

# WATTS *Current*

September 2020

For Our Members

## Annual Meeting Held

Due to pandemic requirements and the need for social distancing, the Annual Meeting of the members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative was held at the Cooperative’s headquarters in Anamosa at 8:00 a.m. on August 20th. In-person attendance was limited to the nine members of the Cooperative serving on the Board of Directors, two employees who are also members, CEO Jeremy Richert and Attorney Phil Brooks with Simmons, Perrine Moyer Bergman law firm. Quorum was obtained through the return of mail-in ballots. Thank you to all the members who participated in this year’s meeting by returning their ballot. (See list of prizes winners on Page 7 randomly selected from the mailed-in ballots.)

President Thielen reported approval of the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes, and the Treasurer’s Report, according to the ballots received.

The nominating committee, in accordance with the Cooperative’s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, nominated the following members for director positions to fill the three positions eligible for election:

- Region 1 (Jones, Cedar, Linn Counties) – Gene Manternach and Robert Stoll
- Region 2 (Jackson, Clinton Counties) – Charlie Peters
- Region 3 At-Large (Dubuque County) – Mary Goebel and Judy Gotto

Attorney Brooks informed members of the results of the balloting, indicating Gene Manternach, Charlie Peters and Judy Gotto were re-elected to the board.

Following the Annual Meeting, the Directors held their re-organizational meeting electing officers as follows: Ron Thielen, President; Tom Stewart, Vice President; Gene Manternach, Secretary; Charles McCullough, Assistant Secretary and Judy Gotto, Treasurer.

A copy of the annual report is available at [www.mvec.coop/annual-meeting](http://www.mvec.coop/annual-meeting). These charts provide further information reflective of the past year.

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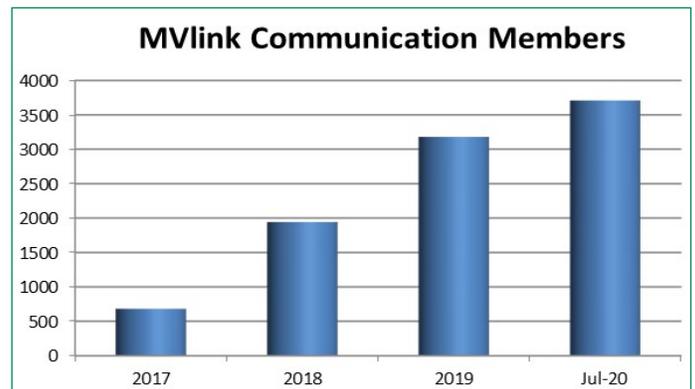
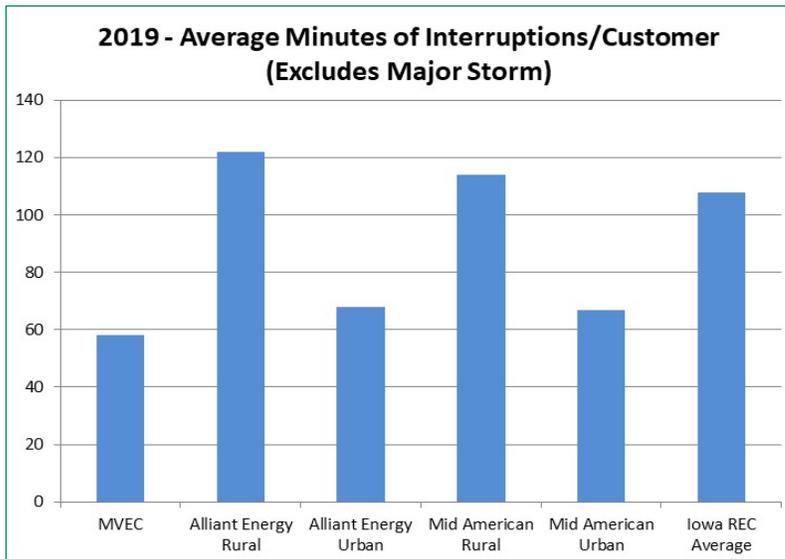
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# Derecho Summary

August 10, 2020 will not soon be forgotten by impacted members or your MVEC team. While we have prided ourselves on fewer and shorter power outages than the average utility, we simply cannot control Mother Nature.

