

WATTS *Current*

January
2024

Our Energy Working for You: Power Outage Restoral from a Lineman's Perspective

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

While MVEC is working on many fronts to ensure reliable power to our members, outages still can occur. This month we are going to do a “virtual” ride along with an MVEC lineman to see the efforts taken to safely restore power in the event of an outage.

Lead Lineman, Jared Howard, has 21 years of experience and has seen a variety of outage calls in all kinds of weather conditions. For the purposes of this article, we will look at a call after the normal work hours.

Initial Outage Report: MVEC member reports outage by calling the main number (800-927-6068), the after-hours number (800-582-8998) or online at mvec.coop. The quickest way to enter your outage is via the online method. Even if the power is out and you can't use your laptop or tablet, you can still report outages online using a cell phone to go to the Cooperative's website.

Outage Dispatch (20-30 minutes of time): Jared receives a call from CRC (Cooperative Resource Center, MVEC's after-hours call center), informing him of an outage and what details they know of the incident. The more information the member observed and can report on what occurred can reduce the time to troubleshoot the repair.* Jared will contact the other linemen on call and they head into the shop. *Note: See 'Why It's Important for MVEC to Have Your Current Contact Information' article on page 7 for information on how MVEC having your correct phone number impacts outage response time).

Assembling Crew (5-10 minutes of time): The linemen arrive at the Anamosa shop (or Peosta, Manchester or Maquoketa outposts depending on the area of the outage) to get their truck and depart for the outage location. The aerial “bucket” truck itself has a variety of equipment, parts, wire, and safety gear to address the most common issues. If it is a larger event, additional MVEC outside and inside staff will also respond. If the outage involves an accident, MVEC crews will be working closely with Emergency Services dispatched to the scene. While the bucket truck can typically help in making repairs quickly, there are still areas of the MVEC service territory that service trucks can't get to, so in some cases, the line crews will have to get back to basics by strapping on their pole climbers and climbing up the pole (often times in less-than-ideal weather).

Arrival on Scene/Initial Outage Assessment (10 -120 minutes): As the crew heads to the outage location they will evaluate reported outage tickets to determine if the outage is affecting one member or is more widespread. The Cooperative's various technology platforms are also able to provide data that will help determine the location and magnitude of the

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outage. The automated meter system can help determine what other meters in an area might also be out of service and the SCADA system collects information for every fault that occurs on the system which can help to pinpoint the exact location of the problem. Depending on the weather conditions and how many members are affected, the time needed for the crew to get to the job site and identify the issue can vary from minutes to hours. From the view of the member, they may notice the truck making several trips by their home or business and this is part of the process in isolating the issue. Jared notes this can be one of the most challenging aspects of the process, something as small as a crack in a pole insulator during a rain can be hard to find.

Repair/Restoral Work (10-60 minutes): Once they are confident they have found the problem, repairs start. As with all steps in the outage process, safety for the member and safety for the linemen are the primary concern. Isolating and grounding the affected portion of the system helps to make it safe to work on. One of the biggest dangers that Jared identifies is vehicles driving by crews when they are out on a call. He asks drivers to slow down and leave plenty of room as they go by the crew.

All-Clear/Reenergize (10-20 minutes): After the repair is completed, the team has to patrol the line, often on foot, to ensure that lines and equipment are clear and it is safe to reenergize. The time for this can be impeded by creeks or rivers, and vegetation or brush in the path of the right of way. Seeing that it is safe to proceed, they will turn the power back on and verify all members have power.

Assuming this all goes as planned, the outage is complete and Jared contacts CRC to notify them. The call is done and they return home to their families and are ready for the next call. For Jared, the most rewarding part is getting the power back on for the members.

