

WATTS *Current*

February 2019

For Our Members

Are YOU Signed UP?

Every day we receive compliments and wonderful testimonials from happy MVlink members. And every day we receive a call that asks, “When will you be in my area?” Many times the second question is answered, “We’ve been there and left!”



This picture shows a sampling of the many pieces of communication we share with members throughout the process, from door hangers, to emails, to bill inserts, to individual mailers and phone calls. Each communication is designed to tell you where we are at in the construction and installation process in your neighborhood. Junk mail you say? It’s not junk if you are still experiencing slow speeds or high prices. Be on the watch for anything with some blue coloring that says MVlink.

Or, to be really sure you aren’t left behind, make sure you have signed up on our website at www.mvlink.coop and then, when we call and leave a message, please give us a call back. Signing up doesn’t commit you to take service, but it does help us prioritize construction areas.

The Value of the GigaCenter

MVlink members have the option of purchasing their own router, or using MVlink’s GigaCenter router for an additional cost of \$4.95/month. With MVlink’s GigaCenter, Cooperative staff can provide remote activation and troubleshooting services for the best broadband experience.

The GigaCenter extends the MVlink network into your home and becomes the central location for delivery and control of the ultimate WiFi experience. This



router enables users to receive up to 1 gigabit broadband data and VoIP phone service. The broadband environment is becoming increasingly focused on streaming content and this device is capable of providing up to 4K/UHD quality.

Other benefits of the GigaCenter include firewall security, forwarding and blocking policies, parental controls with application/website filtering and time of day usage, and universal plug and play.

MVlink members can truly claim a smart home experience with our GigaCenter!

If you have young children or pets at home, install tamper resistant outlets (TROs) or cover unused outlets with plastic safety caps.



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Member Testimonials on MVlink Fiber Internet

It was a great feeling to step into a member establishment, the Fillmore Bar & Grill, recently and overhear people talking about signing up for MVlink! Below are just a few of the many compliments we receive as members start to experience speeds, and service, they haven't seen before. We continue to work as hard as we can to reach all of the other members who have signed-up for service. If you haven't signed up yet, be sure to visit www.mvlink.coop and learn more.

Patricia, Holy Cross: *"We had the nicest group of contractors, very polite, respected our property, and even came back just to visit on their free time. And our son is now able to work from home so we are very pleased!"*

Chad, Anamosa: *"I uploaded 120 pictures to Walmart in about 2 minutes. It would have taken an hour with our previous provider. I give praise to MVlink whenever I can because we have not had a better provider since we've lived in this area."*

Glenn, Worthington: *"Very happy, just love it. Never had this kind of service before. Your build-out process was just like you said it would be (as far as wait time)."*

Laurie, Durango: *"Streaming video was not an option for us before MVlink. For those patiently waiting, it's worth the wait!"*

Regina, Masonville: *"Thank you, you guys have been awesome. We will actually be cutting our monthly costs in half and will have better service and more options!"*

Matthew, Anamosa: *"It's superfast and we're so happy. We have now moved on to having more of a smart home. We wouldn't have been able to do any of this with our prior service."*

Allison, Martelle: *"Fabulous service from your installation employee and we can't believe how fast it is. We would highly recommend MVlink to anyone in your service area."*

More Gaming = More Speed

Was Santa good to your family this year? Are there new Xboxes, Play Stations or Nintendo devices in your home; or is PC gaming your thing? All of these entertainment options are just begging for more speed. It is frustrating to own the latest and greatest devices and then not be able to connect, or be faced with data limits and exorbitant costs.



The majority of our MVlink members initially sign up for the 50 mbps/50

mbps package recognizing it starts them out far better than they were before. But after a few months of use, and new devices, the 100 mbps and 1 gig packages become attractive, too.

We set our pricing to be competitive and fair. As you know, we are a cooperative, working for our members rather than trying to fill the pockets of private investors. Give us a call and explore a different package to test greater speed against your family's needs. You aren't committed to a package for a certain period of time, so moving up or down is easy for us to accommodate.

2019 Tri-State Home & Builders Show
Grand River Center **March 1: 4-8 p.m.**
Dubuque, IA **March 2: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.**
March 3: Noon-5 p.m.



MVEC members thinking about building, remodeling, or looking for ways to save money on their electric bills, should plan to stop by our booth (#176).



When Winter Winds Howl, Power Lines Can Gallop

Severe weather with strong winds can cause damage to trees, buildings, and electrical equipment. While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines.

