the September meeting, the Cooperative's Board of Directors approved the retirement of deferred patronage dividends totaling \$800,000 to active members, and former members, in accordance with our cooperative principles.

The amount represents:

- 100% of remaining allocated margins for 2008
- 25.43% of remaining allocated margins for 2012

Your 2023 patronage check is based on a percentage of how much energy you purchased during 2008 and/or 2012. Checks were mailed out the end of October.

Current and former members with patronage amounts of \$5 or more were mailed a check. Lesser amounts will be left to accrue for future payouts.

Ownership in a cooperative has many benefits, which includes receiving cash back over time. Each year, the Board of Directors determines the amount of excess margins that can be allocated back to the members based upon the amount of energy they each purchased during the year. The allocated funds are retained to cover emergencies such as natural disasters, and other unexpected events, and to maintain and expand our electric system. This practice decreases the need to raise rates or borrow money. Then, as the financial condition of the Cooperative permits, the directors elect to pay the allocated margins back to its members.

To ensure you receive future payments, please keep MVEC informed of any address changes or notify us of the death of a member or former member.

**Note:** Please cash your dividend check as soon as possible. It will only be honored for 120 days from issue date.

**MVEC Region 1 Board Vacancy**  
Interested in filling a seat on MVEC's Board?  
**Learn more on page 2**

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## WHAT ARE PATRONAGE DIVIDENDS?

- 1 MVEC tracks the electricity and/or communications services you use and how much money you pay for it throughout the year.
- 2 We pay for things like maintaining and improving our electric system, and fiber smart grid network, emergencies and natural disasters.
- 3 At the end of the fiscal year, the directors evaluate the excess revenues, called margins, against the business needs of the cooperative.
- 4 The cooperative allocates a portion of those margins to members as patronage dividends based upon their electric and/or communications bills.
- 5 The directors elect to retire, or pay, the patronage dividends when our financial condition permits.



## Null Retires from MVEC Board after 11 Years of Service

After 11 years of dedicated service to the cooperative and its members, Jan Null retired from the Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative Board of Directors on Friday, September 22, 2023.



Jan joined the Board of Directors in September 2012 and represented Region 1, Jones County and portions of Cedar and Linn Counties.

During her time as an MVEC Director, Jan was on the finance committee and earned her Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate. Jan resides in rural Monticello with her husband Bob where they own and operate Timber's Edge Farm Corp.

*"On behalf of the members, Board of Directors and employees, I would like to thank Jan for all of her dedicated years of service to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative," said Jeremy Richert, MVEC CEO.*

*"Jan was always committed to keeping the membership front and center during board room discussions and was a true asset to the Board. We wish her all the best in her retirement."*

### STAY SAFE OUT ON THE HUNT

- Have a way to get in touch with the outside world.
- Always implement firearm safety techniques.
- Do not lean a tree stand against a utility pole.
- Do not fire at power lines, fiber lines insulators or conductor cans.
- Be visible: Wear blaze orange.
- Check the weather in advance and be prepared.
- Check tree stands regularly for stability.
- Survey the area for potential electrical hazards.

## MVEC To Fill Region 1 Board Seat

As mentioned in the article above, MVEC Director Jan Null retired from MVEC's Board of Directors in September after serving MVEC's members for 11 years. Null represented Region 1 (Jones County and portions of Cedar and Linn Counties). Last month, the remaining eight MVEC Directors appointed a search committee of members from Region 1 to seek director candidates to fill the vacant seat. The search committee will present the list of candidates for Board consideration at the December Board meeting. MVEC Directors will then vote on the candidate to fill the Region 1 seat. The approved candidate will fill the Region 1 seat until the next Director election takes place at the 2024 Annual Meeting, which will occur next August. If you are interested in learning more about the requirements to serve on the Board of Directors, please contact CEO Jeremy Richert at 800-927-6068 or via email at [jrichert@mvec.com](mailto:jrichert@mvec.com). If you wish to be considered as a candidate by the search committee, please submit a brief biography stating your interest and qualifications to CEO Richert at [jrichert@mvec.com](mailto:jrichert@mvec.com) no later than December 5, 2023.



# DON'T LET POWER LINES become part of the landscape

## 3 Types of Overhead Lines



Transmission Lines



Distribution Lines



Service Drop Lines

Regardless of the type or voltage, any power line can kill if the path of the electrical current is disrupted.



Always look up and look out for power lines when working outdoors.

Be careful any time you go up, whether it be on a ladder, scissor lift or in a cherry picker.