We understand that our members rely on electric power for so much of their lives and expect it to be available at all times. As Jared has described, there can be many challenges with getting service restored. MVEC is extremely proud of the commitment of our line crews, tech services, and dispatch center employees not only for keeping the power from going out with our routine maintenance efforts, but for restoring service when it goes out in a safe and quick manner at all times of the day and regardless of what the weather is doing. Over the last five years, the outage length for a non-major storm event averages 75 minutes in duration. Even though outages are disruptive, they are inevitable. Hopefully this timeline gives you a better understanding of the work the linemen are doing to get the power back on as safely and quickly as possible.

MVEC Board Approves 2024 Budget

At the December Board Meeting, MVEC directors approved the proposed 2024 budget which includes a rate increase to be implemented in Spring 2024. MVEC management and directors will evaluate proposed cost scenarios and determine the new rate structure over the next few weeks. The rate increase will help offset rising costs of materials, equipment and labor that the Cooperative has faced over the last several years. MVEC will provide more details and official notice of this rate increase in next month's Watts Current and via a direct mailing to all electric members.

Raising rates to our members is never pleasant and is not something MVEC takes lightly. MVEC continually works to balance preparing our Cooperative for growth while also keeping in sight our mission of providing members with safe, reliable and cost-effective service. There are measures you can take to reduce your energy bill: Reduce your energy consumption during peak hours (from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm each day), consider adjusting your thermostat (even slight adjustments can net savings) and seal air leaks or ensure your home is adequately insulated. Visit mvec.coop for more energy saving tips and resources.

December MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Reviewed projected year-end financials
- Reviewed and discussed contacts with members by MVEC's Member Advocate
- Approved the 2024 Capital and Operating budgets
- Approved a donation to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's 2024 International Project
- Discussed items of interest to the Cooperative for the 2024 Iowa Legislative session
- Appointed Scott Minzenmeyer to fill the Region 1 Director vacancy. Scott will replace Jan Null who recently retired from her Director position.
- Approved 2024 Board Meeting dates



NEW EMPLOYEES IN 2023

Tara Beasley-Garcia - CSR-Electric
Marc Breeden - Fiber Lineman
Alex Casey - Apprentice Lineman

Jolene Kramer - HR Manager
Jason Takes - Apprentice Lineman
Trae Klatt - Apprentice Lineman
Seth Stanton - Fiber Lineman

5 YEARS



Matt Althoff
 Journeyman
 Lineman



Bailey Bautsch
 Journeyman
 Lineman



Elyse Fletcher
 Marketing
 Specialist

10 YEARS



Gavin Eilers
 Fiber Staking
 Technician

15 YEARS



Rob Ziegelmaier
 Lead Lineman

20 YEARS



Curt Bahnsen
 Maquoketa Lead
 Lineman



Matt Kurt
 Senior Staking
 Technician

25 YEARS



Jim Waterman
 Anamosa Underground
 Foreman

35 YEARS



Anna Mary Riniker
 Engineering/Operations
 Assistant



50 YEARS
Kathy Schneider
 Billing Supervisor

MVEC's Heat Plus Program

Recently, our Energy Advisor has encountered a few members who have installed Air Source Heat Pumps but weren't aware of MVEC's Heat Plus program. The Heat Plus program is a special heating rate for geothermal, air source heat pumps, or qualifying electric heating systems. All electricity is registered through a sub-meter from October 1st to May 31st and billed at a rate of \$.049 per kilowatt-hour, plus a monthly basic service charge of \$3.50. This rate is designed to encourage energy-efficient heating systems.

Energy used on this meter is automatically subtracted from the energy used on the other (main) meter, and proper calculations are made, so the monthly electricity bills reflect data collected from both meters and appropriately applies the proper electricity rate. The rate is not available to properties having on-site generation (such as solar and wind) behind the meter

(this does not include emergency generators that operate only when normal power is interrupted). If you are interested in applying for the Heat Plus rate, notify MVEC by calling 319-462-3542 or 800-927-6068. Upon completion of the heat pump installation, please contact MVEC to coordinate the installation of a separate electric meter that measures the electric heat usage at your location. There is a one-time \$325 charge plus tax for equipment (billed to Cooperative Heat Plus member). A basic service charge of \$3.50 plus tax will be billed monthly year-round. MVEC reserves the right to inspect installations before or after establishing the Heat Plus rate.

