

WATTS *Current*

June 2020

For Our Members

Safety Matters on Your Road

A Message from the Corner Office-CEO Jeremy Richert

Have you ever stopped your vehicle on the side of a busy highway to check on a flat tire or a trailer cover or to help your son or daughter that is strapped into their car seat?

If so, you are well aware that most drivers won't bother to move over or even slow down as they pass you by. Iowa's 'move over or slow down law' requires motorists to move over or slow down when approaching ANY stationary vehicle with flashing lights activated, including passenger vehicles with hazard lights. Those who disobey the law could receive a hefty fine or potentially lose their driver's license, or worse if they injure or kill someone.



This law is particularly important to MVEC because it helps keep our employees safe as they often need to perform difficult and dangerous work with electric or broadband equipment on the shoulder of a road. Even though our employees set out caution signs and orange cones, wear high visibility gear and turn on their vehicles' emergency lights, other motorists often fail to give them the room they need to do their job safely. The danger exists on busy highways and even remote gravel roads where local residents may not expect a utility crew to be hard at work in their neighborhood.

This law intends to keep Iowa's roads safe for everyone – drivers, emergency responders, utility workers and others. Please make sure to share this safety message with other drivers in your family, especially younger drivers who don't have as much experience behind the wheel. We can each do our part to keep Iowa's roads safe by simply moving over and slowing down when we see stopped vehicles on the side of the road.

When you're behind the wheel, keep your eyes on the road and make room for utility workers who are stopped on the shoulder doing the work needed to provide services to the communities you live in. Safety matters on all roads.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference, the more energy you will save.

Source: energy.gov



Watts Inside:

COVID-19 Update
Page 2

Annual Meeting Discussions
Page 2

Meeting Your Internet Needs
Page 3

Maintain Proper Clearance
Around Grain Bins
Page 4

Energy Industry
Page 5

The Fiber Download
Page 6

Right-Of-Way Planting
Page 7

7,200
VOLT LINES

16
YEARS ON THE JOB

BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S YOU I'M WORRIED ABOUT.

RESTORING POWER TO 500 MEMBERS

HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH.
The last thing he needs is for you to drive into his utility truck because you ignored the flashing lights, cones and signs. When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.

**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**



COVID-19 Update

At press time for this issue, while the Governor is slowly relaxing restrictions across the State, MVEC is choosing to continue working as cautiously as we have been the past several weeks. We recognize the essential services we provide and want to do everything we can to ensure the health and safety of both our employees and our members.

The following procedures are effective until further notice:

- Due to the busy construction season for new electricity services/rebuilds and the increased need for high speed, reliable internet service, we have resumed face to face member meetings with the following policies.
 - o Prior verification that the member and their family is healthy. We will not enter a home that we believe to be unsafe.
 - o MVEC employees will wear face masks and gloves if entering your home or business.
 - o MVEC employees will maintain the 6' required distance from members and we ask our members to do the same.
- Our headquarters lobby remains closed
 - o Members are encouraged to use email and phone to contact us; private Facebook messages will be responded to during office hours.
 - o Automatic payments for both energy and MVlink fiber are encouraged; A payment dropbox is available in our headquarters parking lot.
- Employees will continue working staggered shifts, or working remotely to continue physical distancing. Our normal work is getting done in different ways at times, but we are still working hard to ensure reliable electric and broadband services are available to our membership.

As a member-owned cooperative, our business model ensures we operate at cost without the need to make profits for investors. Our annual budget is based on revenue from the services we provide, with a focus on keeping rates as fair as possible. We know many members are experiencing their own financial hardships and we will continue to follow policy established by the Governor and the Iowa Utilities Board with regard to disconnections for non-payment. We ask members

to work with us for payment options so together we can ensure the health of the cooperative you have ownership in. We want to retain the level of service you expect, at affordable rates.

