

February
2026

WATTS *Current*

Electric Cooperatives Discuss Priorities as Iowa's 2026 Legislative Session Begins

More than 150 senior staff and directors from Iowa electric cooperatives, including MVEC, were in downtown Des Moines on January 13, to attend a legislative “welcome back” reception at the start of the 91st Iowa General Assembly. At the event, co-op advocates discussed priorities face to face with their state legislators.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

“Hosting this annual reception at the start of the legislative session is a way for Iowa electric cooperatives to form long-term relationships based on trust and open communication,” remarked Leslie Kaufman, IAEC executive vice president. “With many new legislators and new faces in leadership this session, we value every opportunity to talk about the cooperative business model and the needs of our member-consumers.”

“We appreciate this opportunity to speak in-person with our local legislators as they begin the 2026 session,” said MVEC Board President Tom Stewart. “Senator Dan Zumbach and Representative Shannon Lundgren attended the event and spent time listening to what is important to us as a cooperative responsible for delivering consistent, reliable and affordable power and internet. Getting everyone together in one room is a positive and effective way to start conversations for this legislative session.”



MVEC Board President Tom Stewart; MVEC Director Lee Hein; MVEC Manager of Communications Christie Remley; Senator Dan Zumbach; Representative Shannon Lundgren; MVEC Director Billie Zumbach; MVEC Director Todd Wiedenman

Representatives from Iowa’s locally owned electric cooperatives covered several important issues that could impact the affordability and reliability of electricity for the members and communities we serve.

Electric cooperatives will again focus on protecting Iowa’s defined electric service territories, an important law that helps ensure every corner of the state receives consistent, cost-effective electric service. Another legislative challenge that could resurface involves third-party or “community solar” proposals that would attempt to allow non-utility solar developers to provide retail electric service inside an established utility’s service area, in direct conflict with the service territory law.

Iowa’s electric co-ops are also seeking to further protect utility workers, who encounter threats, harassment and assaults while on the job. Strengthening penalties for violence against utility workers reaffirms *Continued to page 2.*

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Important Note:

MVEC/MVlink sends e-newsletters to fiber internet members also Watts Current to electric members who receive it by email. On occasion, MVEC/MVlink will send service updates, maintenance alerts and outages via email. **Please note that if you opt-out of receiving emails from MVEC/MVlink (via a link at the bottom of emails), you will be removed from our email database and will no longer receive ANY EMAILS from MVEC/MVlink (including those containing maintenance notices, outages and account information). Opting out of an email doesn't just prevent you from receiving that type of email, it will prevent any communicating with you via email altogether.**



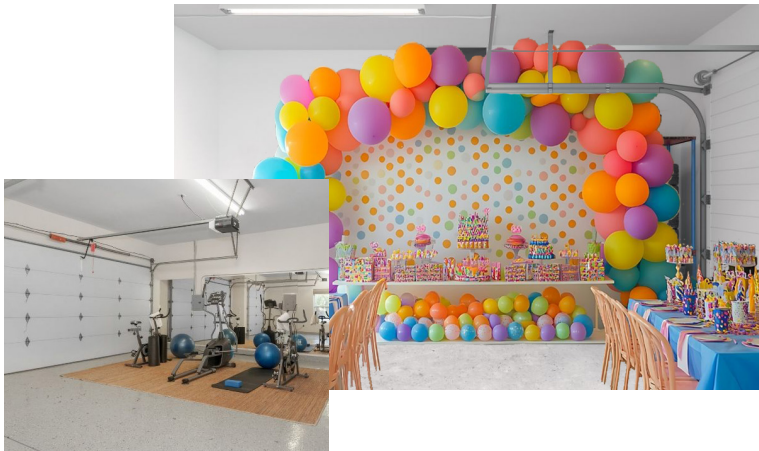
Continued from front page.

our commitment to the safety of cooperative employees and our communities. In the coming months, Iowa's 91st General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy. Iowa electric cooperatives will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues as we work to power lives and empower communities. Learn more about our advocacy efforts at www.IAruralpower.org.

Our Energy Working for You: Energy Efficiency in the Garage

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

During our recent holiday season, one of my family conversations centered on holiday get-togethers that are held in the garage. As family events such as graduations, birthdays and other various holidays outgrow the main areas inside the house, the garage is frequently used—with garages becoming much more than simply a space to store your vehicle. It is not uncommon to see garages with textured floors, heating and cooling heat pumps, seating areas, separate work areas and even restrooms/showers. As the garage looks more like a living space, we should consider measures for energy efficiency in this area.



