

# WATTS *Current*

June 2019

For Our Members

## Election for Directors

Since 1935, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative has been owned by its members and governed by a Board of Directors who are members themselves. The Board of Directors is responsible for representing the members and overseeing the company they own.

Election for directors will take place August 22, 2019, at the Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Berndes Center in Monticello, Iowa.

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

- Thomas Stewart, Region 2 (Jackson & Clinton Counties)
- Ron Thielen, Region 3 (Dubuque County)
- Billie Zumbach, Region 4 (Delaware, Buchanan, and Clayton Counties)

If you are interested in learning more about the requirements for serving on the Board of Directors, please contact CEO Jeremy Richert at 800-927-6068, or send an email to [jrichert@mvec.coop](mailto:jrichert@mvec.coop). A packet of information will be mailed to you. If, after reviewing the qualifications, you wish to be considered for one of these positions, please submit a brief biography stating your qualifications to: Nomination Committee, c/o Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, 109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa, Iowa 52205, prior to June 23, 2019.

## Member Appreciation Nights Held

Member Appreciation Nights were held in Oxford Junction on April 16 and Ryan on April 23. Kids enjoyed bucket rides, face & tattoo paintings, games, and taking home all kinds of sculpted balloons. Attendees also got to view and learn about CIPCO's electric car. Management and Directors were available to answer questions posed by members. It was a fun opportunity to meet with our membership. Thank you to everyone who joined us!

### \$25 bill credit winners:

Burton Ehlers, Bellevue; Louis & Laverta Langenberg, Lisbon; Greg Small, Maquoketa; John Strang, Cascade; Kathleen Callan, Manchester; Arden Fischer, Manchester; Elmer Maiers, Manchester; and Steve Sefzik, Peosta

**3 months of fiber credit winners:** Jan Glenn, Olin; Doris McDermott, Bernard; Kendy Hogan, Manchester; and Arthur Nachtman, Ryan

**MVEC will observe  
summer hours  
May 28-August 30, 2019**  
**Monday-Thursday:  
7:00 AM-4:30 PM**  
**Friday:  
7:00 AM-11:00 AM**

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# The Fiber Download

## We Signed-Up as ‘Interested’, Now What?

You wait! When we made the decision to expand our smart grid network, and ultimately launch MVlink’s high-speed internet service to our membership, we had to determine the best means of constructing the network. It made sense to follow the same process we used in building the electric grid that has proven to be cost-effective, safe and reliable. While we don’t have to place thousands of new poles, and build 37 substations, we do have to add fiber “substations” or hubs, and connect those to create a redundant path within the network to increase reliability. We do have to replace some poles, trim some trees and prepare the existing infrastructure to hold the fiber. Then we have to add communication devices between the hubs to splice it all together and test for light (aka a fiber signal). Once that is complete the main line is built to serve members.

But we are far from done! If you signed a service commitment agreement we need to meet with you at your home/business before the drop work can begin; we call this the Pre Drop meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to determine where the best location for the modem/router will be in your home to provide you the best possible service and to walk out the drop installation outside your property. Once the modem location is selected, we need to figure out how to get from that location in your home to the outside of your home. Once we have a plan to get outside the home we then need to determine all the obstacles in the yard that need to be avoided when installing the drop fiber from the home to the main line fiber. Once

all that information is gathered MVEC creates a “drop plan” that will be sent to our contractor who will then install the fiber from the main line to your home.

After the contractor installs, splices, and tests the drop to your home, MVEC will contact you to schedule the last part of the process, the in home installation! MVEC’s installer will spend a couple of hours at your home to install the fiber from the outside of your home to the modem/router location that was determined during the pre-drop meeting. They make the final connection and ensure your new MVlink internet service is working.

Each step takes time, more than you want, and more than we want. While not to make excuses, we have to manage unusual, relentless weather and multiple contractor firms, while also ensuring the electric side of our business continues to keep your lights on. As we explored this service, we learned an expected construction pace was 300 miles per year, yet we are at an 800 mile pace! So, yes, we are working as fast as we can. Ultimately, it will be worth the wait as numerous connected members have told us.

If your name isn’t in the database at [www.mvlink.coop](http://www.mvlink.coop), please add it today. This list helps us stay in touch with you through each step of the process, and ensures we are serving

areas of greatest need first. If you are in the database, ask your neighbors if they are, also. While we know many households can’t live without high speed internet service any more than they can live without electricity, we also know there are members who aren’t yet connected and don’t want to be. As smart electronics, telemedicine, and the internet of things become more and more prevalent we all need to help educate each other on their benefits and share our success stories to ensure all of our members can fully participate in this high-tech age.

*Continued on page 3*







## The Fiber Download

Continued from page 2

### Fiber Construction Glossary of Terms

- **Design:** A behind the scenes analysis of where the mainline fiber should be placed, how it should connect to the central hub, and what, if any, changes need to be made to the electric system to accommodate the fiber.

