

January
2026

WATTS *Current*

Watts Up at MVEC: Operations Department Update

By Jim Waterman, MVEC Operations Manager

When we last checked in with the Operations Department, former Operations Director Dan Schulte was at the helm. Schulte retired in August so we thought this would be a great time to check in with new Operations Manager, Jim Waterman.

This January looks a little different to me than previous winters at MVEC. Most recently, I had been the Foreman of our Underground crew out in the field but took on the role of Operations Manager in March after Dan Schulte announced his retirement. I came to Maquoketa Valley in 1999 after graduating from Guttenberg High School and completing two years of Powerline School at Northwest Iowa Community College (in Sheldon), as well as a one-year electrician course at NICC in Calmar.

I joined the MVEC team as an Apprentice Lineman, then moved to the Underground Construction crew, ultimately becoming foreman in 2013. Up until now, underground work has been my favorite role at the cooperative. It was challenging work, and I took pride in doing the job that most are hesitant to do.

After working as the Foreman of the Underground crew for 12 years, when the opportunity arose to apply for the Operations Manager position, I was interested in it because it seemed like the next logical step in my career at MVEC. I had been at the co-op for 25 years and built a good foundation of electric utility knowledge and had a good working relationship with my colleagues and our members. Also, I was not getting any younger and years working out in the elements had taken their toll on me physically. I had already undergone two knee surgeries and wanted to consider a change.

Making the transition to working primarily in the office was an adjustment. When you work out in the field, it's peaceful with just you and your crew performing the work at hand. In the office, you're pulled in numerous directions, even on vacation days your phone never stops ringing.

What surprised me most about taking on this position and spending more time in the office is that everyone is still constantly learning—no one has all of the answers all the time. Given the obstacles and tough decisions that are faced daily, MVEC employees do what they need to do. It speaks volumes of the people who work here.

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JOIN OUR TEAM

Your co-op is looking for a couple of outstanding individuals to fill open positions:



Fiber Communications Lineman - Performs a variety of duties related to installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of both overhead and underground fiber optic mainline and service drop facilities.

Energy Advisor - Serves as the liaison to members, responding to questions, resolving problems and promoting coop energy conservation programs. Has general knowledge of electrical and able to provide electrical and energy efficiency advice.

Visit mvec.coop/employment or call 800-927-6068 (and ask for Jolene in HR) to learn more. If you know of someone who might be a fit, please share these opportunities.



Continued from front page.

When asked about my typical day, my first response was that no two days are the same. However, at a high level, I typically arrive at the office an hour early each morning. I first go to the Operations Center and check into the DataVoice program to verify that there are no ongoing outages to address. Then I will go into my office and check the daily schedule and send it out to each truck. At 7:30 each morning, we have a team meeting with all of the linemen to go over what each truck is doing that day and determine if any substation switching needs to be done. This helps us maximize efficiency—by knowing who is where and with what materials, if something needs to shift, we can easily make a more informed decision and act quickly.

After that, I am checking time sheets, creating the next day's schedule, taking member calls and communicating with various contractors to ensure work is getting completed and that we have the materials necessary to perform our work—including consulting with our Warehouse Manager, Brent Van Dorn, to ensure that our Peosta and Anamosa warehouses are well stocked for the crews.

As time allows, I perform work order inspections, crew inspections and check on any rejected poles. At a minimum, I try to get out in the field at least once a week. During these winter months, the crews are focused on detailed line inspections—we will get to 6 of our 37 substations between December and February. We will also work through rejected pole changeouts and routine system improvements, including work orders and line rebuilds, particularly in areas we can't reach unless the ground is dry or frozen. We will also continue to work with our vegetation management contractors to clear our Right of Way (ROW) to improve reliability and safety. Looking beyond our winter work, as soon as spring weather arrives, we will be resume working on underground projects, as well as other projects to accommodate growth across our service area.