As with a home's living space, a good first step is ensuring that the garage is adequately insulated. Today, the recommended attic insulation over the living space is R-60. Having this same insulation value in the garage attic reduces heat loss if the garage is heated. Even if the attached garage is not heated, it is a barrier to heat loss or gain, from the outside air to the main living space and should be considered when installing insulation.

Another basic step to take for energy efficiency in the garage is LED lighting. There are many fixture and lamp choices for lighting this space and if it is used as workshop or detailing the vehicle, good 'task lighting' is a must.

Frequently, a garage has attic access or pull-down stairs. Ensure that access is also insulated and the opening has weatherstripping or a good seal around the frame to reduce heat loss. Garages may also have pipe or duct

penetrations to the outside that need to be well sealed with caulking or expanding foam.

Similar to the house, having energy efficient windows with a U-Factor of at least 0.30 or lower and well insulated and sealed entry doors are also important components to heat loss and air infiltration.

The garage energy efficiency "elephant in the room" is normally the overhead garage door(s). Because this is a large section of an exterior garage wall, it is a significant source of heat loss and air infiltration. Uninsulated garage doors will have an



3
LAYER
CONSTRUCTION

2
LAYER
CONSTRUCTION

1
LAYER
CONSTRUCTION

R Value between 0-3 and sealing around the frame is typically minimal. A step up is a wood door with an R value between 5-9. An insulated steel door that includes better sealing around the perimeter will range from R 6-9. Some of the highest end garage doors will have insulation values up to R-18. A higher end door has added features around the perimeter and between the horizontal panel sections to further reduce air movement. Beyond thermal efficiency, high-performance insulation serves as an effective sound barrier, noticeably reducing exterior noise. As you look at a building or remodeling project for your garage space, prioritizing energy efficiency will ensure the space remains comfortable and functional for a wide range of activities and uses.

Welcome Nolan Morrison

At the end of 2025, Nolan Morrison joined MVEC as a 1,000-hour Apprentice Lineman 1 and will work out of MVEC's Peosta outpost. Nolan completed the Electrical Power Distribution program at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College and is a graduate of Western Dubuque High School. He brings hands-on experience in aerial line construction and fiber-related field work, along with foundational skills in safety, climbing, and equipment operation. MVEC welcomes Nolan to the co-op family!





2025-2026 Heat Plus

The 2025-2026 Heat Plus rate with Power Cost Adjustment is \$0.044 per kilowatt-hour for electricity used on and off-peak during the winter months. MVEC

strives to keep this rate as low as possible to encourage the installation of highly efficient heat pump systems. If you are planning a building or remodeling projects, contact us at 800-927-6068 for energy efficiency ideas.



Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442 or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

December MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Approved the 2026 Capital and Operating budgets.
- Reviewed and approved changes to the Cooperative's employee compensation plan.
- Discussed items of interest to the Cooperative for the 2026 Iowa Legislative session.
- Discussed Director compensation for meeting and training sessions. Per diems will increase by \$10 in 2026 in accordance with existing Board Policy.
- Approved 2026 Board Meeting dates.

January MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Reviewed and discussed the 2026 Safety Improvement plan that was developed by the Cooperative's Safety Committee.
- Reviewed projected 2025 year end financials. Energy sales were 22% higher than 2024 and 3% below the 2025 budget amount. Total expenses for the year were 0.5% below budget. Total margins for the year are projected to be slightly above budget.
- Reviewed and discussed the Cooperative's updated financial forecast which was updated after the 2026 Cooperative Budget was approved.
- Discussed the 2026 Legislative welcome back reception that was held in Des Moines.
- Discussed topics covered at recent training sessions attended by Directors.
- Approved voting delegates for upcoming business meetings for affiliate organizations.



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



Benefits



Quick to market.



Needs no water.



No air emissions.



Zero fuel costs.

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.



Please Cash 2025 Dividend Checks!



Dividend checks were issued to eligible MVEC members on October 27, 2025, and automatically become void on February 24, 2026. If you have not cashed your check, please do so soon. Dividend checks not cashed by February 24, 2026, will be retained by the Cooperative and redistributed next year when dividends are paid. Please call the office at 800-927-6068 and talk to Jan if you have any questions. As a reminder, if your dividend was under \$5, it is being held until the accumulated amount in the future is over \$5

WHAT IS backfeed?

