

# WATTS Current

November 2019

For Our Members

## Your Co-op. Your Share.



**MVEC retires  
\$418,246 to members**

At it's September meeting, the Cooperative's Board of Directors approved the retirement of deferred patronage dividends totaling \$418,246 to active members, and former members, in accordance with our cooperative principles.

The amount represents:

- 100% of allocated margins for 2004
- 15.46% of allocated margins for 2005

Your 2019 patronage check is based on a percentage of how much energy you purchased during 2004 and/or 2005.

Current and former members with patronage amounts of \$5 or more were mailed a check. Lesser amounts will be left to accrue for future payouts.

Ownership in a cooperative has many benefits, which includes receiving cash back over time. Each year the Board of Directors determines the amount of excess margins that can be allocated back to the members based upon the amount of energy they each purchased during the year. The allocated funds are retained to cover emergencies such as natural disasters, and other unexpected events, and to maintain and expand our electric system. This practice decreases the need to raise rates or borrow money. Then, as the financial condition of the Cooperative permits, the directors elect to pay the allocated margins back to its members.

According to CEO Jeremy Richert, "We're proud to support our communities by putting money back into hands of the members we serve. It is what makes the Cooperative business model unique."

To ensure you receive future payments, please keep MVEC informed of any address changes or notify us of the death of a member or former member.

**Note:** Please cash your dividend check as soon as possible. It will only be honored for 120 days from issue date.

### Your Next Destination Glyn Mawr Winery - The Local -

103 1st St. NW Mount Vernon, IA  
glynmawr.com or on Facebook  
Wednesday-Thursday 10am-6pm  
Friday-Saturday 10am-10pm  
Sunday Noon-4pm

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Patronage  
Dividend Check...  
a benefit realized by  
being a cooperative  
member



MVEC tracks how much  
you pay for electricity  
throughout the year



When MVEC closes  
its books each year, we  
determine whether  
there are excess revenues,  
called margins



The equity is returned to  
our members over time  
through the patronage  
dividend checks.



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## The Seasonal Switch

Many have already made the seasonal switch from cooling to heating their home. Not only do we bring out our favorite sweaters and pack away the summer gear, but our home and energy habits also need to adapt to the new season. Here are a few ways you can do that.

**Update Your Thermostat** - The key to successful savings is to make sure the thermostat is working around your unique schedule. When leaving the home, set your thermostat to lower the heat a few degrees. Once you return or shortly before you return, allow the heating system to recover around 68 degrees F. Geothermal systems operate more efficiently when temperatures are not adjusted.

**Drapes and Blinds** - Take advantage of the day time sunlight to warm the south side of your home. At night, close the drapes and blinds to create an extra barrier to prevent drafts.

**Doors and Windows** - Wind and drafts are more common during the cold months. There's no better time than now to close holes and gaps around exterior doors and windows. Use a door threshold or sweep at the bottom to keep your heat from escaping.

## Adjust Your Ceiling Fans For Winter Use

Run your ceiling fan on low speed in a clockwise direction during cold-weather months to help circulate warm air that gathers near the ceiling back into the room. Change the direction of rotation by flipping the switch on the motor housing or remote control. Then raise your heating system's thermostat by a few degrees. Finally, remember to turn off the fan when the room is unoccupied.

