

WATTS Current

May 2023

For Our Members

MVEC's Investment in Technology Benefits Member Experience

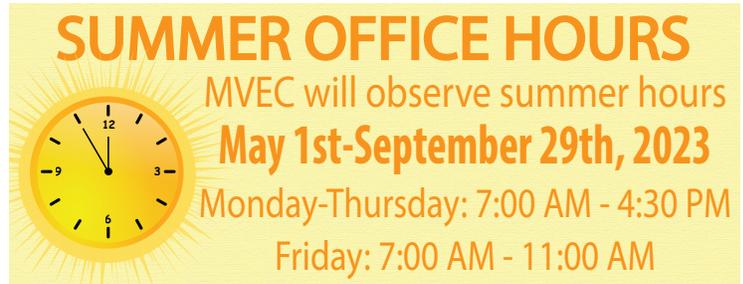
When you think of MVEC, your electric service provider, you may not immediately think of your co-op as a technology company. However, MVEC has made continuous and increased investments in technology to improve the reliability of our electric grid as well as the way we respond to outages when they do occur. What does this investment specifically mean to you, the member?

Reliability and Responsiveness

MVEC's SCADA system (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) is able to monitor and control equipment within MVEC's 36 substations in real time. SCADA allows MVEC to monitor the performance of the electric grid, put equipment in safety mode when crews are working on energized lines, and operate equipment to assist with day-to-day construction work and the restoration of outages in an efficient, safe manner. The information gathered from the SCADA system is continuously evaluated and used to determine where system maintenance efforts need to be focused. This ensures our maintenance dollars are spent in a wise manner and in areas where they will be most beneficial. Maintenance programs influenced by SCADA and other data available to the Cooperative include lightning protection, tree trimming, animal guards, and underground cable replacement.

To assist with outage response, motor operators have been installed on switches located between substation feeders that allow MVEC to transfer entire feeders to adjacent substations in minutes—translating to decreased down time during large transmission outages. The information collected every time a line blinks can also be used to help pinpoint where the problem might be, this can drastically reduce the time spent by crews patrolling many miles of line trying to find the cause of an outage or blink.

MVEC operating staff can also login remotely and access the SCADA system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—allowing them to address and review information for outages from anywhere at any time. It is estimated SCADA *continued on page 2*



SUMMER OFFICE HOURS
 MVEC will observe summer hours
May 1st-September 29th, 2023
 Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM
 Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

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MEMBER ROUND-UP July 27th July 25 - July 30 2023
 MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 70TH ANNUAL *Dubuque County Fair*



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and the other technology platforms in place at MVEC has helped to reduce outage time by 45%.

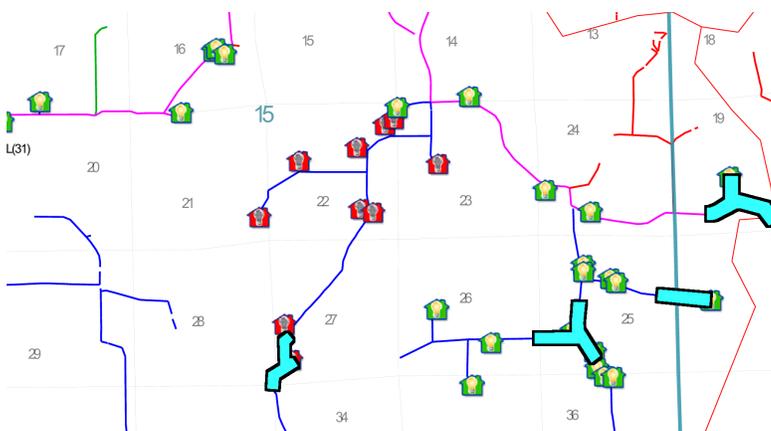
Improved Communication and World-Class Internet

After much research and discussion, MVEC launched our smart grid (fiber internet) project in 2016. MVEC’s fiber network has hardened the communication path between the office and our substations and made it much more reliable, especially during storm situations when the radio network that had been in place would historically struggle. The fiber network has also allowed the cooperative to extend our SCADA capabilities outside the substation fences and to downline equipment, which has increased the amount of data available for use by our engineering and operations teams to assist with system reliability, system operations, and member service. The millions of data points collected are also of great value to the engineering department and they plan for future system growth and reliability improvement projects.