Members must apply for the Heat Plus rate within one year of the purchase date (as shown on the member's invoice). Past eligibility, however, does not guarantee that equipment will meet the criteria for current programs in effect. Visit mvec.coop/heat-plus-program for more information.



Residential

2024 MAQUOKETA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE REBATES

Contact the cooperative for the complete list of rebates and qualifications



APPLIANCE RECYCLING

Geothermal Heat Pumps	New closed loop	\$400/ton
	Unit replacement with existing loop	\$150/ton
Air Conditioner	Energy Star qualified	\$75
Water Heaters	Air Source Heat Pump water heater	\$650
	Electric storage water heater	\$75
	Storage water heater with desuperheater	\$150
	Electric storage water heater with first time Heat Plus*	\$125
Level II EV Charger		\$500
Heat Recovery Ventilator	Energy Star qualified	\$250
Air Source Heat Pump	Energy Star heat pump	\$200/ton
		+\$250 bonus
	Hybrid heat pump bonus	\$100/ton
	Cold Climate heat pump	\$450/ton
	Standard heat pump	\$150/ton
Clothes Washer	Electric water heater required Energy Star qualified	\$40
Electric Clothes Dryer	Energy Star qualified	\$20
Weatherization	Insulation and air sealing for homes built prior to 2000	Up to \$2200
All Star Home Bonus	Eligible for additional rebate	\$500
Premier Electric Home Bonus	Eligible for additional rebate	\$200



Call our toll-free Pull the Plug hotline at (855) 838-7817 to request collection and recycling of your old, working refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioner; up to three operable units per address. Pick up and recycling is done by the cooperative's contractor.

Refrigerator	\$35/unit
Freezer	\$25/unit
Window Air Conditioner	\$25/unit

* Heat Plus rate is a promotional residential rate for electric heating equipment. For more details, requirements and Terms and conditions go here: <http://www.mvec.coop/rebates>

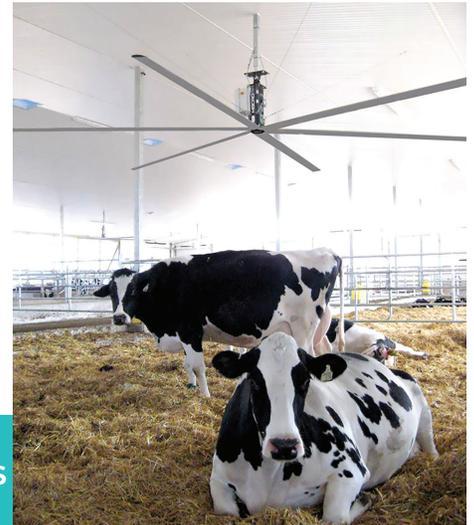


Agriculture

2024 MAQUOKETA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE REBATES

Contact the cooperative for the complete list of rebates and qualifications

Livestock Equipment	Waterers, heating, lamps, pads, controllers	Varied
Dairy Equipment	Reclaimers, pre-coolers, pumps, compressors	Varied
Livestock Ventilation	BESS Labs listed	Varied



MacroAir

Research has shown that a cool cow is a productive cow and that milk production increases up to two pounds per cow when they are in a comfortable environment.

Energy-efficient HVLS fans keep cows cool by moving air more efficiently through barns and open-air sheds while keeping bugs, birds and dust under control.





Safety Matters: Wishing You a Safe New Year!

By Jenna Curtis, Safety Director

Happy New Year! We are kicking 2024 off by emphasizing our commitment to safety at Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. My name is Jenna Curtis and I have been MVEC's Safety Director since 2017.



At MVEC, the safety of our employees, members and the public is our top priority. My focus at MVEC is to ensure that our line crews and employees are properly trained and informed on all things safety.