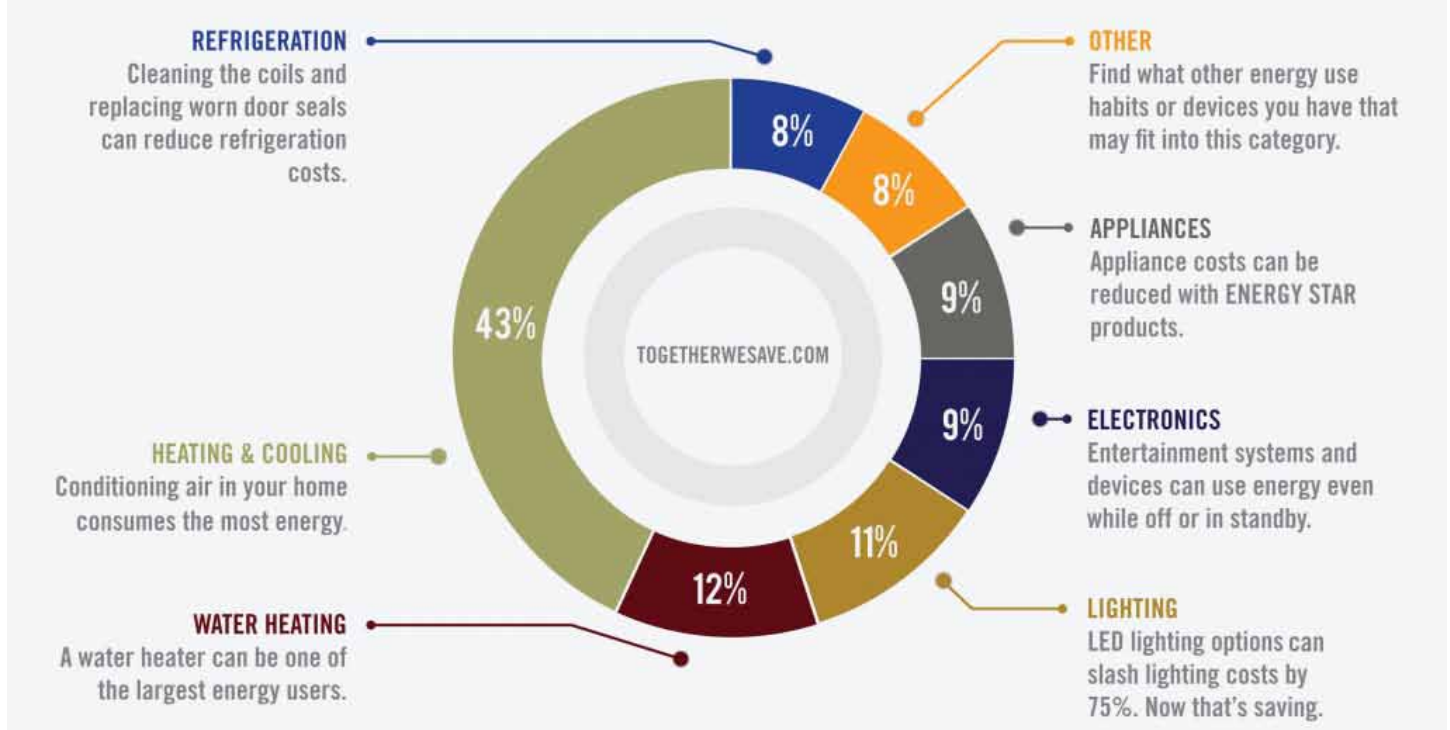
*Editor's Note: The costs to offer energy efficiency services and incentives are collected through the monthly energy charge on your bill. In 2019, the cost to our members was \$0.00106 per kilowatt-hour used.*



SAVINGS  
WITH  
STAYING  
POWER

EFFICIENT | CLEAN | SAFE | ELECTRIC

## HOME ENERGY USE





## When You Change Your Clocks Remember To Check These Devices

When Daylight Saving Time ends on November 3, you probably don't hesitate to move all your clocks back an hour. But what about your smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers? Just because they work in the background 24/7, that doesn't mean you don't have to give them a little love too!

**Smoke alarms:** Of course, you should test them every week or at least once a month, but you also should replace the battery twice a year when you change your clocks. Also check the date on the back of your alarms to make sure you haven't reached their maximum lifetime of 7 to 10 years – and need to replace them with new ones.

**Carbon monoxide detectors:** You should have one on every floor and test them once a month too. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacing the battery or when the device tells you it's time for a new one – and replace the unit every 7-10 years; the manufacturing date is on the back.

**Fire extinguishers:** If your extinguishers have a gauge, make sure the needle falls within the green area; if they have a test button instead of a gauge, the button should pop out immediately after you push it. If your extinguishers fail either test, replace them immediately. Also note that the useful life of a fire extinguisher can be anywhere from 5 to 15 years, so check the bottom for the date of manufacture so you know when it's time to head to the store for a new one.

Now's also a good time to make sure none of these safety devices have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Tens of millions of these lifesavers have been recalled during the past several years because they might not function properly, so make sure yours are OK by going to the commission's website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) and running a search for the products you own.

## Is Something In Your Home Fooling Your Thermostat?

Keep lamps, TVs and other heat-producers away from the thermostat. The extra heat they generate could fool the thermostat and cause the heating system to cycle less often, causing you to raise the setting on the thermostat because the rest of the house is too cool.