- **Make Ready:** Our electric linemen travel the newly designed area to trim trees that will interfere with the new line, replace poles with taller poles if necessary, and generally ensure the line is ready for the fiber contractor to attach to.

- **Drop:** This describes where the fiber will attach to a member's home or building. It requires an appointment with the member to determine the best placement for MVlink to connect and for the member to experience the greatest connection experience.

## Sites to See

Watch this section for new or popular internet sites you may want to explore.

- **Coursera.org**

Never stop learning. Coursera offers flexible, affordable online courses offered by the world's top universities and companies.

- **Techguy.org**

Computer acting up? Check out this free site for 24/7 computer help from a 20-year old company with over 700,000 users.

- **Duolingo.com**

Prep for your next vacation by learning a new language through this fun and addictive site.

## Summary of Articles and Bylaws Relating to Directors

### Annual Meeting

Article II of the Bylaws provides that an Annual Meeting of the members shall be held between August 1 and November 1 of each year with the exact date to be set by the Board of Directors.

Article VIII, Section 3 of the Articles of Incorporation indicates that the members shall be "entitled to receive ten (10) days written notice of the time and place of all meetings and of the purpose of all special meetings."

### Directors

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

### Nominations and Election of Directors by the Members

Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation indicates—"The Cooperative's service area shall be divided into four (4) numbered geographic regions. Two (2) members shall be elected from each geographic region... The remaining ninth director shall be selected from any geographic region or the geographic region determined by the Board of Directors..." The election of directors shall be by ballot and each voting member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote for each director to be elected. Article III, Section 5 of the Bylaws states, "Candidates for election to the Board of Directors shall be nominated by a nominating committee... Any fifty (50) or more members may make other nominations in writing... not less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting..."

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



## Unplug to be More Connected

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” Author Anne Lamott cleverly captures the benefits of unplugging in today’s device-driven, multi-tasking world. Keeping up with work, family and school activities or the latest trends on social media makes most of us feel compelled to constantly check our devices.

Summer is a great time to take a family vacation, but it’s also a good opportunity to unplug from our devices and enjoy the great outdoors with family and friends. Research has shown that we all need downtime after a busy day to recharge—even though we may resist it. Take a moment to slow down and enjoy some peaceful hours away from technology.

While you’re unplugging from your devices, take a look around your home to identify electronics that consume energy even when they are not in use (this is known as “vampire” energy loss). TVs, gaming consoles, phone chargers, and computers are some of the biggest culprits.

If your summer plans include a staycation, take time to recharge your relationships and be more present with those you love. Stop by your local farmers’ market,



or check out a hiking trail in your area. Enjoy our beautiful surroundings with your family and friends.

Speaking of spending time outdoors, you can also enjoy energy savings by incorporating LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Save energy by keeping warm summer air outside where it belongs. Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows. You can also employ a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when no one is home.

In our connected world, we have forgotten how to slow down. We multitask and text. We check email, then voicemail, then social media. Do yourself and your family a favor. Put down the device and smell the fresh air.

While we can’t help you recharge your relationships, we can be an excellent resource when you do plug back in, just call or click away to reach us.

*Editor’s Note: The costs to offer energy efficiency services and incentives are collected through the monthly energy charge on your bill. In 2018, the cost to our members was \$0.00106 per kilowatt-hour used.*

**Cool your home efficiently.**



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An electric heat pump is the most energy-efficient home cooling and heating option available today – and can reduce your energy consumption and utility bills during even the warmest months of the year. **Visit our website to learn more about going electric – and find rebates on new equipment.**

319-462-3542  
mvec.coop



Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**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](mailto:erobertson@mvec.coop)





## Tips for Maintaining an Efficient HVAC System

Ah, summer. Cookouts, swimming pools, camping. It's the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. And when it's time to come back indoors, there's nothing better than that cool blast you feel from your home's air conditioning unit.

Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also the most expensive equipment to repair or replace. Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to lengthen the life of your HVAC system.

**Change or clean filters.** Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency of your system. The Department of Energy recommends changing or cleaning filters every month or two during the cooling season. If your unit is in constant use or is subjected to dusty

conditions or pet hair, consider checking filters more frequently.

**Clean the HVAC unit.** Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit once each season to ensure maximum airflow. (Warning: Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.)

**Clear space around the HVAC unit.** Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass left behind from the lawn mower can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 2 feet around the condenser to increase airflow.


If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, follow the steps in the graphic shown at left.

### 3-Step HVAC Test

**As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.**

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

You should also have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable, especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan.

## WE PAY YOU TO PULL THE PLUG

Recycle your old appliances through the Pull the Plug program. Call CLEAResult at **855-838-7817** to schedule your pickup. Please have your account number handy as you will be asked to provide it.