I knew safety was going to be my career path because I grew up helping my dad with construction jobs and always had a passion for helping people; so what better way than to help people stay safe while at work and at home? I have a Bachelor's of Science, Occupational Safety and Health from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Recently I completed the Certified Loss Control Program, an intensive program in electric utility safety and loss control offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in conjunction with the National Utility Training & Safety Education Association. I am one of only a few electric utility professionals in the country to hold this certification.

MVEC takes safety seriously and invests in training and tools to ensure our employees use safe work practices in the field, on the road and in the office. MVEC received accreditation from the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), a program that reviews our safety efforts on an annual basis and every three years with a more detailed and in-depth review. Additionally, we hold monthly safety meetings and have created a hands-on training field for our apprentices to practice hot (energized) work without the hazards. We also have a safety committee that meets monthly to identify priorities and implement safety improvement plans.

Please look for this column each quarter for practical safety tips that can keep you and your family members safe. I look forward to sharing the latest safety resources and trends with you. For

now, here are a few tips to consider as we navigate the next few winter months:

- As we are in winter storm season, always assume downed lines are energized
- Always watch the roadways for our crews and other workers working on or near the traveled portion (slow down or move over)
- Be winter storm ready (cell phones charged, food and water supply, fresh batteries in flashlights, vehicle in good working order, blanket, snow shovel and ice scraper in vehicle)
- Learn the basic signs of frost bite and hypothermia
 - o Frostbite signs: Numbness, white or grayish skin
 - o Hypothermia signs: Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, slurred speech, fumbling hands
- Be careful to prevent slips, trips and fall hazards in and outside your home (wipe up any wet surfaces, make sure rugs are smooth/flat, don't lay extension cords across doorways, traction shoes on snow/ice, and use handrails when taking the stairs)





TECH LINK

It's Smart to Get a Good Night Sleep

As we enter the New Year and many of us are working to keep those healthy New Year's resolutions, be mindful about the quality of sleep you are getting. We share this article from Website Compass magazine that outlines some smart devices that can assist you with getting a better night's sleep and streamline or elevate your personal care routine.

Solutions

Smart home solutions available for bedrooms and bathrooms are generally focused on helping you sleep better and starting your day more efficiently.

Devices

The following devices are available to create these solutions:

- Smart beds and bedding that increase your comfort and track your sleep
- Air quality units including air conditioners and air purifiers to adjust the environment
- Smart toilets with features like automatic opening and closing, heated seats, and deodorization
- Smart showers with systems that use voice commands to turn on the water and set it to your preferred temperature
- Smart scales that can track your BMI, heart rate, and muscle mass, in addition to your weight



Considerations

Since bedrooms and bathrooms are personal areas of the home, pay attention to privacy in devices used here. Choose those that prioritize it and have strong data encryption features. Also be aware of how manufacturers are using and sharing your data.

Additionally, air conditioners and air purifiers can be noisy and disrupt sleep, even when they're designed to help it. Look for products that are quiet or serve as white noise that won't disturb you. Finally, understand that smart devices, especially those used frequently, may require regular maintenance—such as replacing filters for air purifiers—which involve additional costs.

STEPS TO TAKE WITH MVEC IF YOU ARE MOVING

If you are moving from the service address that MVEC has on file for you, please take the following steps to ensure the appropriate actions are taken to disconnect your MVEC services. If your move is out of our service area entirely, we thank you for your membership. Please make sure that we have your forwarding address for your final bill and to collect future patronage dividend payments.

1. Notifications: Notify MVEC that you need to disconnect both your electric service and your fiber internet service (if you also subscribe to our MVlink internet) and provide the date you will no longer be responsible for electricity or MVlink fiber internet usage. If you have both electric and fiber services, the disconnect date must be the same. To schedule a disconnect of electric service call 800-927-6068 or visit our electric portal; to disconnect fiber internet service, call 800-927-6068 or email fiber@mvec.coop.