Our energy is always working for you to provide safe, reliable services and we ask for your continued trust and understanding as we all continue to adjust in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

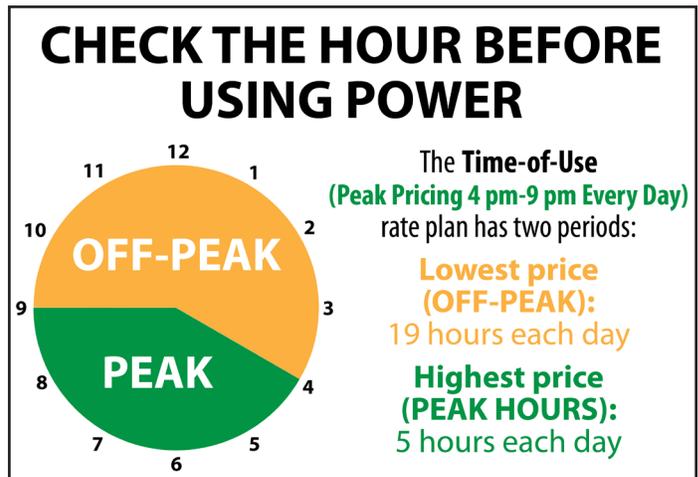
Annual Meeting Discussions

The Board of Directors is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation with respect to how and when the Cooperative will hold our annual meeting of the members and director elections. The meeting is currently scheduled for August 20 at the Monticello Berndes Center.

At their June board meeting, the directors will review the State's recommendations for public gatherings and determine if the meeting can be held as planned in August or if alternative arrangements will need to be made. The board will consider options such as delaying the meeting until a later date or conducting the meeting virtually with director elections and voting held via mail. Watch for a decision in the July newsletter.

This year there will be director elections for Region 1 (Jones, Cedar and Linn Counties), Region 2 (Jackson and Clinton Counties) and Region 3 At Large (Dubuque County).

If you are interested in learning about the requirements for serving on the Board of Directors, please check out our website at www.mvec.coop or contact CEO Jeremy Richert at 800-927-6068, or send an email to jrichert@mvec.coop.





Meeting Your Internet Needs

Since launching MVlink in 2016, the number of new connections grows daily and we are now quickly approaching 4,000 communication members. The growing demand for high speed, reliable and affordable internet services is more prevalent than ever as we all learn to spend more time at home. And, as a member-owned Cooperative, our core mission is meeting the needs of our members. You've asked for greater speeds and more package offers, and we are responding with more offers at the same or reduced costs. Members currently enjoying 50 Mbps/50 Mbps speeds were automatically upgraded to 85 Mbps/85 Mbps. We've added two new symmetrical packages for speeds of 250 Mbps and 500 Mbps and our gigabyte members will now see symmetrical service as well with a reduced price. If you've been thinking about signing up for MVlink service, or thinking you need more speed, now's the time to give us a call and let us help you. For only \$10/month, members can upgrade from the 85 Mbps package to 250 Mbps with just a phone call. Check out these new offers and **Make the Clear Choice** today for consistent speeds with fair pricing from your local Cooperative, the one you have ownership in.

SURPRISING NEW PACKAGES NOW AVAILABLE.
To meet your growing bandwidth needs we have improved our speeds and package offers to better serve you.

Standard 85 Mbps/ 85 Mbps	\$59.95/mo.
Premium 250 Mbps/ 250 Mbps	\$69.95/mo.
Platinum 500 Mbps/500 Mbps	\$79.95/mo.
Ultra 1GB (1,000 Mbps)/ 1 GB.....	lower price \$89.95/mo. (a \$40 savings!)

CALL 800-927-6068 TODAY

ADD TELEPHONE SERVICE WITH UNLIMITED LOCAL/LONG DISTANCE CALLING for only \$34.95/month.

Home Electrical Inspection:



Pass or Fail?

Would your home pass an electrical inspection? Local electrical codes vary, so check with your qualified electrician, but here are **five things your home should have:**



Wiring should be sound (not overcrowded or knob-and-tube wiring used in old homes).