When eight of our 36 substations lost transmission service and 138 poles snapped, 22% of our meters were out of service, impacting 3,580 members. While trees falling into electric lines is often the primary reason for power outages, this storm was heavily impacted by broken poles and damage to transmission lines. The average duration of the power outages was 14 hours and 28 minutes, with the shortest outage at only two minutes and the longest outage seven days. The longest outages (over 24 hours) were primarily related to transmission lines on the ground, although some members needed to wait for an electrician to make repairs before we could re-energize them. The most significant damage occurred in the southern portion of our service area in a line from Martelle to Oxford Junction.

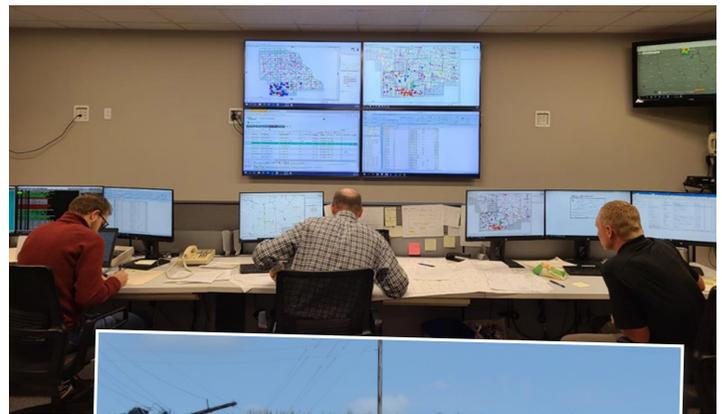
MVEC was fortunate to host 14 linemen from other Iowa electric cooperatives aiding in power restoration. Those 14 linemen, plus eight of our own, then moved on to assist Linn County REC with their outages.

This unprecedented ‘land hurricane’ created additional challenges when telephone and internet outages were as widespread as electricity outages across the State.

With this storm, MVEC simultaneously managed both electric and MVlink internet/phone outages. We designed the MVlink network with a redundancy plan involving two different

third-party providers. When one of those providers went out of service immediately, the other service was able to provide services to all MVlink members. However by late Tuesday morning the second provider was also out of service; thankfully for just a few hours. Multiple large communication companies utilize shared data and server facilities so the loss of one, can impact many, many services. MVEC is fortunate to have a redundancy plan in place as one of our providers was still out of service at press time for this newsletter (10 days), yet we were able to provide communication services through the remaining provider.

We sincerely thank all of the members, strangers, fellow cooperatives and vendors who helped us through this disaster so that most all of our members had services restored within three days. The Cooperative spirit of members helping members is alive and well.





