

WATTS Current

May 2021

For Our Members

Patronage Dividends - The Cooperative Difference

One of the benefits of membership in a cooperative is that you, as both a customer and a member, own a portion of the business. That ownership has value, not only in reliable services and affordable rates, but also in patronage dividend earnings.

As not-for-profit entities, cooperatives return margins to their members in excess of those needed for daily operations in the form of patronage dividends. Calculating the dividend amount starts when your Board of Directors reviews the year-end financials and determines the amount of revenue collected that was not needed to cover the costs of providing services during the year. Excess revenues (or margins) are divided among the members based on the total dollar amount of each member's electric bill during the year. The resulting figure is the allocation earned by each member as a percentage of their business during the year.

At their April board meeting, the Board of Directors approved allocating \$1,412,381 of the 2020 margins back to the membership. Each member's individual share of the allocated margin will appear as a message on the May energy bill. This is only a notice of allocation and cannot be treated as cash or deducted from your bill.

The Cooperative retains these allocated margins to operate the Cooperative until such time as they can be retired (or paid) in cash to the members. Some members may recall receiving a dividend payment or bill credit last fall when MVEC retired \$645,253 from allocations made for the years 2005 and 2007.



SUMMER OFFICE HOURS
 MVEC will observe summer hours
May 3rd-October 1st, 2021
 Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM
 Friday: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Watts Inside:

Summary Of Annual Meeting Requirements
Page 2

Annual Meeting And Election Of Directors
Page 2

Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins
Page 3

Wapello Solar Project Reaches Commercial Operation
Page 4

Use Caution When Burning Ditches
Page 4

Improving Your Yard? Know What's Above And Below
Page 5

Tech Link - Understanding VoIP Telephone Service
Page 6

Shining The Light On Community Volunteers
Page 7

Member Meet Up
Page 7



TYPES OF UTILITIES

- INVESTOR-OWNED**
Privately owned by shareholders/investors
Operate for a profit
- MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS**
Owned by cities, counties, or states
Not-for-profit
- COOPERATIVE**
Owned and operated by the people they serve
Not-for-profit

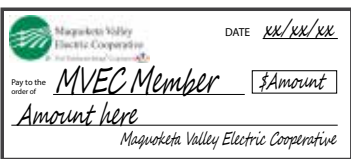
When you sign a service agreement with Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, you become a **COOPERATIVE MEMBER**



WHAT ARE PATRONAGE DIVIDENDS

- 1** MVEC tracks the electricity and/or communications services you use and how much money you pay for it throughout the year
- 2** We pay for things like maintaining and improving our electric system, and fiber smart grid network, emergencies and natural disasters
- 3** At the end of the fiscal year, the directors evaluate the excess revenues, called margins, against the business needs of the cooperative
- 4** The cooperative allocates a portion of those margins to members as patronage dividends based upon their electric and/or communications bills
- 5** The directors elect to retire, or pay, the patronage dividends when our financial condition permits

HOW DO I RECEIVE MY PATRONAGE PAYMENTS



DATE xx/xx/xx

Pay to the order of MVEC Member \$ Amount

Amount here
Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

CHECKS ISSUED
 Members or former members:
 Checks will normally not be issued for an amount under \$5.00. Retired amounts under the \$5.00 minimum will be held by the Cooperative until the member's cumulative retired patronage balance reaches \$5.00.

Search our list of unclaimed capital credits at mvec.coop/patronage-dividends or greatiowatreasurehunt.gov to see if anyone you know is owed money from Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative!



Summary Of Annual Meeting Requirements

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 forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting...”

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



Annual Meeting And Election Of Directors

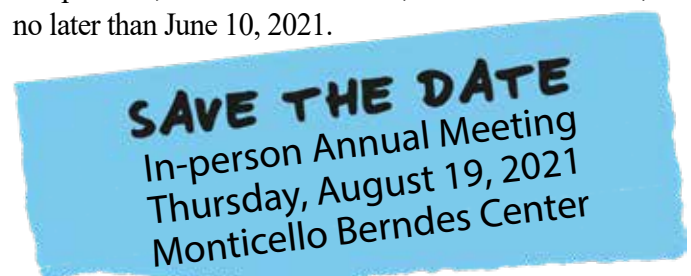
As the pandemic recovery continues, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative’s Board of Directors has decided to cautiously proceed with an in-person Annual Meeting on Thursday, August 19, 2021 in Monticello. Attendance will follow COVID-19 safety guidelines. In addition to the in-person meeting, members who are uncomfortable or unable to attend the meeting will have the option to cast their ballot for directors via mail, just as we did last year. Watch for your response card/ballot and voting instructions to arrive in early August. Future issues of Watts Current will provide more details as plans progress.

We believe a combined option of an in-person business meeting and mail-in balloting effectively encourages all members to participate in the Cooperative’s business. Members who return their Annual Meeting response card prior to August 17th will be entered into a drawing for cash prizes.

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 these positions.