Ceiling fixtures should be controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain.



Outlets near water should have GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters).



Your refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal should each have its own circuit.

Your island should have its own outlet.



Learn more at

[Safe Electricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS



MVEC will observe summer hours

May 4th-October 2nd, 2020

Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM



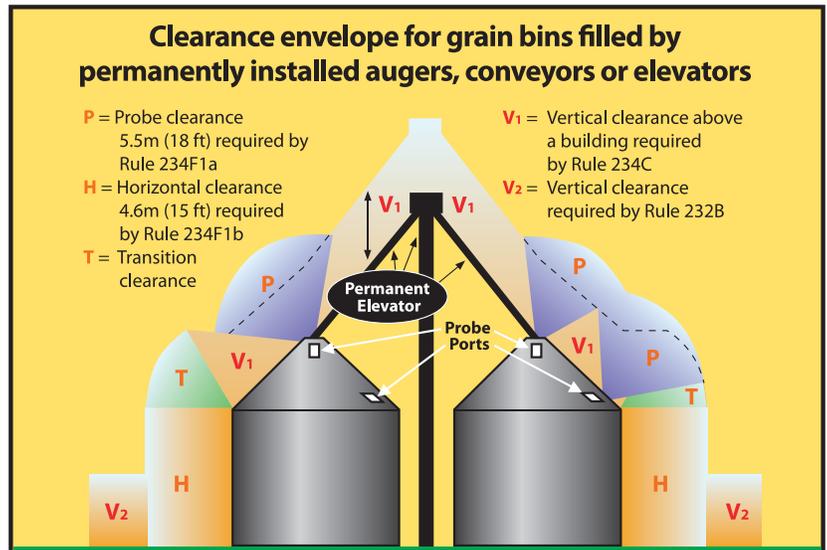
Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins

If you are planning to construct a new grain bin (or move an existing one) please contact Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. We will provide assistance in planning a safe environment for everyone working at, and living around, your grain bins. The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable augers, conveyors and elevators, as well as permanent equipment.

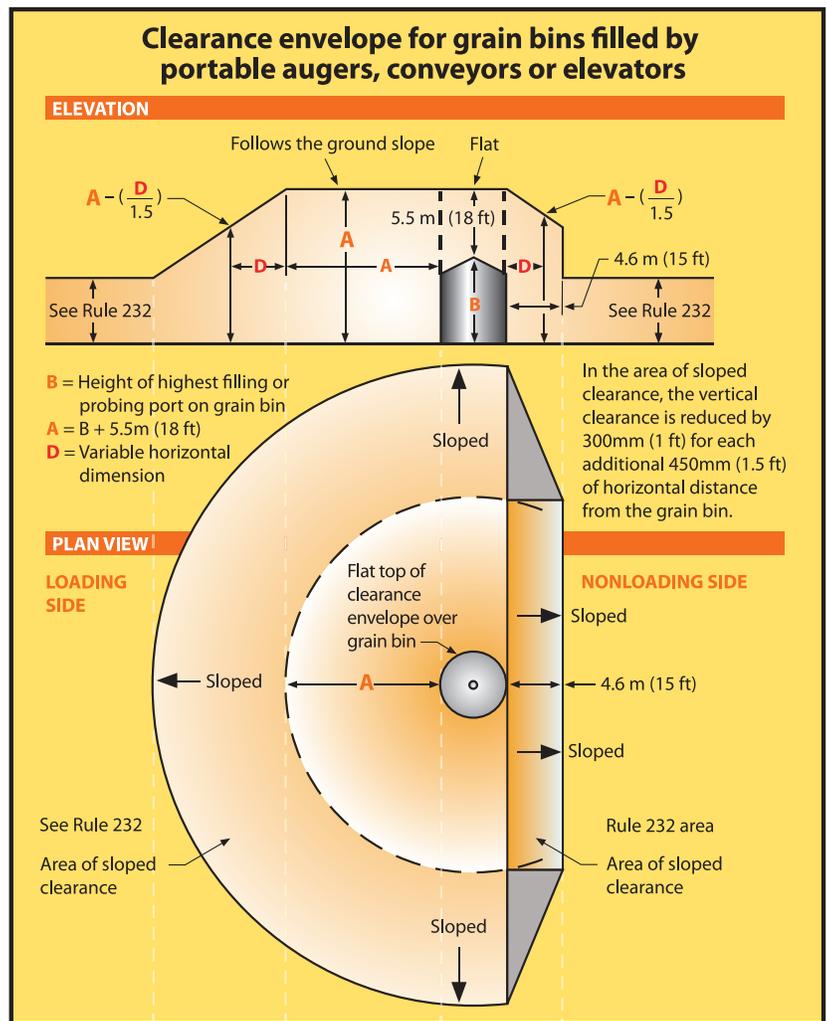
Electric wires should be at least 15 feet from the non-loading side of the grain bin; at least 18 feet from the highest filling or probing port on the bin; and a clearance of at least the bin height plus 18 feet from the loading side of the grain bin. Electric service cannot be provided to a grain bin installation that does not meet these clearances.