## Also look for power lines when:



Operating a crane, concrete pump truck

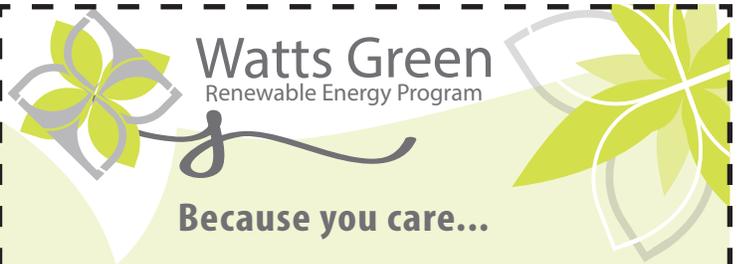


Raising a truck bed



Using any long tool or equipment that extends

Learn more at:



## Watts Green Renewable Energy Program

### Because you care...

Today's changing energy landscape is bringing more attention to renewable energy resources. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative supports generation that is safe, reliable, cost effective and environmentally responsible.

**Watts Green** - Green renewable energy is electricity produced in an environmentally friendly manner. Sources of green energy include the sun, wind, and water, which are pollution free and naturally reoccurring.

Renewable electricity technologies are among the cleanest and have the least impact on the environment.

Some of the renewable energy that is sold to our members is purchased from other members who have renewable energy systems.

**Costs** - The price for new green power is slightly higher than power generated from conventional sources such as coal. MVEC's Watts Green Renewable Energy Program enables you to support renewable energy by paying a small premium on your bill. The extra cost is currently 2 cents per kilowatt hour, or \$1 for a 50 kilowatt hour block, which is applied only to that portion of renewable energy that is chosen.



### Benefits

-  **Quick to market.**
-  **No air emissions.**
-  **Needs no water.**
-  **Zero fuel costs.**

To participate in the Watts Green Renewable Energy Program, detach and complete the form below. The form can be returned with your energy bill or mailed separately to:

**Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative**  
 109 North Huber Street  
 Anamosa, Iowa 52205

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! Enroll me in the Watts Green Renewable Energy Program. I hereby request that Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative bill to my account \_\_\_\_\_ kWhs (blocks of 50 kWhs only) at the renewable energy rate each month according to MVEC's tariff. The current price is \$1.00 per 50 kWh block above the standard rate. I will be notified at least 30 days in advance of any price change, and may terminate this enrollment at any time by notifying MVEC.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.



2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...

3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the



electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.

4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.



5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

MVEC wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season.

MVEC's 2023 rebate program will end on January 31st, 2024 for purchases made in 2023 (note: members must apply for rebates within 6 months of the purchase date). Look for information on our 2024 rebate program in the January edition of Watts Current.



# Don't forget to send in your

# 2023 REBATES



# Our Energy Working for You: Heat Pump Technology a Viable Heating/Cooling Solution

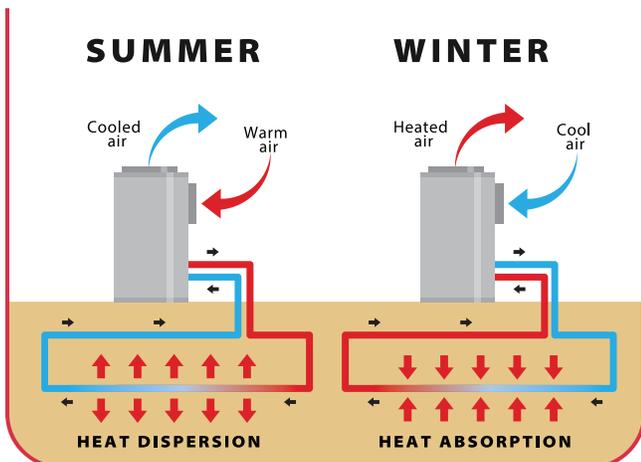
By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

What is all the buzz about heat pumps? You may be hearing more about heat pumps in the news and the energy savings they can produce. This month I will give an overview of the technology and why it is a popular option for a home heating and cooling system.

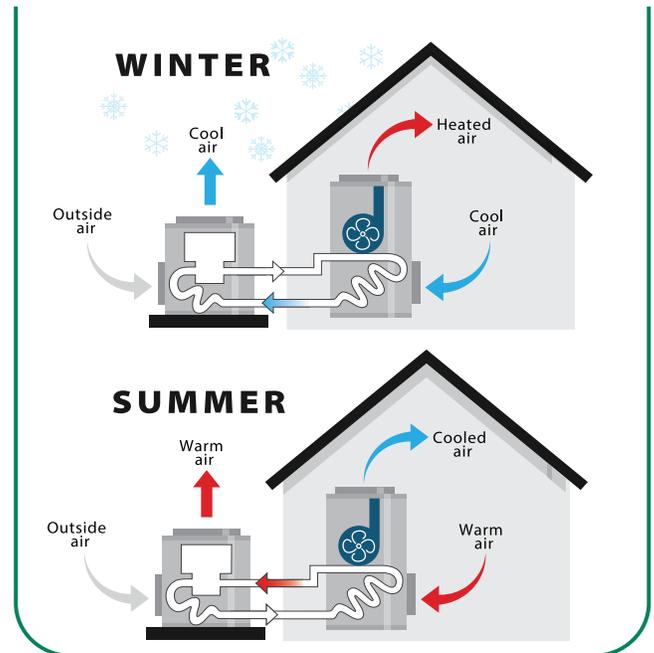
Heat pumps represent an overall category of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) that transfers heat from one area to another. Your air conditioner or your refrigerator are two types of heat pumps that work in one direction. A heat pump moves heat in two directions depending on the time of year. In summer it works much like an air conditioner removing heat from inside the home. In winter, the heat pump reverses and removes heat from the outside and moves it inside.