## We're Thankful For Our Sister Cooperatives

When you think about MVEC you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work right here in the communities we serve. You may not realize that MVEC is actually part of a much larger cooperative network that brings additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op. *Cooperation Among Cooperatives*. When severe weather is predicted for our region, we can call on our sister co-ops in other areas. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks and manpower to our area as needed. We work together and share resources in order to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. MVEC reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help. November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. We are grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





## Your Next Destination

*Patty Manuel,  
MVEC Director of Public Relations*

As I travel, I often pass the immaculate vineyard at Dale & Brenda Broulik’s farm south of Olin. Little did I know that Glyn Mawr farm produced 9,000 bottles of wine this year!



*Anna Wilson & Brenda Broulik*

Brenda and Dale had enjoyed various wine-tasting events and they owned land conducive to a winery. Maybe starting her own wine-making business made sense, although she knew she couldn’t do it alone.

Enter daughter, Anna Broulik Wilson. Living in Cedar Rapids with her growing, young family and employed as a real-estate agent, Anna realized maybe the opportunity to go into business with her mom could be a way to change her family’s lifestyle, connect with the land, and raise her children in the country.

The women agreed to make it happen and haven’t looked back. They immediately enrolled in Kirkwood Community College’s viticulture course. From there they did considerable research on what types of grapes they wanted to raise. In May 2009 they planted their first grapes at the Olin farm, and then patiently waited three years to harvest the crop. Brenda & Anna were part of the class that made the first batches of Kirkwood’s wine. They also identified buyers for their grapes, retaining some to practice their small batch wine-making skills.

The 2 ½ acre vineyard at Glyn Mawr consists of 1100 plants and 6 different varieties. Each year, 50-70 volunteers show up at the farm to help pick grapes and enjoy lunch and wine punch with the Broulik’s.



*Glyn Mawr Vineyard south of Olin.*

Once commercialized, they secured sales space in 25 retail specialty shops and held tastings at 100-150 events annually from Des Moines to the Mississippi River. Setting their tent up at farmer’s markets that

were sometimes too warm for the wine, then holding their tent down during tornado warnings and offering tastings during the winter in a 17-degree building where the wine was freezing, made them long for a permanent retail space.

Eventually their eyes settled on one of the oldest buildings in downtown Mount Vernon’s historic district. Built in 1881, the location, historical building significance and community vibrance could be the perfect setting for a retail winery.

In January 2018, they purchased the building and began the pain-staking construction and renovation work to restore as much of the building’s integrity as they could. The end result is a beautiful vintage-industrial look with two floors of exposed brick and stone, high, open ceilings and a story-telling mural.

In May 2019, ten years after their first grapes were planted, Anna & Brenda opened Glyn Mawr Winery-The Local.

Selling their wine, Iowa craft beer, Kombucha (a fermented tea produced in Iowa City) and various products and



*Wines offered at Glyn Mawr Winery-The Local.*

snacks from 25 Iowa-based businesses has turned the historic building into a destination. With live music, an outdoor seating area with room for a food truck and the perfect Main Street location, The Local has significantly enhanced Mount Vernon’s Main Street while adding to Iowa’s growing wine trail.

Glyn Mawr Winery-The Local, 103 1st St. NW Mount Vernon can be reached at 319-895-8790, via their website at [glynmawr.com](http://glynmawr.com), or on Facebook. They are open during special holiday and community events as well as regular business hours as follows:

- Wednesday-Thursday 10am-6pm
- Friday-Saturday 10am-10pm
- Sunday Noon-4pm

If wine and beer aren’t of interest, you must stop to see the restored building and shop the Iowa-made products. Then mingle thru the variety of other Mount Vernon shops. Be sure to inquire about the large mural uncovered during construction and then share your destination experience far and wide.



## What Are GFCIs And Are They Required Outdoors?

Did you know that ground-fault circuit interrupter or GFCI protection is required for all outdoor outlets, which are also known as outdoor receptacles?



The National Electric Code (NEC) began requiring GFCI installation on all outdoor outlets in 1975. Today, that rule stands with one uncommon exception - when homeowners have what is called a dedicated branch circuit for outdoor outlets.

GFCIs serve as important electrical system protection since they automatically trip as soon as anything goes wrong in a circuit. When working properly, they keep us from getting shocked or electrocuted. This is especially important around the home where water and electricity have the chance to mix, such as in bathrooms, basements, kitchens, garages, and of course, outdoors.