According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199-25.2(3)b. *An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board.)*

If the electric wires around your existing or proposed grain bin do not meet the requirements shown in the diagrams or if you have any questions, please contact our office at 800-927-6068.



From IEEE Std. C2-2017, "National Electrical Safety Code." © Copyright 2016 by IEEE. All rights reserved.



From IEEE Std. C2-2017, "National Electrical Safety Code." © Copyright 2016 by IEEE. All rights reserved. The IEEE disclaims any responsibility or liability resulting from the placement and use in the described manner.

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents for these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



Energy Industry

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Members are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever. While the changing energy market has created more options for members, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations in particular. That's because of two factors.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and members are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or internet service. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or shoddy products and services.

Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount. You can combat this scam by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not call. If you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call us directly at 800-927-6068. Do not use the phone number given by the scammer.

Avoid Solar Scams

Another scam we see from time to time is connected to solar systems. Homeowners with solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from crooks claiming to represent a solar company, promising to replace faulty or broken parts or improve efficiency. Again, if you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) or the company that installed the solar array if you think there may be a problem. Other than occasional cleaning, solar (if installed correctly) is virtually maintenance-free.

Use Trusted Sources

If you're considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. This is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there has been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck. Representatives of solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

MVEC can offer a candid assessment to determine whether solar is right for you. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members.

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy advisor - your local electric cooperative. We are a local, community-focused company that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe services to our members.

Remember, we're just one call or click away, please reach out with any questions about your electric or internet service or bills - we're here to help.

Cool your home efficiently.



SAVINGS
WITH
**STAYING
POWER**

EFFICIENT | CLEAN | SAFE | ELECTRIC

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



The Fiber Download

Maybe It's Time To Consider A Mesh Wi-Fi Solution

Are you having trouble connecting to Wi-Fi when you're in certain areas of your home? Does your device suddenly disconnect from the network for no apparent reason? Does it take forever to download large files? Do streaming movies pause or stop altogether? Is all this happening even though you've upgraded your router, placed it in the best location, and are using the settings recommended by your service provider? If so, it may be time to consider a different type of home Wi-Fi solution, one that's designed to address the most common problems people experience in their home Wi-Fi networks. The best alternative right now to standard home Wi-Fi is an exciting new technology called Mesh Wi-Fi.

What is Mesh Wi-Fi?

Like your current Wi-Fi network, Mesh Wi-Fi uses a router to transmit the Wi-Fi signal your devices connect to. What's different is that it combines the router with a series of small wireless devices - called satellites - which you place in different rooms in your home. These satellites communicate with the router and provide you with a strong Wi-Fi signal everywhere, whether it's your bedroom, your home office, or even your backyard. What's more, once you're connected to your Mesh Wi-Fi network, there's nothing else you need to do. You can roam freely in your home with any of your devices and not have to worry about losing your connection or dealing with poor performance. The Mesh Wi-Fi system knows where you and your device are at all times and connects you to the nearest satellite.