## Visit Our New Website www.mvec.coop

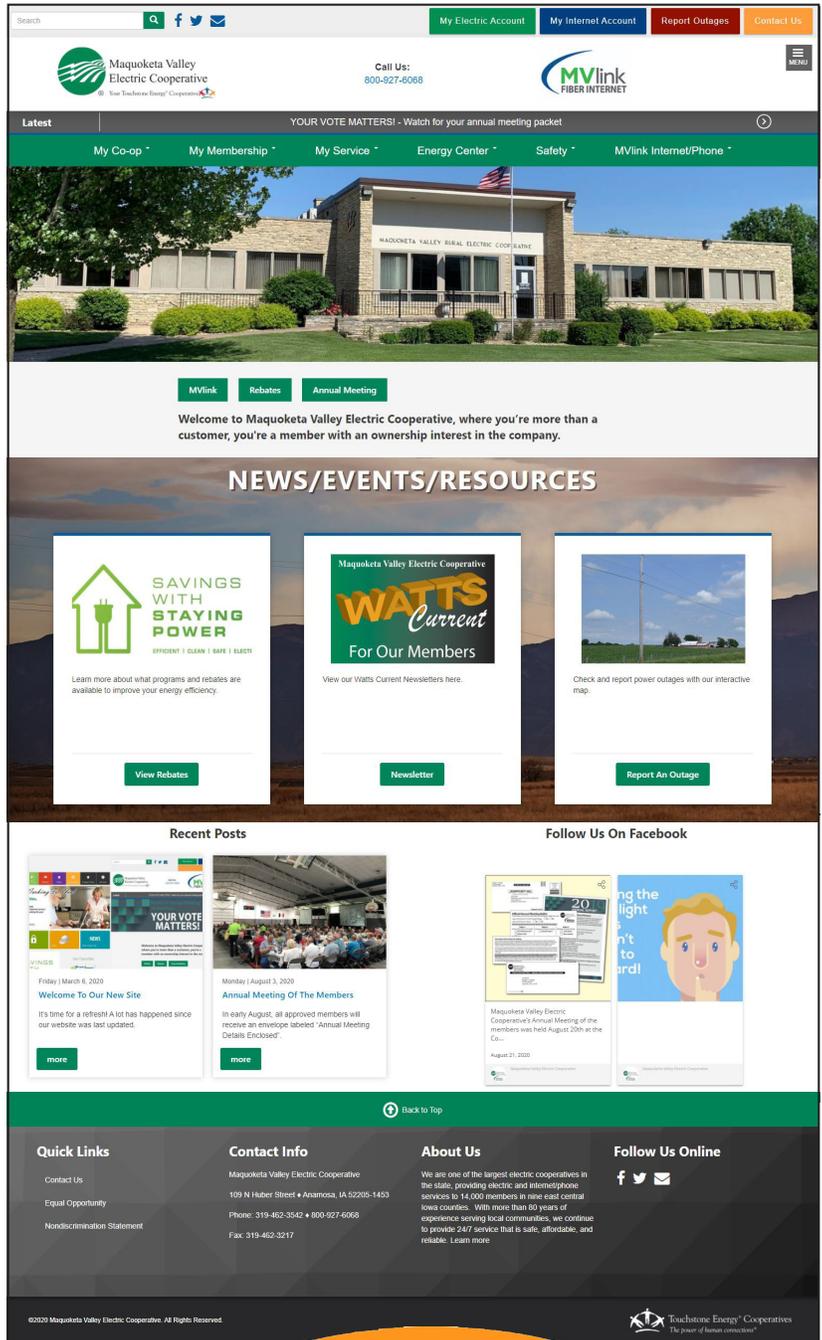
If you haven't yet visited our new website, take a minute to browse through it. A lot has happened since our website was last updated; we've added a high speed fiber and telephone service, hired several new employees, and experienced a need for greater communications with the ongoing pandemic.

A key component of the new site is that it marries mvec.coop and mvlink.coop into one robust site; hopefully making it easier for members to do business with us in one stop.

Website analytics tell us that MVlink fiber internet/phone service, tracking power outages, paying your bills and finding ways to save energy are the most important resources on our site. We believe we have made all of those areas very visible to our visitors. The site also provides a current news section, some easy to find 'hot buttons' for popular areas and you can glance at the most recent Facebook posts, all from the home page.

One of the many benefits of being a Touchstone Energy Cooperative is the ability to use their web designing and hosting capabilities to more easily develop, edit and navigate a user-friendly site in an affordable manner. We're learning that Chrome users may experience the exact look we planned for, while other internet browsers may display slightly different versions; and not all mobile phones are the same!

As with all good websites, this is a work in progress. We are still fine-tuning some sections but it was important for us to 'go live' and bring updated MVlink information into the main site. Members who use mvlink.coop will be re-directed to the new site.



### 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**



## USE OUR NEW WEBSITE FOR ONE STOP INFORMATION

- ✓ Pay Your Bills Electric/Internet
- ✓ Saving Energy
- ✓ Report Or Check Outages
- ✓ Sign Up For Internet



## Hand Sanitizer Safety

There has been a lot of discussion about how dangerous it is to keep hand sanitizer inside a vehicle. Let us see if you can put some of these fears to rest. The benefit of hand sanitizer outweighs the risk at this time.