Our department looks forward to continuing to deliver safe, reliable and affordable power. Along those lines, I would like to remind our members of the importance of Right of Way clearing. It is crucial for MVEC crews and

contractors to keep our electric lines clear of trees and vegetation as those are the largest outage causes. If you have questions about ROW clearing, you can always visit our website (mvec.coop/tree-trimming) or call our office at 800-927-6068. If you have issues or questions in general, feel free to direct those to the office as well (vs. the guys in the field who are focused on performing dangerous work). Lastly, always report any lines down or trees on the lines.



NEW EMPLOYEES IN 2025

Brady Kennedy - Apprentice Lineman

Bereket Loer - Distribution Engineer

Ethan McCaulley - Apprentice Lineman

Nolan Morrison - Apprentice Lineman

5 YEARS



Christie Remley
Manager of Communications
& Public Relations



Lane Hennenman
Anamosa Lineman



Peyton Rupp
Anamosa Lineman

10 YEARS



Hunter Beatty
Staking Technician



Tyler Bartholomew
Engineering Technician



Travis Manders
La Motte Lead
Lineman



Eli Hunerdosse
Engineering Technician
Foreman

20 YEARS



Jesse Kemp
Peosta Lead Foreman



Keith Keltner
Senior Mechanic

25 YEARS



Jeff Geistkemper
Fiber Plant Manager



Safety Matters: Winter Travel Safety Tips

By Jenna Curtis, Safety Director

For some, winter travel may mean navigating Iowa winter on a road trip. For others, winter travel means a flight to some warm, exotic locale. Regardless, there are safety precautions you should take for both types of travel. Before you head out on the road, make sure your car is winter road-worthy. Check your tire tread, battery charge and make sure the gas tank is full. Also, be sure to pack an emergency kit—warm clothing, hat, gloves, boots, blanket, flashlight (with new batteries), water and some non-perishable food such as protein bars. For our brutal Iowa winters, consider a compact snow shovel and some ice melt. If you have an accident, go off the road or get stuck with the vehicle running, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear so that carbon monoxide does not build up inside.

Be sure to also include a first aid kit, this is something that will come in handy regardless of the season. If you already have a first aid kit in your vehicle, make sure it is well stocked or replenished if used.

If your winter traveling has you embarking via airplane, first things first. If a travel deal seems too good to be true, it probably is a scam. Don't click on special offer links via email or text and do not use a site that you aren't familiar with to book your dream vacation.

Once you've booked your trip, be prepared for security lines to move slower in the winter months, as travelers often wear bulky clothing and layers to stay warm. TSA recommends arriving at least two hours before your flight, especially in the winter.

To speed up the process, wear easily removable shoes and keep items like coats and laptops easily accessible.

Winter also brings cold and flu season and airports and planes can be breeding grounds for germs, especially during winter. To stay healthy, hydrate, sanitize and carry vitamins.

Once you've arrived at your destination, particularly if you are staying in an Air BnB or vacation rental, do a walk through to check that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are present and functioning. Consider packing a travel smoke and carbon monoxide detector.

Once you've arrived at your resort, hotel or rental, take a little time to check where doors and stairways are located. During your inspection, create a mental escape plan for emergencies. Look for the first aid kit and fire extinguisher (and confirm it's charged/functioning). This will save precious time during any sort of emergency.

Lastly, don't neglect your home security while you are traveling. Preparing your home for being gone on vacation involves a series of steps to ensure your safety and the maintenance of your property. Here are some key tips to consider:



- Make your home look occupied: Keep your house looking lived-in leaving the blinds down. Use timers for lights or smart plugs to make it seem like someone is home.

- Use Smart Home technology: Consider installing smart locks and motion-sensor lighting to deter intruders.

- Secure your home: Double-check all locks, windows, and entry points. Pick up any spare keys you hide outside. Install security cameras or video doorbells to monitor your home remotely.

- Turn off the main water valve: This prevents water damage and flooding.

- Unplug electronics and appliances: This reduces the risk of fire and saves you money.

- Be careful with what you post on social media: Avoid announcing your absence on social media. Adjust your privacy settings to limit who can see your updates.

By following these tips, you can help protect your home and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience while you're away.