While the heat pump has been used in the southern regions of the US in the past, improvements in design and technology have also made them a more viable option in northern climates like Iowa. There are a couple different heat pump technologies to consider:

1. **Geothermal Heat Pumps** exchange heat with the ground. Since the ground at a certain depth is approximately 55 degrees year round, heat can be pulled or pushed depending on the season. Geothermal technology represents some of the most efficient heat and cooling systems available. While these are the most efficient systems, they are usually the most expensive installed cost and with the need for tubing loops installed in the ground, they can be disruptive from a landscaping perspective.



2. **Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)**, as the name implies, move heat from the air. In summer, the ASHP removes heat from the air inside your home much like a regular air conditioner. In the winter, it reverses and pulls heat from the outside air. Wait, pulling heat from the cold winter air? Yes, depending on the model, more efficient cold climate rated units can pull heat from the outside air all the way down to -13°F. Although ASHPs lose some efficiency as weather turns colder, they will have either backup heating elements or a hybrid system utilizing a typical furnace.



Energy efficiency varies by types of heat pumps. Geothermal heat pumps can have Coefficients of Performance (COP) of 5, so for every 1 Watt of energy input, it will produce 5 Watts of heat. ASHP have a COP of up to 3.5. Compared to an efficient gas furnace that would have an efficiency of 96% so every 1 unit of energy input would only produce 0.96 units of heat.

To help with the cost of moving to these more efficient systems, MVEC has rebates depending on the unit (visit [www.mvec.coop/rebates](http://www.mvec.coop/rebates)). Also, tax credits may apply for these systems and the following link and consultation with your tax person, can help reduce the initial installed cost [www.energystar.gov/about/federal\\_tax\\_credits](http://www.energystar.gov/about/federal_tax_credits). MVEC also has a Heat Plus rate for homes that have a qualifying heat pump system.

You can find information on the Heat Plus rate at [www.mvec.coop/heat-plus-program](http://www.mvec.coop/heat-plus-program). If you have questions on these technologies or would like to discuss your specific situation, feel free to contact me as well ([areiter@mvec.com](mailto:areiter@mvec.com) or 800-927-6068).



# TECH LINK

## Is Your Internet Ready for the Holidays?

There is already enough stress getting ready for the holidays - decorating, shopping, baking and don't forget—entertaining guests! Make sure that your internet doesn't become the Grinch that steals your family's holiday joy this season. Whether it's online shopping, streaming music and movies or supporting all of those tech gadgets that will come under the tree, make sure you have a sufficient speed package to meet your family's growing needs. MVlink offers speeds from 85 Mbps (\$59.95/mo.) to 1 Gig (\$89.95/mo.) with friendly, local support. For more information, visit [mvec.coop/mvlink-internet](http://mvec.coop/mvlink-internet) or call 800-927-6068 to speak with one of our fiber representatives.

85 Mbps/85 Mbps \$59.95/mo

250 Mbps/250 Mbps \$69.95/mo

500 Mbps/500 Mbps \$79.95/mo

1 Gb (1000 Mbps)/1 Gb \$89.95/mo

*"Lightning fast & always works!"*

**Thinking of Cutting the Cable/Satellite Cord?**  
MVEC's new StreamNow site will help you determine if streaming is right for you. Visit [mvec.coop/streaming-guide](http://mvec.coop/streaming-guide) to learn more!

**StreamNow is Your Guide to Streaming TV**  
This StreamNow platform will help you navigate through the many streaming options currently available in the marketplace.

**Streaming is as Easy as 1, 2, 3, 4**

- 1. Choose Your Ideal Internet Speed For Streaming**  
Selecting the optimal bandwidth for your household is the first step to streaming.
- 2. Review Your Streaming Service Options**  
There are many on-demand and live TV streaming services out there. We'll help you choose what's right for you.
- 3. Find, Purchase, and Connect the Right Device**  
If you don't have a smart TV, you'll need a separate streaming device to access the content. Get guidance here.
- 4. Sign Up for Streaming Services**  
Let the fun begin! Sign up for a streaming service or two...or three. Most require only a 30-day commitment.