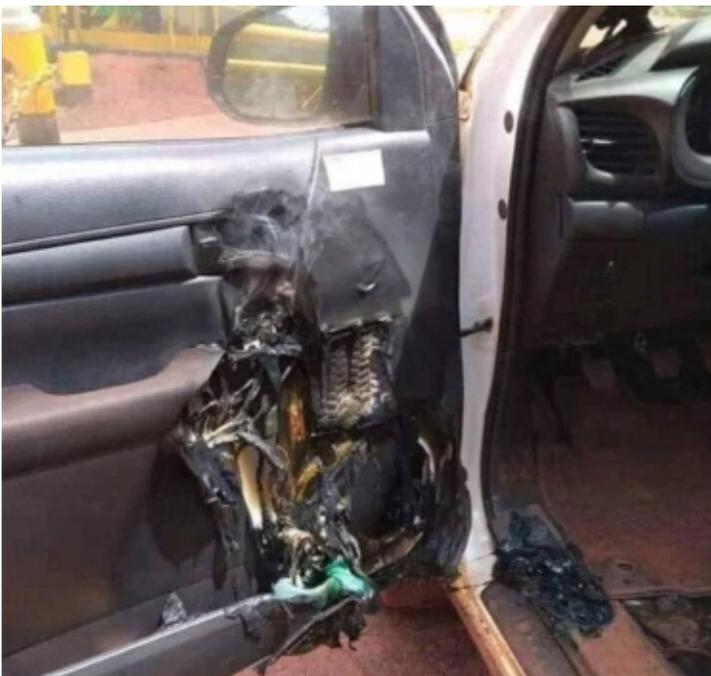
Quick fire explanation:

All materials must be converted to a vapor prior to burning. If you look closely at a candle you will notice a gap of vapor between the wick and the flame. All materials convert to vapor at different temperatures and of course not all materials will burn. Hand sanitizer contains around 80% alcohol. It converts to a vapor around 72 degrees. This is called its flash point. It would still require an ignition source to burn. In the viral internet picture of the car fire, it is likely that a spark occurred in the door control or a cigarette provided this.

*OCONOMOWOC, Wis. (WMTV) -- An Oconomowoc fire department's warning about the dangers of leaving hand sanitizer in their vehicles on a hot day. However, the post and similar ones have also drawn criticism over whether or not the risk actually exists.*

*In a post showing a burned-out car door, the Western Lakes Fire District explains most hand sanitizers are alcohol-based, making them flammable.*

*"Keeping it in your car during hot weather, exposing it to sun, and particularly being next to open flame while smoking in vehicles or grilling can lead to disaster," the post read.*



## GENERATOR Safety



When you have lost power, a portable generator can temporarily provide needed electricity. However, it may present serious hazards if not used properly. **Follow these tips to ensure everyone's safety:**

- Select a generator that can provide the amount of power you expect to need.
- **Read all instructions** before using.
- Always operate the generator on a **stable, dry surface**.
- Set up your generator in a **well-ventilated** area outside the home—out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents into the home. Generators produce **DEADLY** carbon monoxide.
- Use a **heavy-duty extension cord** to connect appliances to the outlets on the generator.
- **NEVER plug a portable generator into your home.** This can cause electricity to feed back through your home onto the utility's system. This "**backfeed**" can be **deadly** for line workers and anyone near downed power lines.
- Always allow the generator to **cool before refueling**.

Learn more about generator and storm safety at **SafeElectricity.org**.



## Harvest Safely

Now is the time for farmers to reap the rewards of a long and often tiring growing season. When it comes to fall harvest, there is a lot to get done in a seemingly short amount of time, as shorter days and cooler weather can create a sense of urgency. These factors, along with today's technology and large farm equipment, can lead to serious accidents.