Backfeed happens when a person connects their portable generator to a wall outlet, which allows power to flow in reverse – that is, the alternate power source feeds energy back through their home's electrical system, their meter and back into the power lines.

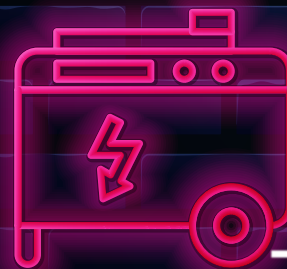
Potentially deadly backfeed can also happen with permanently installed generators that are not used or installed correctly. They should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician, who will install either an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator. The job of this switch is to transfer a power source safely from its primary source to a backup source.

To keep utility crews safe, never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system, and ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly. Electric lineworkers thank you in advance.

Learn more at:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**

**Avoid deadly backfeed and
help keep lineworkers safe.**





Watt's Up at MVEC: Technical Services Department

By Dean Koopmann, Technical Services Manager

This month's Watts Up at MVEC column spotlights MVEC's Technical Services department and Dean Koopmann, Technical Services Manager, who is celebrating his 36th year at the co-op.

When I started at MVEC (Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative) as a lineman in 1990, the Technical Services Department did not exist because the technology was not available yet. At the time, we did not have devices that regulate voltage and only one person was responsible for substation maintenance. As the Cooperative invested in more technology to meet the growing demand of our members, the need for a Technical (Tech) Services Department was created.



*Dean Koopmann, Technical Services Manager
Photo credit: Zach Finn, CIPCO*

MVEC implemented solid-state (devices used to regulate the voltage) that were equipped to connect to SCADA which was deployed in 1998. SCADA (Supervisory Controlled Automated Data Acquisition) is used to remotely monitor and control substation/line devices. This allows the Operations Department to remotely monitor and manage the electrical system. This capability has decreased outage time for members and allows the Engineering Department to utilize the data for the engineering models. The Tech Services Department is responsible for maintaining MVEC's 37 substations to ensure they are operating correctly and transmitting data back to the office.

The Tech Services Department currently has ten employees and is responsible for ensuring that MVEC's meters, regulators, transformers, and fiber equipment all function within specification.

An accurate and well-maintained metering system is a critical component of the cooperative's service to members. A meter records all power delivered to the members and is a priority for the Tech Services Department. In 2008, MVEC deployed PLC (Power Line Carrier) AMI (Automated Meter Infrastructure) meters to further improve communications from the members' meters back to the main office.

AMI meters provide detailed usage of information down to the member level which allows us to monitor the system more closely. Once the decision was made to update to AMI metering, the entire system was upgraded in 18 months with the help of the Tech Services Department and the Maintenance Lineman. This upgrade not only included meters, but it also included a new unlicensed radio system to help send and receive larger amounts of data to the main office. It was quite an undertaking and accomplishment for our department. Currently, the AMI PLC equipment is being replaced with AMI RF (Radio Frequency) technology which is more reliable, allowing for even more data collection.

In 2016, MVEC invested in and constructed a fiber optic smart grid network. This allowed the Coop to provide high speed internet to the members while also creating communication to electrical equipment located on substation lines. Fiber requires less maintenance and is not as affected by weather as point-to-point radio communication. Tech Services is responsible for helping to maintain and upgrade the fiber network. As with the electrical side of the Coop, the fiber network helps to evaluate growing member needs and leverage modern technology to expand and improve service. Recently, work was completed to upgrade the fiber network to 100 Gig, which allows the fiber network to transfer data at higher speeds while also making 5 Gbps speeds available to MVlink members.

The biggest challenge that the Tech Services department faces is time restraint. The department is responsible for a variety of equipment and projects—both member-facing and internal to the Cooperative itself by maintaining substation equipment, metering, line equipment, and fiber network. Our department is continually adding innovative technology and is committed to learning new skills.



From L to R: Chad Wieser, Andrew Recker, Logan Bell, Alex Casey and Bennett Cole

Last summer MVEC's built the first new substation in nearly 30 years. Tech Services played a pivotal role in making this happen. The talent and expertise within the department and the

willingness to work together made it a success. I am proud of the way our team stepped up to make it happen.

One of my favorite aspects of this job is the continuous learning, constant challenges, and being involved with all the technical changes at the Coop. MVEC is focused on using technology in a manner that improves the services we offer to our members, making our Cooperative a respected leader in the industry.