**What Type of Streamer are You?**

- Movie Buff**  
HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, and Apple TV+ are known for their award-winning original movies.
- Binge Watcher**  
Netflix has historically been known as the leader in best original series content.
- Fun-Loving Parent**  
Disney+ is a great choice for families, offering timeless classics and new releases.
- Home Improver**  
Check out Discovery+ and the Magnolia Network for home improvement shows.
- Local News Devotee**  
Check out our [Free Live TV Channel Guide](#) to make sure you'll still have access to local news.
- Sports Fan**  
The ESPN+ app is a good option for streaming live sports and ESPN originals.
- Penny Pincher**  
Free, *ad-supported* services feature mostly older shows and movies - not the latest content - but the price is sure right!
- Why Choose Streaming?**  
There are good reasons why 4 out of every 5 homes are now subscribing to at least one streaming service:  
**Monthly Savings**  
**Convenience**  
**Personalization**

### Stream Your Holiday Favorites

Your holiday traditions likely include favorite seasonal movies and there are a variety of festive options for the whole family on the various streaming platforms. If you are considering cutting the cable cord and switching to streaming for the first time, MVlink is here to help you with that as well. Our helpful streaming guide can assist you with determining which streaming platforms are right for you (as well as what each option costs). Visit [mvec.coop/streaming-guide](http://mvec.coop/streaming-guide) for this handy resource.

StreamNow Insider newsletter preview showing a 'QUIZ' section and 'Tech Link' branding.

### MVlink members, are you receiving our monthly streaming e-newsletter?

If you're an MVlink fiber internet member, we send a monthly MVlink StreamNow Insider email with the latest movies, original shows and sporting events on all the streaming platforms. Don't recall seeing this monthly email in your in-box? Check your spam or Junk folders and make sure MVlink is a preferred sender. The StreamNow Insider will help you cut through all the clutter and find great shows for you and your family to enjoy throughout this holiday season and beyond! It's getting cold outside--stock up on the popcorn and get ready for your holiday and winter binge-watching!



# Power Pole Clutter

Flyers, satellite dishes, posters, basketball hoops, decorative lights, even hunting stands. You name it, someone has tried to staple, nail or tie it to a power pole. Here's a quick look at the dangers and pitfalls associated with unauthorized pole attachments.



## Gloves

Staples, tacks and nails can puncture a lineworker's insulated rubber gloves and expose them to electric shock.

## Boots

Objects can cause a worker to fall if they snag their boots.

## Climbing Hooks

Nails and tacks can impede climbing hooks from sinking into the wood.

## Dangerous

A person who gets too close to energized lines while attaching an object can be electrocuted.

## Distraction

Some materials posted on poles, like mirrors or holiday decorations, can be a distraction to drivers.

## Illegal

Many state and local laws and the National Electrical Safety Code prohibit any unauthorized items on poles. Utilities can face fines if these attachments aren't removed.



## Pole Damage

Even small holes can allow moisture and insects past the pole sealant, which can shorten the life of the pole or weaken it and cause it to fall in a storm.



## Hinders Repairs

Posters and flyers can hide identifying markers on poles and slow repair work.



# Watts The Answer?

1. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home \_\_\_\_\_ tends to increase during winter months.
2. A heat pump moves \_\_\_\_\_ in two directions depending on the time of year.
3. If you are considering cutting the cable cord and switching to \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time, MVlink is here to help you with that as well.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to [efletcher@mvec.coop](mailto:efletcher@mvec.coop)

Two winners will each receive a \$10.00 credit on their energy bills.

Please complete the following:

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

September winners:

Gretchen Eibey, Manchester

Wayne Engelken, Greeley

## October Board Meeting Update

- Approved the annual write-off of uncollectible accounts.
- Reviewed and discussed CFC's key ratio trends financial report.
- Reviewed an electric rate study for electric utilities in Iowa.
- Established the timeline to fill the Director opening for Region 1.
- Appointed a Search Committee for the Director opening in Region 1.



Maquoketa Valley  
Electric Cooperative  
109 North Huber Street  
Anamosa, Iowa 52205

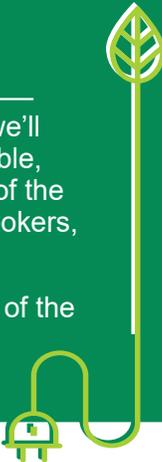
PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Permit 174



## 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: [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

## Understanding Your Electric Bill

**ON-PEAK** hours are 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
**OFF-PEAK** hours are  
Midnight - 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. - Midnight  
*These times are in effect every day.*

## Watts Current

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