Galloping is the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines and can cause several problems, from temporary power interruptions to equipment damage, the collapse of power poles and downed lines.

Galloping lines often result from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line, causing bouncing wires, or galloping power lines.

There isn't much utility workers can do until the wind dies down. That's why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These help reduce galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you see galloping power lines:

- Keep your distance - ice can break off or power lines break loose.
- Contact the utility to make them aware of the potential damage as soon as possible.



If you see a downed line:

- Stay far away and warn others to stay away too.
- Remember, a downed line can remain energized even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- Always report the location of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.
- Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. This kit should include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/ medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, and toiletries.

To learn more about storm and outage safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

YOUR VOICE COUNTS

MVEC values your feedback, good or bad. That's why we ask that if you are called, or emailed, to take a brief survey, we hope you'll consider helping us. By participating in our member satisfaction survey, you're helping us deliver on our mission of providing exceptional services and the safe, reliable electric power and high speed internet service you depend on.



Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative

© Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Make Note:

- All legitimate survey calls will use a Caller ID code of "Electric Coop".
- Calls will originate from area code 336.
- Email invitations will include a code to link to the survey.
- All responses are confidential and only used to improve our service.





Cut Your Energy Costs in Half with an Electric Heating and Cooling System

Four Benefits of Switching to an Energy-Efficient HVAC Option

With the average homeowner spending more than \$900 a year on heating and cooling costs, it's worth finding ways to save on your energy bill.¹ There are affordable, energy-efficient options available that will help lighten the burden on your wallet – and the environment.

“An electric heat pump is the most energy-efficient home heating and cooling option out there today,” says Al Schilling, MVEC Member Advocate. “It can provide heat equal to three times the amount of electricity it consumes. Over time, this creates enormous savings.”

There are three types of electric heat pumps to consider: Air-source heat pumps use the temperature difference between outside and indoor air to cool or heat homes.

Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the earth's constant temperature by circulating a water-based solution through buried pipes. Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pumps are easier to install, quiet, and flexible for heating and cooling individual rooms and smaller spaces. All three of these options can help you cut expenses and save money, especially over the long run.

In addition to annual energy savings, the benefits of switching to an electric system include:

- **Comfort:** Enjoy stable, reliable heating and cooling year-round – saving energy while leaving the thermostat set right where your family likes it.
- **Reducing your carbon footprint:** Relying on your heat pump's ability to recycle thermal energy rather than generating heat through combustion.
- **Safety:** Rest easy knowing your heat pump produces no harmful emissions, eliminating the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, exhaust fumes or gas leaks.
- **Lowering utility expenses, get rebates:** By reducing the amount of electricity you use to heat your home, you'll also save on your monthly utility bill – and you can also take advantage of immediate rebates on qualifying equipment.

Many consumers wait until there's an issue with their system to consider other options. “When your furnace or air conditioner fails, you're likely to feel forced to quickly replace your equipment with whatever option is most readily available,” says Schilling. “Learning more about the variety of home heating and cooling choices before that happens makes the decision to switch a clear one.”

For more information on electric heating and cooling systems, please give us a call at 800-927-6068.

¹ EnergyStar.gov, 2018.

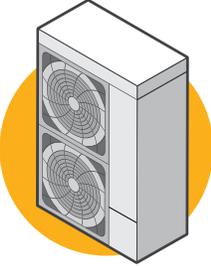
Types of Heat Pumps

There are three main types of heat pump systems. Use the information below to determine the system that's best suited for your climate and home.

Air-Source Heat Pumps

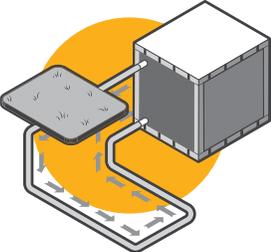
- Most commonly used heat pumps
- Moves heat rather than converting it from a fuel like combustion heating systems do
- Can reduce heating costs by about 50 percent when compared to baseboard heaters or electric furnaces
- Newer, more efficient systems now represent a legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions like the Northeast and Midwest.

Note: If temperatures in your area drop below 10 to 25 F, you will need an auxiliary heating system (depending on the size of the system).