November MVEC Board Meeting Update

- Provided update on MVlink activities for 2025 and budgeted plans for 2026
- Received an update on large loads within MVEC's service territory
- Reviewed the 2026 Draft Capital and Project budgets
- Completed training on Director's fiduciary responsibilities
- Approved changes to Board Policy for areas of Director code of conduct and training expectations. The changes were recommended by the Board Policy Committee.



Residential

2026 MAQUOKETA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE REBATES

Contact the cooperative for the complete list of rebates and qualifications

Geothermal Heat Pumps	New closed loop	\$500/ton
	Unit replacement with existing loop	\$200/ton
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/max
Electric Vehicle Ready		\$200/home
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



Agriculture

2026 MVEC REBATES

Contact the cooperative for the complete list of rebates and qualifications

Livestock Equipment - Varied
Waterers, heating, lamps, pads, controllers

Dairy Equipment - Varied
Reclaimers, pre-coolers, pumps, compressors

Livestock Ventilation - Varied
BESS Labs listed

For more informations on Agriculture and Commercial rebates visit:
mvec.coop/rebates



New Incentives in 2026

MVEC is introducing two new rebates in 2026 to support heat pump maintenance and energy efficiency measures:

Heat Pump Check-Up Earn money back just by having your ground source or air source heat pump checked. This rebate may be submitted every three years. \$50

Energy Assessment Incentives Earn money back when you complete selected energy efficiency measures after an audit performed by MVEC's Energy Advisor.

Incentives Vary.

* 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>



Our Energy Working for You: Energy Efficient Building Design

By Al Reiter, Energy Advisor

We often talk about energy efficiency from the perspective of an existing home. Ideally, the work starts much earlier to build an energy efficient home or building. This month we will examine how early decisions in the building process will lead to money saved. Those choices will also contribute to creating a comfortable living space.

For this article we reached out to a local expert in using energy efficient design in construction. Scott Casey with Casey Building Solutions (Cascade), focuses on a holistic approach to energy efficient construction to achieve energy goals for his customers. Scott shares with us that when considering a construction project, the builder should incorporate discussion about the owner's goals in saving energy. This discussion should take place early in the process and ideally would even be before the building site is selected, to allow the structure's location to take advantage of the seasonal changes. A study by Lawrence Berkley Labs highlighted that orienting the windows to maximize solar energy can result in 10-20% energy savings.

Scott notes that energy efficient design is a science and all aspects of the building, from the foundation to the building envelope, HVAC systems, and the occupant's habits, are key to how the home or building performs for them. It is important to have a builder who understands the process and looks at several factors in the building layout and selection of materials for optimal energy efficiency. HVAC designers will utilize software for what is often referred to as a "Manual J calculation" to properly size the system. If the living space experiences cold and hot zones, this leads to discomfort for the occupants and can lead to air quality issues. Further illustrating the science involved with building construction Scott explains, "A good energy efficiency plan helps to make it all work as it should. We all want a comfortable, efficient, inexpensive home with good indoor air quality. That is really hard to achieve without good planning...while air tightness is imperative to make a house energy efficient, if not done properly, it can introduce problems with moisture and air quality".

With any construction project, often there are hard choices in costs versus benefits. The advantage of making efficiency upgrades to the building or equipment is that those cost savings should be something that can be planned and validated after completion. MVEC, in the process of doing an energy assessment for our members, performs a blower door test to determine air changes per hour in the structure. In addition to the cost savings, there is the added benefit of improved comfort and air quality.

For most of our members, a home is the single largest purchase we make. In building a home, the homeowner has many decisions to make that can be overwhelming. Including discussions with your builder on energy efficiency early in the process, which can lead to a lifetime of benefits. With any building project, check MVEC rebates that may apply at www.mvec.coop/rebates.



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. Questions? Contact our Billing Department at 800-927-6068



TECH LINK

Making the Most of Your MVlink Service

In addition to providing reliable, ultra-fast internet service, MVlink also features several devices and services you can take advantage of as a fiber internet member to maximize your MVlink experience.