2. Wireless Router/Modem: If you are an MVlink subscriber and you have our equipment, either schedule a time for MVEC to pick up your wireless router (by calling 800-927-6068 or emailing fiber@mvec.coop) or disconnect it (**Please call our fiber department to ask for disconnecting instructions**) and bring it to MVEC's office (109 N Huber St. Anamosa).

3. Mesh WiFi Unit: If you purchased a Mesh WiFi Unit from MVEC, you own this piece of equipment so there is no need to return it.

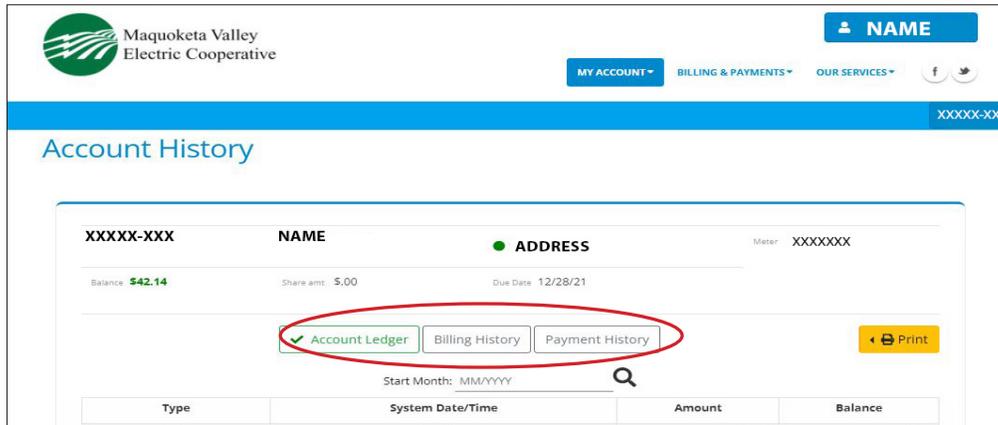
4. Exterior/Outside Equipment: Please note that any MVEC or MVlink wiring, equipment or boxes on the exterior of your home should stay in place and is the property of MVEC.





Use Your Member Portal for Tax Prep

Make your tax preparation easier by using MVEC's member portal to access your billing/payment history for the past year. You can access the member portal by clicking on the green My Electric Account button on the top of any mvec.coop page. If you have not used our online electric portal before, it's easy to create an account - you just need your full 8-digit account number, the last 4 digits of your SSN, and the last 4 digits of the phone number associated with your account. The portal gives you more information about your electric account at your fingertips.



Why It's Important for MVEC to Have Your Current Contact Information

Having correct phone numbers on file for your electric account ensures you will see faster responses when you call our office after hours. When your call is pushed into the automated system during high-volume call periods such as major storms, your account is immediately matched with your phone number. If we do not have a correct phone number, you can experience significantly longer wait times. Does MVEC have your current and complete contact information? Be on the lookout for the contact information insert that will be included in your February bill or email billing@mvec.coop to update your information.

- Make sure that MVEC has your current primary phone
- Provide MVEC with a secondary (and maybe even a third) phone number
- Consider authorizing your spouse to access your account
- Provide MVEC your email address

Leadership Program

Last month, MVEC's Distribution Engineering Manager, Nik Schulte, was one of 15 to graduate from the inaugural Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP) put on by Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC). CLIP participants committed to a yearlong calendar of in-person, virtual and on-demand training sessions where they gained leadership skills and learned about various co-op roles. Congratulations, Nik, and thank you for your commitment to MVEC and our members!



Watts The Answer?

1. The _____ way to enter your outage is via the online method.
2. Smart home solutions available for bedrooms and bathrooms are generally focused on helping you sleep better and starting your day more _____.
3. Make your tax preparation _____ by using MVEC's member portal to access your billing/payment history for the past year.

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 _____

November winners:

Elmer Maiers, Manchester
 Gilbert Gaul, Farley



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

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U.S. POSTAGE
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Permit 174



ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: energystar.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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Monday-Friday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998

www.mvec.coop

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