The image below shows how smart grid brings it all together:

1. SCADA automatically detects and records information about a fault event
2. Outage Management automatically determines which meters are most likely to be impacted
3. The Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) evaluates the list of potentially impacted meters
4. Results are automatically displayed:
 - Green houses have power, Red houses don’t have power
 - Blue highlighted areas represent where the problem is most likely located based on the fault information

All of the above is completed in 2 to 3 minutes and displayed on computers in the operations center as well as on laptops in trucks in the field, which significantly improves the cooperative’s response time and efficiency with restoring outages



Summary of Annual Meeting Requirements

Annual Meeting

Article II of the Bylaws provides that an Annual Meeting of the members shall be held between August 1 and November 1 of each year with the exact date to be set by the Board of Directors. Article VIII, Section 3 of the Articles of Incorporation indicates that the members shall be “entitled to receive ten (10) days written notice of the time and place of all meetings and of the purpose of all special meetings”.

Directors

Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation provides the Board of Directors shall be made up of nine (9) members of the Cooperative. The directors serve for a three-year term. Each year the terms of three directors expire on the date of the Annual Meeting.

Nominations and Election of Directors by the Members

Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation indicates-“The Cooperative’s service area shall be divided into four (4) numbered geographic regions. Two (2) members shall be elected from each geographic region... The remaining ninth director shall be selected from any geographic region or the geographic region determined by the Board of Directors...”

The election of directors shall be by ballot and each voting member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote for each director to be elected. Article III, Section 5 of the Bylaws states, “Candidates for election to the Board of Directors shall be nominated by a nominating committee... Other nominations can be made with signatures in writing of 50 or more members...not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting...”

Please do not hesitate to contact the Cooperative office should you have any questions concerning membership requirements or the procedure of nomination and election of directors at the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative.



Annual Meeting and Election Of Directors

As a member-owner of MVEC, you can participate in the business of your co-op. One of the easiest and best ways to get involved is to attend our Annual Meeting, scheduled for Thursday, August 17, 2023, at the Berndes Center in Monticello. Attend to get updates about your co-op and cast your vote for the Board of Directors. Members who are unable to attend the meeting will once again have the option to cast their ballot for directors via mail, just as we have done the previous three years. Watch for your response card/ballot and voting instructions to arrive in early August. Future issues of Watts Current will provide more details as plans progress.

We believe a combined option of an in-person business meeting and mail-in balloting effectively encourages all members to participate in the Cooperative's business. Members who return their Annual Meeting response card prior to August 15th will be entered into a drawing for cash prizes.

Three positions for the Board of Directors listed below are up for election. Each position is a three-year term. The Board of Directors has appointed a nominating committee to review and develop a list of candidates for these positions.

- **At Large**
- **Region 1 (Jones and portions of Cedar and Linn Counties)**
- **Region 2 (Jackson County and portions of Clinton County)**

If you are interested in learning about the requirements for serving on the Board of Directors, please contact CEO Jeremy Richert at 800-927-6068 or via email at jrichert@mvec.coop. A packet of information will be mailed to you. After reviewing the qualifications, if you wish to be considered for one of these positions, please submit a brief biography stating your qualifications to: Nomination Committee %Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, 109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa, IA 52205, no later than June 8, 2023.

MVEC Supports Youth Leadership Opportunity

One of the 7 Cooperative Principles is Concern for Community. Each spring, MVEC shows concern for our community by supporting FFA chapters in our service area. MVEC supports chapters sending students to the Washington Leadership Conference to provide youth in our service area with leadership



Pictured: Christie Remley, MVEC Manager of Communications & Public Relations, presents a certificate to Jayson Ruley, member of the Midland FFA Chapter.

development opportunities. The Washington Leadership Conference provides FFA members a premier leadership experience while exposing them to the rich history of Washington, D.C. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and MVEC supports cultivating strong leaders in our communities. So far this spring, MVEC staff and directors have attended annual banquets for FFA Chapters in the Cascade, Monticello, Midland, Dyersville Beckman and Maquoketa school districts.

A Safe, Happy House

Four Easy Ways to Boost Electrical Safety at Home

DON'T
place flammable items, like potholders, napkins or dish towels near the stove while cooking.

DO
keep electrical devices away from water to prevent electric shock.

DO
ensure you're using the correct wattage in all light fixtures.

DON'T
overload electrical outlets with more devices than the circuit can handle.

SAVE THE DATE
Annual Meeting
Thursday, August 17, 2023
Monticello Berndes Center

May is National Electrical Safety Month.



Tree Trimming and Right of Way Management

Warmer weather is finally here, and with it our world greens up, reminding us of the unique beauty this part of Eastern Iowa offers. Trees are part of that landscape, but also present challenges to delivering safe, reliable power to MVEC members. Recent major weather events reinforce how dependent the energy grid is on having a clear, safe path to deliver power to your home or business.

How big a deal is it, having trees in the powerline right of way? The most recent information for 2022 has service interruptions caused by trees as the most common reason for outages, accounting for 31% of outages last year. Outages not only affect the member’s home or business, but also their neighbor’s. It is also a cost, representing approximately \$700,000 of MVEC’s operating budget in 2022. MVlink fiber communication service is also dependent on clear routes. Now, here is the good news; it is one of the most controllable outage causes if we, MVEC and the members, work together to improve this.