If you are planning a new outdoor space (or a remodel in any area of your home) that requires additional outlets, consult a licensed electrician. Outdoor outlets must be installed in outdoor-rated electrical boxes and must have special covers based on their type and location, among other requirements.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of GFCIs, consider this easy-to-understand explanation by This Old House: “A ground fault happens whenever electricity escapes the confines of the wiring in an appliance, light fixture, or power tool and takes a shortcut to the ground. When that shortcut is through a human, the results can be deadly. About 200 people in the U.S. alone die of ground faults each year, accounting for two-thirds of all electrocutions occurring in homes. The ground-fault circuit interrupter (was invented) in 1961. Most of the time, (the) invention does nothing; it just monitors the difference in the current flowing into and out of a tool or appliance.

But when that difference exceeds 5 milliamps, an indication that a ground fault may be occurring, the GFCI shuts off the flow in an instant - as little as .025 seconds.”

So with the advent of the GFCI, how do people become electrocuted by ground faults? Probably for one of several reasons:

- Their GFCIs are not working properly. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working and if not, have new ones installed.
- They live in an older home built prior to GFCI requirements or in a dwelling that is not up to code.
- They took on an electrical DIY project and were not qualified to do so.

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

## 2020 Energy Efficiency Incentives

Minor changes are being made to residential and agriculture incentives offered in 2020 including the following:

- Expand the water heater incentive to remove the 55 gallon limit and add 40 gallon tanks
- Many LED incentives will be reduced and eliminated over the next two years

Now is the time to make the switch to LED to take advantage of incentives. All eligible energy efficient measures implemented in 2019 will need to be submitted for reimbursement by January 31, 2020.





# The Fiber Download

## Streaming TV

MVlink does not offer a bundled service that includes TV. The reasoning is because TV as many know it today is quickly evolving. Streaming TV is becoming as popular as smart phones. Members who can use an app on their smart phone, can also figure out streaming TV. Most smart TVs have a device built in or you can purchase a device that will connect your TV to your home's internet service via WiFi. Devices like Roku (or Fire Stick, etc.) can be set up to connect to the internet just like your cell phone, computer or tablet. Once connected, your TV screen will have several apps on it, just like your smart phone does. Choosing which apps to use could involve using a service like Suppose.TV.com (see below). What does your home watch the most? Local news? Sports? Cartoons? Do some homework and figure out what apps will give you the most options for your TV enjoyment. For a monthly fee, you can purchase one or more apps to allow you many viewing options. Members often tell us they can purchase multiple apps for far less than they currently pay for cable TV service, and that even includes the monthly MVlink cost. Better yet, you are only buying what you want to watch, versus paying for multiple channels you never watch. With MVlink's 50/50 mbps service you can enjoy streaming on multiple TVs with no buffering. Do some research and join the smart TV bandwagon today!

Suppose is a tool for searching and comparing video services. Based on your preferences, Suppose shows you detailed information about your video service options so you can make the best choices. The video services market is changing rapidly, and the number of service providers is growing. This has greatly improved customer choice, and has the potential to save customers a lot of money. But customers should not be required to spend hours doing analysis or building spreadsheets to make sense of all the options. A tool to search and compare services is essential. Suppose guides you through the complexity and gives unbiased search results. Clicking on a Free Trial or Sign Up button helps support Suppose, but our search results are not influenced by any financial compensation. The Suppose team is led by co-founders Andrew Shapiro and John Tantum, both of whom are experienced technology entrepreneurs. Suppose is based in Corte Madera, California.