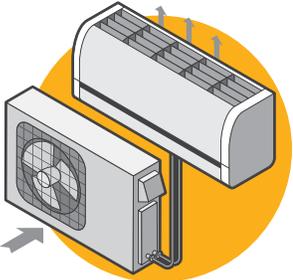
Geothermal Heat Pumps

- More expensive to install but provide more energy savings for heating and cooling
- Move heat through pipes buried underground
- When compared to a conventional heating system, can reduce energy use by 25 to 50 percent
- Effective in extreme climates
- Not ideal for smaller lots and certain soil conditions



Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pumps

- Easier to install, quiet, small in size
- Flexible for heating and cooling individual rooms and smaller spaces
- No energy loss through ductwork, which accounts for more than 30 percent of a home's energy use for space heating/cooling.
- Installation can be pricey, but federal incentives may be available



Heat pump systems should be installed by a licensed professional. Contact your local electric cooperative for more information about options and potential incentives.

Sources: Dept. of Energy and Consumer Reports





You're More Than a Customer

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo observed that, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

To a large degree, this reflects Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's philosophy toward our consumer-members and the broader service territory that we serve. As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe energy and fiber, there is another equally important part of this equation. Your well-being and that of the larger community that we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a customer; you are a *member* of our cooperative and without you, we would not exist.

In 1935, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative was founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. Concerned local leaders came together to build this cooperative and bring electricity where there was none.

At that time, members of the community understood we were different because they likely knew someone who helped to create Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. For most people, our founding and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider. But we are not. We are a cooperative that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we are able to do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you and that of the larger community to guide our long-term decisions. This is why we hold annual meetings and other events, such as member appreciation nights throughout the year. We host events like this to engage with you and obtain your feedback.

We strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently. We're always looking to explore more options that will help you manage your energy, such as performing an energy assessment of your home. In short, we are always seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment, evolving technology and shifting consumer expectations.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative members help guide important cooperative decisions that improve and enrich the community. We value the perspective

5

HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE

Be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.

ZONE IN ON SAFETY
Respect roadside work crews.
Don't drive distracted. Reduce your speed. Change lanes.

- 1 work zone crash occurs every **5.4 minutes**
- 70 work zone crashes result in **injuries each day**
- 12 work zone crashes result in at least **1 fatality each week**

Never plug a generator into a wall outlet in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line could **electrocute a utility worker** or neighbor.

DON'T post signs on utility poles.
Foreign objects can **tear** utility workers' **protective clothing**, which is the first line of protection from an **electric shock**.

Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org

of our board members, who are members of the cooperative and community – just like you.

As a local business, we have a stake in the community. That's why we support economic development efforts and local charitable organizations programs like RECare. When we support these efforts, we are supporting the community and making it a better place for everyone.

While the times may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. We view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and in the future.



Cheap Electronic Chargers Spell Trouble

The chargers that came with our phone, digital camera or other electronics seem to disappear as often as a sock mate sometimes.

As a solution, many people reach for the low-cost, generic plug-in USB chargers and charging cables found in the sea of impulse items that flank the check-out line at your favorite drug, convenience or big-box store. They're also popular items on numerous online shopping sites and cheaper than dishing out money to replace them with their original maker's versions.

It can save money and it's so convenient, you rationalize. Without much more thought, in the virtual cart or on the counter it goes.

Inexpensive charging components may be one area you don't want to cut corners on, however, for a variety of reasons. Amazon recalled 26,000 AmazonBasics portable lithium-ion battery chargers and power banks after the massive online retailer learned the units can overheat and ignite, causing fire and burn hazards. According to the U.S. Consumer Safety Product Commission, the products were sold between December 2014 and July 2017.

Along with being a potential fire hazard, using cheaply made charging components and devices can also cause electrocution. Dangers aside, they may cost you more in the long run since they can cause damage to whatever's on the other end of the cable.

To keep safe around electrical devices and charging gear, Safe Electricity recommends the following:

- Do not leave items that are charging unattended.
- Always keep charging items away from flammable objects, especially bedding, and do not take them to bed with you. Tell kids and teens to NEVER place any charging device under their pillow. The heat generated cannot dissipate and the charger will become hotter and hotter, according to the Newton, N.H. Fire Department. This could lead to the pillow or bed catching fire.
- Do not touch charging electronic devices with wet hands or while standing in water.
- Make sure charging components are certified by a reputable third-party testing laboratory.
- Only buy product-approved chargers and cables (those made or certified by the manufacturer). Using cheaper devices can cause damage to the USB charge chip. Although it's tempting to save money, this can have a lasting impact on how quickly and effectively your device charges in the future.