Planning

MVEC provides a Right of Way and Planting Guide to assist you in where to plant trees. Using this in conjunction with expert advice of your local tree nursery will help in reducing future problems. Having to trim a favorite tree that has grown into the electric line or fiber is not a task that the MVEC linemen or the member wants, but the cooperative’s primary goal is to provide a safe, clear right of way for power and communications to the member and their neighbors. For a copy of our Right of Way brochure, either visit mvec.coop/tree-trimming or call the office to request one.

Tree Trimming

When tree trimming is unavoidable and must be done, there is a process for this. Typically, MVEC crews will use a variety of methods to clear the path, that includes cutting, trimming, mowing, and where permissible, applying eco-friendly herbicides. When complete, the tree stumps, logs and branches are the property and responsibility of the landowner. Also consider that electrical lines or communication cables may be buried and the vegetation and tree roots can also create problems for these lines.

MVEC Equipment

In addition to a clear right of way for lines, it is important to maintain clear access for distribution equipment on the premises, often the green boxes, which may house metering equipment or transformers. It is tempting to plant vegetation around this equipment to hide it, but this equipment has to be safely accessed by MVEC personnel and occasionally changed out. It is a safety concern for our linemen who are tasked with providing reliable power to MVEC members.

STAY SAFE AFTER A STORM

Clean up with care

Once the storm has passed, it is tempting to go straight into yard clean-up mode. However, take time for safety.

Do not go outside if there is a power outage. There could be a downed power line, which could cause electrocution. Sometimes, downed lines can be covered by branches, storm debris, water, snow or ice.

Keep these additional safety tips in mind:

- Do not trim trees/branches within 10 feet of a power line.
- Read all instructions and be familiar with equipment you intend to use.
- Do not use a chainsaw for the first time during cleanup.
- Follow all safety recommendations when using power tools.

- Carry a ladder horizontally instead of vertically.
- Look for overhead power lines before carrying a ladder.
- Always look up for overhead power lines before removing debris from gutters.

- Take your time. Rushing can result in serious injury.
- Wear proper shoes and clothing when using ladders and power tools.
- Call your electric utility to report branches in power lines; never try to remove them yourself.



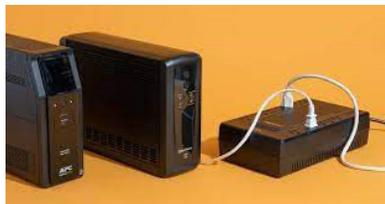
Our Energy Working For You: Uninterruptible Power Supplies

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

I am working to get a report ready for tomorrow. Just a couple more paragraphs to write, double-check the numbers, and I'll be good to go. But then the train goes off the tracks, an outage occurs, and my computer goes down. You may have had this happen, and it is not a good feeling to have to redo all of your work! This month's article focuses on uninterruptible power supplies, frequently called UPS systems that help to reduce loss from those unplanned outages.



While the team at MVEC works hard to keep the lights on, unplanned outages still occur for a variety of reasons. The ice storm in February is one example, but even short outages, lasting only a few seconds, can create problems in your home or business. A tree branch in the wind, vehicle accident, or a small animal on the system can cause an outage that affects your productivity or comfort.



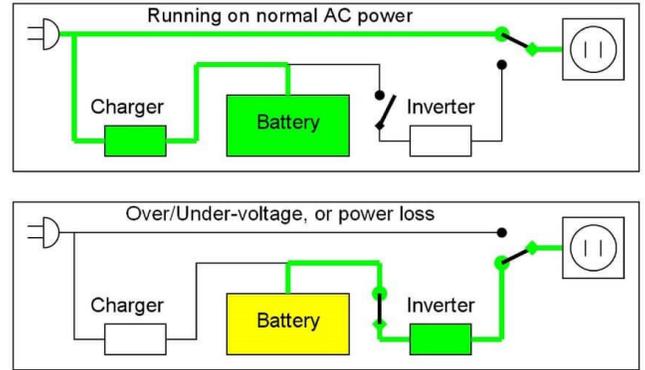
UPS systems come in a variety of sizes and can be used for different applications. Some are life safety critical, such as for medical equipment.

Industry also utilizes UPS systems to supply power to key manufacturing processes that would cause loss or waste if an outage occurs.

Most frequently, people see UPS systems that are next to a computer. This type of UPS has a small battery that will power the computer or appliance during an outage and the battery is charged from the home's receptacle outlet. Some of these units may also incorporate surge suppression into the unit as well. Cost can vary, from under \$100 for a

basic unit providing a few minutes of power backup, to thousands of dollars for a unit that provides power longer or for multiple loads. Higher end units can also communicate with equipment to start an orderly back up and shut down of the system.