Appliances in working condition (runs and cools) will qualify for the following rewards:

**Refrigerators: \$35 Freezers: \$25 Window Air Conditioners: \$25**

Limited to three appliances per year.





# Right-Of-Way Planting

MVEC respects our members' desire to enhance their property with trees, shrubs, flowers and other lawn



ornaments. We also want to provide you and your neighbors reliable electric service.

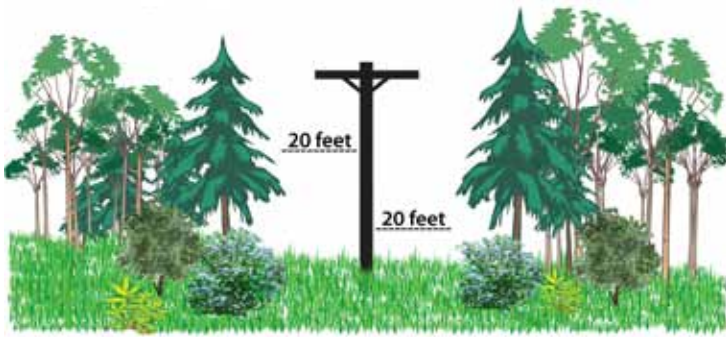


Maintaining the electric system, involves climbing, treating or replacing poles and working on transformers in your yard. We are not responsible for damage to decorative plantings surrounding our work areas. While the landscaping in these photos may look nice, it does not allow clear

access to our equipment, increases outage time and reduces safety for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation.

## Safe Planting Tips to Remember

- Consider mature height of trees. Never plant a tree that may someday grow near or into an electric line. Tall growing trees should be planted far enough away to avoid future pruning. Trees should be planted far enough away so the full grown canopy will be at least 20 feet away from electric lines.
- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow to interfere with underground pipes, cables, and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers, poles, or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.
- Before digging, call Iowa One Call at 811 or 800-292-8989 to have primary utility-owned facilities marked so that accidental contact, damage, and injuries can be avoided. In addition, if you need secondary privately-owned facilities marked, it is your responsibility to arrange this type of locate with a qualified professional. Visit [www.mvec.coop/safety](http://www.mvec.coop/safety) for more information.



## Nondiscrimination Statement

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

fax:  
(202)690-7442; or

email:  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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## Don't Just Pack Your Bags; Prepare Your Home for Vacation Too

Your bags are packed and you're ready to leave your humdrum routine for a much-needed vacation. As you pack for your destination, remember your home needs a little prep, too. Along with the usual tasks such as having your mail stopped, there are other steps you can take to help deter burglars and even save you a little green. With the money you save, you might have a little extra for umbrella-garnished drinks or destination t-shirts.

Before you leave, here are some ways to save money on your energy bill:

- Adjust your hot water heater. For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low or vacation mode. For an electric version, turn it down or off at the circuit breaker panel.
- Set or program your thermostat to a temperature that mimics the outside temperature (about 80 to 85 degrees). This still protects your wood floors and furniture, as well as if you have pets keeps them comfortable, but saves on energy costs.
- Do not completely turn off your air conditioning during vacation, however, so that the air in your house continues to circulate.
- Unplug small appliances and electronic devices including gaming systems so that they don't draw power. Also do not leave chargers plugged into an outlet. (This tip is important when you're home as well. Do not leave chargers plugged in when they're not in use since they can overheat. Unplug charging devices after electronics are fully charged.)
- Make sure your sump pump is working.

Take these electrical and plumbing precautions:

- Turn off water valves to the dishwasher, washing machine and all sinks. Or, consider shutting off the main water valve, which cuts off water to the house but still allows water supply to an outdoor sprinkler system.

Here are some ways to keep your home look lived in and ward off burglars:

- If you have a smart home, it's easy to regulate lights in your home remotely. Turn various lights on and off intermittently or have them timed to do so.
- If you do not have smart lighting, put various lights on timers.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to park in your driveway occasionally while you are gone.
- Use motion detectors on outside lights.
- Before you leave, check all windows and doors to make sure they are locked.

And finally, remember to clean out your fridge before leaving so that you don't come home to moldy leftovers.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Watts The Answer?

1. The Annual Meeting will take place August \_\_\_\_, 2019, at the Berndes Center in \_\_\_\_\_.

2. You should also have your \_\_\_\_\_ system periodically inspected by a licensed professional.

3. Trees should be planted far enough away so the full grown canopy will be at least \_\_\_\_ feet away from electric lines.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill, or email them to [erobertson@mvec.coop](mailto:erobertson@mvec.coop).

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

Please complete the following:

Name

Address

April winners:

Dennis Gerardy, Maquoketa

Elana Shinkle, Dubuque





Maquoketa Valley  
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109 North Huber Street  
Anamosa, Iowa 52205

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## 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

is published monthly for the members of  
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Mailing Address:

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

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