Overhead electric lines near end rows and along roadways can also be a danger to operators of large, taller farm equipment. We urge farmers to keep equipment and extensions at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions, and recommend the following tips to keep farmers safe:

- Know where overhead power lines are before you head out to the field and have a plan to stay far from them.
- Use a spotter when raising any equipment such as augers, grain trucks, and even ladders. It can be difficult to tell how close you are to overhead power lines.
- Know what to do and have a plan if you come into contact with an overhead power line. Do not leave the vehicle until utility workers have cut off electricity and confirmed that it is safe to exit the vehicle. Know what to do in the rare event the equipment catches fire!
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level—under 14 feet—before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground, shifting weight, or other conditions can make it difficult to control raised equipment.
- Never try to move a power line to clear a path. Power lines start to sag over time, bringing them closer to farmers and others who need to avoid them. Contact MVEC to repair sagging power lines.

## Crop Dryer Plans

We work hard to provide our members with reliable electric service, but there are times we need your help. If you are planning to improve your grain drying system, or must replace it due to the recent storms, we need to ensure our facilities are adequate to handle any increased energy load. Without proper planning on the energy side, you could experience a blown transformer the first time the new dryer is energized.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's electric tariff, as filed with the Iowa Utilities Board, states:

*Member shall notify Cooperative if they wish to increase their connected load by 10% or more in excess of the load agreed upon at connection only after assurance from Cooperative that its facilities are adequate to supply such increased load.*

If you are making plans that involve energy load increases, please give us a call at 800-927-6068. Working together, we can avoid an expensive power outage at an inopportune time



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.





# The Fiber Download

## Battery Backup UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply)

What is a battery backup? It is a device that protects electronics from electrical surges but also has outlets that are powered by a battery inside the device in case the electricity goes out. So depending on the wattage the device supports, and the amount of wattage used by the devices plugged in, a battery backup can keep your equipment powered on while the electricity is out; how long depends on the amount of wattage used per the wattage supported by the battery backup. For example if a 350 watt battery backup has 325 watts plugged in and being used, then the battery backup will probably only keep those devices powered on for a few minutes. Whereas a 350 watt battery backup with 75 watts plugged in could stay powered on for several minutes or maybe even an hour or more.

Battery backups not only protect the equipment from power surges but because they can keep a computer powered up for a few minutes it can buy you time to save your work and shut down the computer properly to avoid corruption of your hard drive.

The price of a battery backup varies depending on the wattage capabilities. Usually the lower the wattage the lower the price, where the higher the wattage the more expensive.

These devices are commonly found online or at big box stores such as Best Buy, Staples or OfficeMax.



**LOTS OF DEVICES PLUGGED IN  
MAXED OUT WATTS  
SHORTER RUN TIME**

Unit Features	
Key Features	
Run time for load	255 W 2m
Max. Capacity Used	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Output power capacity	255Watts / 425VA

**EXAMPLE**

**MINIMUM DEVICES PLUGGED IN  
LONGER RUN TIME**

Unit Features	
Key Features	
Run time for load	75 W 22m
Max. Capacity Used	<div style="width: 29%;"></div> 29%
Output power capacity	255Watts / 425VA

*Editors note: Battery back-ups are a lot like a generator; the more you have plugged into a generator, the more gas you will use. The fewer items you plug in, the longer your gas will last.*

## Sites to See

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

- [www.supercook.com](http://www.supercook.com)  
If you want to surf the internet in a semi-productive way - but not so productive that you actually have to leave the house -- then check out Supercook.

Here's how it works: You tell it which ingredients you have in your home, and it'll give you a big list of recipes you can make using just those ingredients. It's a fun way to stay thrifty, clean out the fridge, and make sure food doesn't go to waste.

## Battery Back-up and MVlink

MVlink phone members receive a battery-back up upon install. However these batteries are designed to only cover phone service during an outage and they will not keep your Internet service operational.

To access the Internet, both the MVEC-supplied ONT, and any member-owned equipment, must be plugged into the battery back-up. Laptops and tablets are equipped with an internal battery that can often last hours, but desktop computers should be plugged into the battery back-up.

Do more with **HIGH SPEED FIBER INTERNET** from



MVlink can meet your growing bandwidth needs with high speeds, affordable pricing and great, local service.