### Sites to See

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

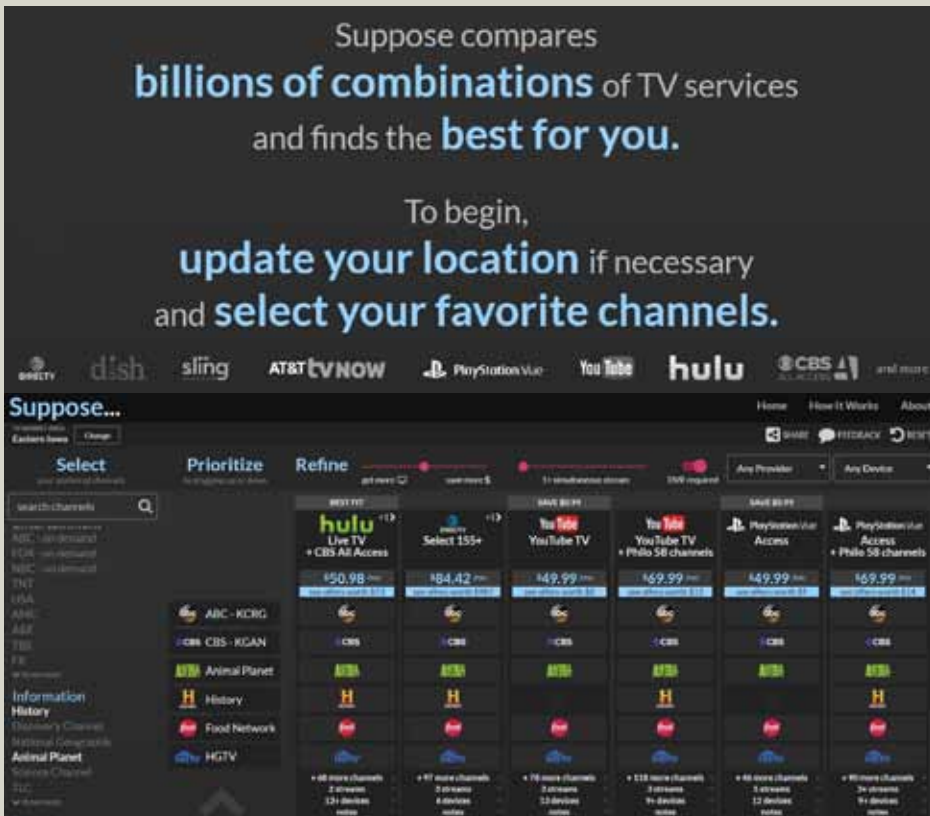
- <https://www.toptenreviews.com>  
Here's a side-by-side comparison of popular streaming sites and services.
- <https://www.gq.com/story/the-six-best-tv-shows-to-stream-right-now>  
The best TV shows to watch online right now.
- <http://mentalfloss.com/article/525562/25-best-movies-stream-right-now>  
An incredible amount of entertainment is at our fingertips now. Here's a tidy list of excellent films worth considering.

## Connection Speeds Glossary of Terms

**App:** Is short for application, which is the same thing as a software program. Software that allows you to perform specific tasks.

**Roku:** Plugs into your TV using an HDMI cable, connected from your TV to the Roku device. The Roku is then connected to the internet via a wired or wireless connection to your home network. Roku works by downloading video from the internet, you then watch on your TV.

**Fire Stick:** A small device roughly the size of a flash drive that plugs into a TV's HDMI port. The Fire Stick enables any TV to stream content over WiFi such as Netflix, YouTube, Hulu, Pandora, HBO Go, and much more.





# FALL SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS!



Fall is finally here! The leaves are changing, the weather is cooler and the holidays are just around the corner. But Fall also brings a higher risk of home fires and electrical safety hazards.

Read the safety tips below and fill in the blank with the correct term from the word bank.

1. Candles and \_\_\_\_\_ should only be used by adults.
2. An adult should always stay in the kitchen when something is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Smoke alarms should be tested every \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure they are working. Batteries should be replaced at least once every \_\_\_\_\_ or right away if they start to "beep."
4. Make sure all \_\_\_\_\_ are blown out before leaving a room.
5. Keep any items that can burn away from the stove, toaster and other cooking \_\_\_\_\_.



## WORD BANK

APPLIANCES    YEAR    CANDLES  
COOKING    MATCHES    MONTH

Answer Key: 1. matches 2. cooking 3. month 4. candles 5. appliances

# Watts The Answer?

1. Ownership in a cooperative has many benefit, which includes receiving \_\_\_\_\_ back over time.
2. Run your ceiling fan on low speed in a \_\_\_\_\_ direction during cold-weather months to help circulate warm air that gathers near the ceiling back into the room.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is becoming as popular as smart phones.

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

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

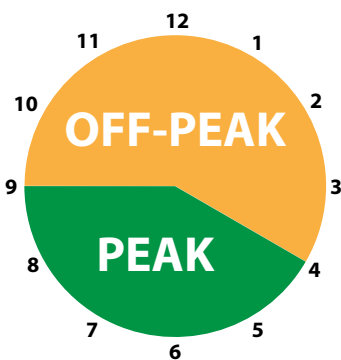
Please complete the following:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

September winners:

Earl Goerd, Dyersville  
John Grant, Peosta



## CHECK THE HOUR BEFORE USING POWER

The **Time-of-Use (Peak Pricing 4 pm-9 pm Every Day)** rate plan has two periods:

**Lowest price (OFF-PEAK):**  
19 hours each day

**Highest price (PEAK HOURS):**  
5 hours each day