Advantages Of Mesh Wi-Fi

In addition to solving your biggest home Wi-Fi challenges, and giving you outstanding performance, Mesh Wi-Fi is cost-effective. You can purchase a mesh unit from MVEC for a one-time charge of \$90 plus tax. The Mesh Wi-Fi unit, combined with MVlink's Gigacenter router*, will extend your network even further than a Gigacenter alone, for a complete managed solution.

With the Gigacenter/Mesh Wi-Fi combination, if you experience any technical issues MVlink's tech team is just a phone call away to access your network and remotely figure out the source of your problem.

If you're ready to move on from your current Wi-Fi challenges, contact us today. Mesh satellites provide a Wi-Fi experience that's second to none.



*The Gigacenter router is available for \$4.95/mo. plus tax, regardless of the number of mesh units in place.

Sites to See

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

- www.thespruce.com
real-life tips and inspiration to help you make your best home. From decorating and gardening advice, to entertaining and home repair how-tos, The Spruce can show you how. We help more than 30 million users each month find the information they need.
- www.inc.com
7 Simple Daily Habits to Sharpen Your Intelligence. Give your brain a daily workout to sharpen your focus and become more intelligent.

Glossary of Terms

Wireless: Anything that uses radio signals to communicate can be considered a wireless device. When a wireless device sends a wireless signal (radio signal) as a transmitter, another device picks the same by acting as a receiver.

Router: An Internet networking device that allows data to be shared between your device and the network service you receive from your Internet provider.





Right-Of-Way Planting



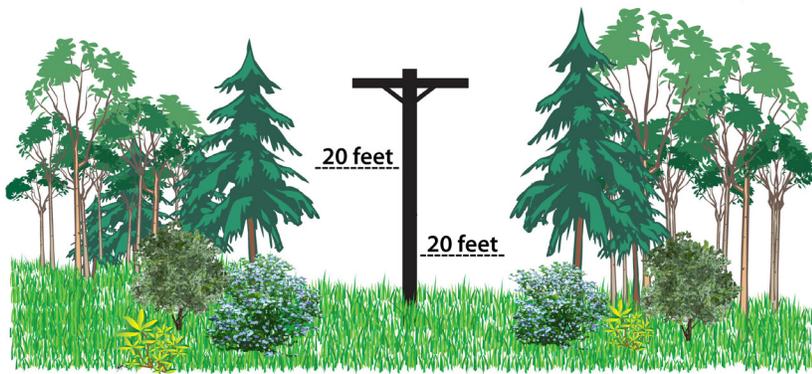
MVEC respects our members' desire to enhance their property with trees, shrubs, flowers and other lawn ornaments. We also want to provide you and your neighbors reliable electric service.



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 for more information.



Watts The Answer?

1. We can each do our part to keep Iowa's roads safe by simply _____ over and _____ down when we see stopped vehicles on the side of the road.
2. You've asked for greater _____ and more package offers, and we are responding with more offers at the same or reduced costs.
3. In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted _____ advisor - your local electric cooperative.

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

March winners:

Delwyn Curtis, Manchester
John L Kilburg, Spragueville



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

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Cedar Rapids, IA
Permit 174



Happy 4th of July

MVEC's office will close at 11am on July 2nd and remain closed thru July 3rd in Observance Of Independence Day.



Watts Current by Email
If you would prefer to have the Watts Current emailed to you, please sign up by emailing efletcher@mvec.coop

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 Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

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

Summer Office Hours (May 4-October 2, 2020)
Monday-Thursday • 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday • 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.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
Like Us On  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
Maintenance Issues	maintenance@mvec.coop
Dividend Questions	patronage@mvec.coop
New Service Questions	engineering@mvec.coop
Management	management@mvec.coop

Printed by Julin Printing Company
Monticello, IA