Standby UPS diagram



Contact your local tech retailer to recommend a UPS system that is right for your situation and needs. Adding this layer of emergency backup power can save lost data or other important electrical loads in your home or business.

NO Installation Fees
NO Bait & Switch
NO Contracts

SIGN UP TODAY!

MVlink
FIBER INTERNET
MVEC.COOP





TECH LINK

Battery Backup for Your VoIP Phone

As we enter summer storm season, don't forget the battery backup for your VoIP phone (Voice over Internet Protocol, or phone service over the internet). For many years, your analog phone landline would allow you to stay connected to emergency voice services during a power outage. However, many of today's advanced VoIP home phone services require backup battery power to continue functioning during an outage. To avoid a disruption of home voice service during a power outage – and to maintain the ability to connect to 911 emergency services -- Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) offers backup batteries for purchase to members who subscribe to our MVlink VoIP phone service.

What Your Battery Can – and Can't – Do for You

MVEC/MVlink's backup batteries for telephone modems allow members to continue to use their home voice services during a power outage. Without a backup battery or alternate backup source such as a generator, members with VoIP service will not be able to make any calls, including emergency calls to 911. The only way to maintain the ability to use your VoIP phone during a power outage is by using some form of backup power.

MVEC/MVlink's backup battery for VoIP phone members does not provide power to any services other than voice. Home security systems, medical monitoring devices and other equipment will not run on a home phone backup battery (see Al Reiter's Energy Advisor column on page 5 for other uninterruptible power source suggestions).

Purchase and Replacement Options

If you are concerned about being able to contact 911 emergency services during a power outage, a backup battery may be a good option for you. You can purchase a backup battery for your VoIP phone directly through MVEC/MVlink or through retailers such as Best Buy. If purchased from MVEC/MVlink, our technicians will install the battery and explain proper care and use.

Keep in mind that backup batteries have a life span of approximately three to five years before they should be replaced.

If you have any questions or simply want to purchase a backup battery through MVEC, please call 1-800-927-6068, or email us at fiber@mvec.com.

WE'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER

PHONE SERVICE FROM MVLINK

You already enjoy the gold standard in internet – why not enjoy phone service as well?



FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Unlimited local calls
- Unlimited long distance for calls within the Continental United States; excluding Alaska and Hawaii
- Voicemail to Email
- Call Waiting
- Caller ID
- Call Forwarding

CONTACT US TODAY!



MVEC Members Fight Hunger

Thanks to the generosity of members and employees, MVEC was able to donate nearly 420 pounds of food and hygiene products to area food pantries in Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson and Jones Counties at the conclusion of the March food drive.

“Food insecurity continues to be a challenge for many residents in the communities we serve, and we were pleased to be able to call on our co-op family to help,” said Jeremy Richert, MVEC President & CEO.

MVEC held the food drive in conjunction with Franklin REC (Hampton, IA) and Farmers Electric Cooperative (Greenfield, IA) in an effort to help fill food pantry shelves in areas served by the co-ops. With rising grocery prices, food pantries are struggling to meet demand. MVEC would also like to thank the Fareway Stores in Manchester, Maquoketa, Monticello and Peosta for providing easily accessible drop-off locations.



Watts The Answer?

1. The millions of data points collected are also of great value to the engineering department and they plan for future system _____ and reliability improvement projects.
2. The most recent information for 2022 has service interruptions caused by _____ as the most common reason for outages.
3. MVEC's backup batteries for telephone modems allow members to continue to use their home voice services during a _____ outage.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to efletcher@mvec.coop

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

Please complete the following:

Name

Address

March winners:

Wilma Jesenovec, Hopkinton
Barbara Downey, Preston

April MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Reviewed the Cooperative’s 2022 Reliability Report and 2023 Reliability Plan.
- Approved a donation to a Dubuque County community project.
- Approved proposed updates to employment policies as recommended by staff.
- Was given an update on safety activity at the Co-op and had a discussion on MVEC’s Commitment to Zero Contacts 2.0
- Appointed the nominating committee for 2023 Director election.



**Nominate a local volunteer
and they could win
\$2,500 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at
IowaShineTheLight.com



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

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Cedar Rapids, IA
Permit 174

NEVER FORGET
MEMORIAL DAY

MVEC will be closed Monday, May 29 in observance of Memorial Day

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.

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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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Mailing Address:
109 North Huber Street • Anamosa, IA 52205
319-462-3542 or 800-927-6068

Summer Office Hours (May 1-September 29, 2023)
Monday-Thursday • 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday • 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998
www.mvec.coop

Email direct to the following departments:
Electric Billing: billing@mvec.coop
Electric Service: maintenance@mvec.coop
Internet/Phone Service: fiber@mvec.coop

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