TECH LINK

Protect Your Heart (and Your Data) from Valentine's Day Scams

Valentine's Day is a time for love and affection, but all of those emotions can leave you vulnerable to cyber threats. Take off the rose-colored glasses to protect your heart and your data this Valentine's Day with these tips:

- **Beware of "Too Good to Be True" Gift Offers and Deals:** Scammers often use fake discounts or flash sales for luxury gifts, meals and hotels around Valentine's Day to lure victims. Always verify the sender's email (or web) address and avoid clicking on suspicious links.
- **Verify Digital E-Card Senders:** Cybercriminals exploit digital e-cards to send malware or phishing links. If you receive a digital Valentine's from an unexpected sender, verify it with the supposed sender via text or call directly.
- **Spot "Phishing Cupid" Emails:** Scammers may impersonate delivery services or colleagues sending a "secret Valentine." You could also be sent an irresistible email offer for a Valentine's gift, or an e-card purportedly from an admirer you may or may not know, that turns out to be a phishing attack. These emails often ask you to log in or provide personal details. Educate others and use secure payment methods when buying gifts online.
- **Say No to Romance Scams:** Sometimes a bad actor will take advantage of loneliness and our human nature to connect with others by manipulating victims into sending money or disclosing personal information. These threats have become even harder to spot in the wake of AI. Not everything is as it seems—do your own research thoroughly before engaging any of these inquiries.
- **Use Secure Payments:** Stick to well-known retailers and secure payment methods (e.g., PayPal, credit cards) with reputable dispute processes.



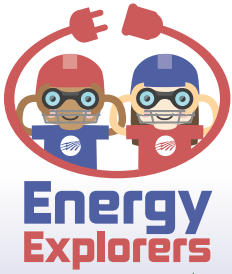
By applying these tips, you can celebrate Valentine's Day safely and protect your personal information (and your wallet) from cyber threats.

New Year = More Scams

It may be a New Year, but scammers are up to the same old tricks. MVEC has recently become aware of scams where a fraudster poses as an MVEC representative or that of our power supplier, insisting on immediate payment to prevent disconnection. Neither MVEC nor our power supplier will call to demand instant payment. We want to keep you safe: If you're ever unsure about the person on the other end of the line, please hang up and reach out to us directly. We're always here to help you verify your account safely.

If you receive a suspicious call, text, or email:

- **Hang up immediately.**
- **Do not call any phone numbers provided by the solicitor.**
- **Contact MVEC directly at 800-927-6068 or 319-462-3542 to verify your account status.**



Score Big with Energy Savings!

Every Super Bowl MVP makes big plays—and you can too! Use the clues below to fill in the blanks and learn how you can help save energy at home by making smart, efficient plays. Double check your work in the answer key.

1. Spend time outdoors or unplugged to reduce your _____ time and save energy.
2. Turn off the _____ while brushing your teeth.
3. When it's cold, wear an extra layer of _____ instead of turning up the thermostat.
4. Keep doors and _____ closed when your home's heating/cooling system is turned on.
5. Unplug smaller electronics like _____ when you're not using them.
6. Turn off _____ when you leave a room.

Word Bank:

windows
clothing
water
lights
screen
chargers

Answer Key: 1. screen 2. water 3. clothing 4. windows 5. chargers 6. lights

Watts The Answer?

1. It is not _____ to see garages with textured floors, heating and cooling heat pumps, seating areas, separate work areas and even restrooms/showers.

2. An accurate and well-maintained metering system is a _____ component of the cooperative's service to members.

3. Cybercriminals exploit digital e-cards to send _____

or phishing links.

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 _____

December winners:

Audry Anderegg, Manchester
Linda Lyons, Anamosa



Rep. Randy Feenstra Visits MVEC

Photo Caption: From L to R: MVEC Manager of Communications Christie Remley; MVEC Board President Tom Stewart; Representative Steven Bradley; Representative Randy Feenstra; MVEC CEO Jeremy Richert; Senator Carrie Koelker and IAEC Senior Manager of Advocacy and Policy Haley Moon.

MVEC met with Representative Feenstra, Senator Koelker, Representative Bradley, and Jones County Economic Development Director Derek Lumsden on January 5 to discuss eastern Iowa's energy and rural development goals.



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

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**Our Office Will Be Closed
Monday, February 16
In Observance Of Presidents' Day**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.



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.

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www.mvec.coop  

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Internet/Phone Service: fiber@mvec.coop

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