**NO CONTRACTS • NO DATA CAPS • NO INSTALLATION FEES**

**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 1 Gb (1,000Mbps)/1 Gb.....\$89.95/mo.**

**What can you do with more? CALL 800-927-6068 TODAY**





## Annual Meeting Prize Winners

MVEC awarded \$2,000 in cash prizes to randomly-selected members who returned their Annual Meeting ballot.

*Robert /Julie Oeschger, Cascade*  
*Donald A Lueken, Dubuque*  
*David J Frett, Bellevue*  
*Pearl A Smith, Spragueville*  
*Mary Ann/Madonna Carradus, Dundee*  
*Albert L Neyen, Epworth*  
*Douglas/Karen Koopmann, Peosta*  
*Finest Grains-Natural & Organic Products, Dyersville*  
*Mark Heiar, Spragueville*  
*Eugene L Gansemer, Holy Cross*

*Paul Heinrich, Maquoketa*  
*Nathan Stecklein, Bernard*  
*Bernard Manternach, Monticello*  
*Donald/Diane Schemmel, Sherrill*  
*Daniel T Kurt, Cascade*  
*Brad/Denise Wubbena, Manchester*  
*Jeffery J Gerlach, Springbrook*  
*James J Gehl, Cascade*  
*Madonna Sieverding, Bellevue*  
*Ray Ronek, Dubuque*  
*Gary Lange, Dyersville*  
*Waylon/Robyn Fry, Earlville*  
*Alan Mensen, Dyersville*  
*Bruce A Ross, Manchester*  
*Tim/Mary Biedermann, Sherrill*  
*Trent D Willey, Preston Iowa*  
*Dianne S Henry, Maquoketa Iowa*  
*Joseph W Kafer, Manchester Iowa*  
*Jack Theisen, Bernard Iowa*  
*Dale J Clemen, Dubuque Iowa*



## Working To Provide You Better Service

Having correct phone numbers on file for your electric account ensures you will see faster responses when you call our office after hours. Our call center software recognizes your phone number and your account pops onto the agent's computer screen, allowing the conversation to go much faster. When your call is pushed into the automated system during high call periods such as major storms, your account is immediately matched with your phone number. If we do not have a correct phone number, your call may be re-directed to a live agent or simply be disconnected if call volumes are high.



Please feel free to provide a main phone number, and a second or even third number. Our goal is to match phone numbers for those authorized to access your account for outage reporting or bill payments. Providing your email address is also helpful in today's electronic world. When we can email messages to our members instead of sending mail, we can save costs. We then can pass on these cost savings to you, our members! You can include information with your next bill, reach us by telephone 800-927-6068 or email [billing@mvec.coop](mailto:billing@mvec.coop)



## Watts The Answer?

1. The Cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ of members helping members is alive and well.
2. A key component of the new site is that it marries \_\_\_\_\_ and [mmlink.coop](http://mmlink.coop) into one robust site;
3. Having correct \_\_\_\_\_ on file for your electric account ensures you will see faster responses when you call our office after hours.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

July winners:

Dennis Freiburger, Delhi  
 Elmer Schumann, Dyersville



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

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

**HAPPY LABOR DAY**

**MVEC will be closed  
Monday, September 7  
in observance of Labor 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](mailto: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**  
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A Touchstone Energy® 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.

**After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998**  
**Visit Our Website: [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop)**

**Email direct to the following departments:**

Billing Questions	<a href="mailto:billing@mvec.coop">billing@mvec.coop</a>
Fiber Questions	<a href="mailto:fiber@mvec.coop">fiber@mvec.coop</a>
Product or Service Questions	<a href="mailto:memberservices@mvec.coop">memberservices@mvec.coop</a>
Maintenance Issues	<a href="mailto:maintenance@mvec.coop">maintenance@mvec.coop</a>
Dividend Questions	<a href="mailto:patronage@mvec.coop">patronage@mvec.coop</a>
Management	<a href="mailto:management@mvec.coop">management@mvec.coop</a>

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