- **WiFi Router** - MVlink offers home (or small business) WiFi for an additional **\$4.95** per month. Members can use their own router but it is best to use a router supported by MVlink. It allows our staff and tech team access to your network to remotely figure out the source of a problem.

MVlink uses the GigaSpire router, a next-generation WiFi system. MVlink couples the GigaSpire with a fiber modem to provide a superior online experience for members.

- **Managed WiFi App** - Our WiFi router can be managed by downloading a free app through the App Store or Google Play. MVlink Managed WiFi app is easy to use. Look up or change your password, set WiFi schedules and parental controls, establish a guest WiFi and much more.

- **Mesh Unit / Extender** - Like your current WiFi network, Mesh WiFi uses a router to transmit the WiFi signal your devices connect to. What's different is that it combines the router with a series of small wireless devices - called satellites which is placed in different rooms in your home. These satellites communicate with the router and provide you with a strong WiFi signal everywhere in your home.

A Mesh unit from MVlink is a one-time charge of \$90 plus tax. The Mesh WiFi unit, combined with MVlink's WiFi router, will extend your network even further than a router alone, for a complete home managed solution.

- **VoIP Phone** - Along with high-speed internet, MVlink members can also enjoy unlimited long distance phone service. Voice over the Internet Protocol, or VoIP service simply means your phone service is supplied through your internet connection for making and receiving calls. Most members will be able to retain their current phone number and their current telephone(s).

MVLINK PHONE FEATURES INCLUDE:

Unlimited local calls,	Call Waiting
Unlimited long distance calls within the US	Caller ID
Voicemail to Email	Call Forwarding

Residential telephone service is only **\$34.95** per month when bundled with your MVlink internet service (cost is \$49.95 if not bundled). For more information, **visit mvec.coop/telephone-service**.

- **Streaming Guide Resource** - Another benefit MVlink members receive is a convenient monthly Streaming TV digest (sent right to member email in-boxes) that is a helpful tool on what to watch on the various streaming platforms—the guide contains updated information on new movies, programs and sporting events coming to Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, etc. If you haven't taken the plunge into streaming yet, MVlink also offers a helpful guide that takes you through the steps and different Streaming TV services. Visit our guide: **mvec.coop/streaming-guide**.

Request from Our Fiber Techs:

Mother Nature has certainly provided a challenging winter so far with several heavy snow falls, ice and windy conditions. Please keep our fiber technicians in mind when doing snow removal on your property. Consider clearing a path to the NID on the side of your home (entry point where the fiber comes in) so that if internet maintenance is necessary, our technicians don't have to struggle through deep snow drifts. Thank you in advance for your help—our friendly fiber technicians truly appreciate it!



Gotto and Stewart Earn Director Gold Credentials

One of the 7 Cooperative Principles is 'Education, Training and Information' meaning that cooperatives prioritize education for members, managers, employees and elected representatives. MVEC employees routinely participate in training at the statewide and national level as do MVEC Directors. Last year, MVEC Board President Tom Stewart and MVEC Board Treasurer Judy Gotto



Tom Stewart
President
Director for Region 2



Judy Gotto
Treasurer
Director At-Large

each earned the Director Gold Credential, which recognizes directors who have earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) credentials and are committed to continuing their education throughout their service on the board. Congratulations to President Stewart and Treasurer Gotto and thank you both for your continued commitment to MVEC and our members.

Fischer Graduates from Leadership Program

Last month, MVEC's Senior Accountant, Abby Fischer, graduated from the 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, Abby, and thank you for your commitment to MVEC and our members!



Watts The Answer?

1. It is _____ for MVEC crews and contractors to keep our electric lines clear of trees and vegetation as those are the largest outage causes.

2. _____ electronics and appliances: This reduces the risk of fire and saves you money.

3. MVlink also features several devices and services you can take advantage of as a fiber internet member to _____ your MVlink experience.

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:

Jan Keck, Greeley

Dan Cavanaugh, Peosta



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

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.

Source: 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.

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