The bottom line is this: Don't buy charging equipment with prices that seem too good to be true or from companies you've never heard of. And even if you've heard of the company, be leery of fakes. In 2016, Apple sued a company that sold counterfeit wall chargers with Apple's name on them for less than \$10 each.

Say yes to the Milky Way in the check-out line or to the online Kindle book and no to cheap chargers.

TIPS TO SAFELY CHARGE YOUR ELECTRONICS

- Sale** Don't buy cheaply made, off-brand charging cubes and cables. They can be **potential fire hazards**, cause electrocution, or damage the device.
- Throw away charger blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and **make sure they are not hot** when charging devices.
- NOT IN BED** Only charge devices on a **hard, flat, noncombustible surface** to allow for adequate ventilation.
- Do not touch** any electronic devices that are charging **when you are wet** or standing in water.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org



Please Cash Dividend Checks!

Dividend checks were issued to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative members on October 18, 2018, and automatically become void on February 15, 2019. If you have not cashed your check, please do so soon. Dividend checks not cashed by February 15, 2019, 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 Dawn 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.

Equal Opportunity

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity affirmative action employer. It shall be the policy of the Cooperative that all applicants for employment shall be considered and hired on the basis of merit, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, citizenship, disability, or status as a veteran.

Third Party Notification

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's third party notification plan allows our members to designate a third party to receive copies of any notices that might be received for discontinuation of electric service.

The purpose of this program is to limit the risk of a member having the electric service discontinued because of a breakdown in communication. Example, a member missed receiving the notice or received it but did not understand the implications.

Copies of the notifications may be sent to any third party; a relative, friend, clergyman, physician, landlord, agent or agency, etc., designated by the member. Even though the third party serves as an additional communication link with the member, the third party is not placed under any obligation to pay the electric bills. Third party notification does not defer or prevent discontinuing the electric service if payment is not made.

Although we will make every effort to provide third party notification, the member making this request agrees that Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative incurs no liability whatsoever for failure to do so for any reason.

Watts The Answer?

1. Galloping lines often result from _____ buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds.
2. _____-Source Heat Pumps are the most commonly used heat pumps.
3. Throw away _____ blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and make sure they are not _____ when charging devices.

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

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

Please complete the following:

Name

Address

Since there was not a December issue of Watts Current, there are no winners to announce. The January issue winners will be published in March.



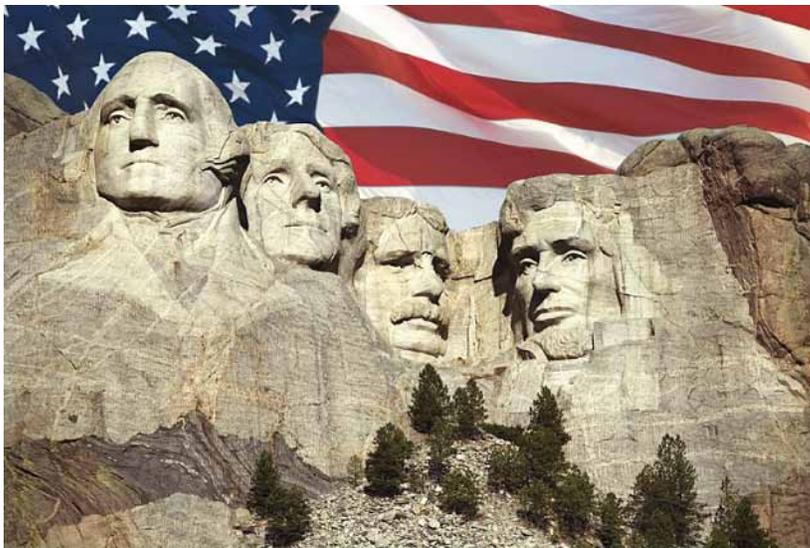
Watts Current by Email

If you would prefer to have the Watts Current emailed to you, please sign up by sending an email to erobertson@mvec.coop



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

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
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**Our office will be closed
Monday, February 18, in
observance of Presidents' Day**

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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Mailing Address:

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

OFFICE HOURS

Monday thru Friday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998

Visit Our Websites

www.mvec.coop

www.mvlink.coop

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Follow Us On

Email direct to the following departments:

Billing Questions

billing@mvec.coop

Fiber Questions

fiber@mvec.coop

Product or Service Questions

memberservices@mvec.coop

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maintenance@mvec.coop

Dividend Questions

patronage@mvec.coop

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