- Charles McCullough, Region 3 (Dubuque County)
- Jan Null, Region 1 (Jones, Cedar and Linn Counties)
- Larry Swanson, Region 4 (Delaware, Buchanan and Clayton Counties)

If you are interested in learning about the requirements for serving on the Board of Directors, please contact CEO Jeremy Richert at 800-927-6068 or via email at jrichert@mvec.coop. A packet of information will be mailed to you. After reviewing the qualifications, if you wish to be considered for one of these positions, please submit a brief biography stating your qualifications to: Nomination Committee, %Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, 109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa IA 52205, no later than June 10, 2021.





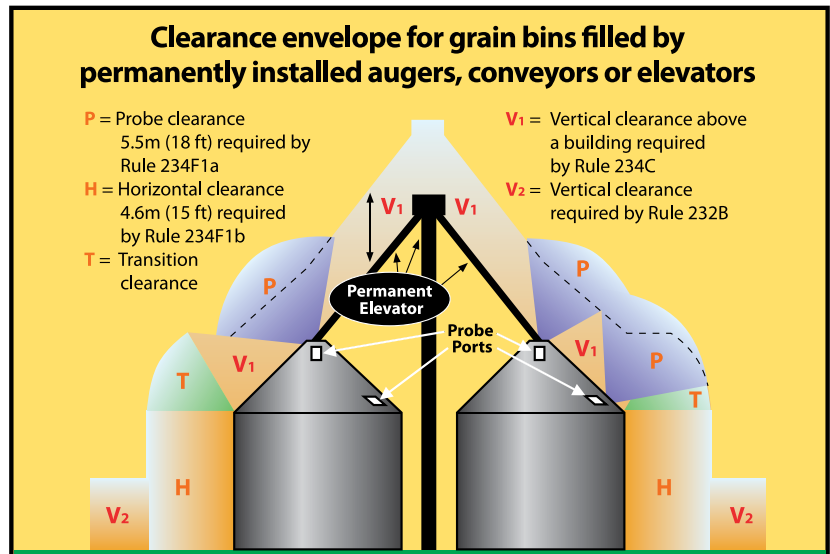
Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins

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.

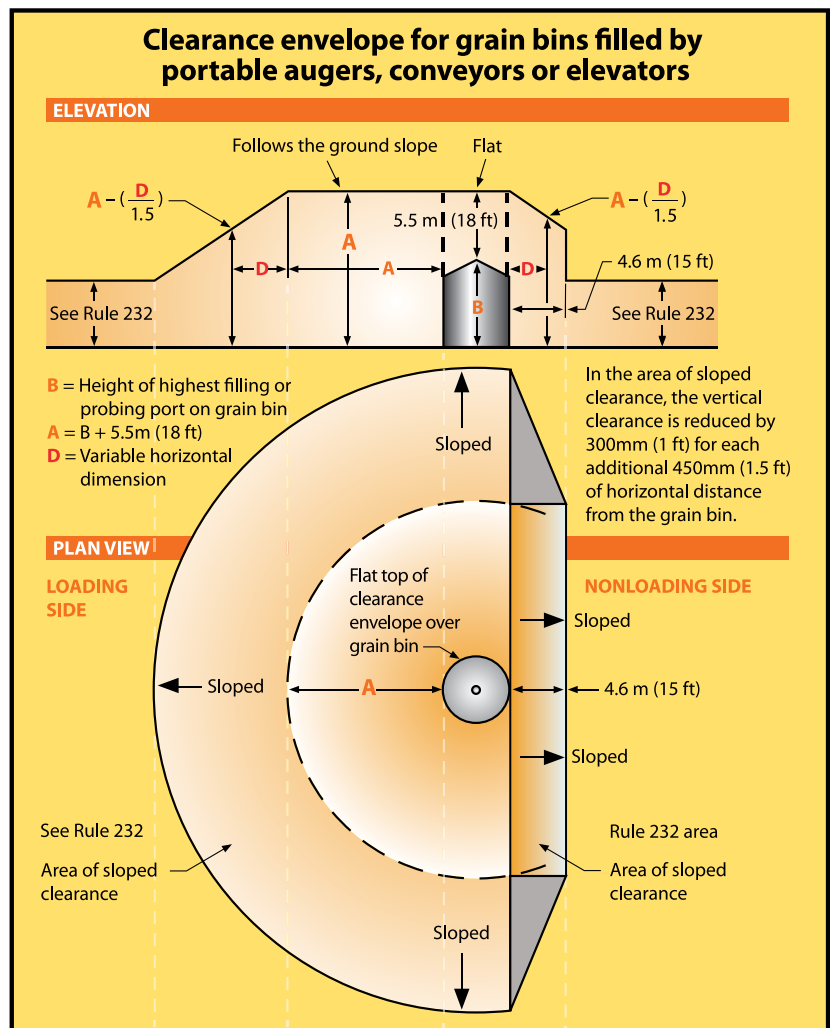
Electric wires should be at least 15 feet from the non-loading side of the grain bin; at least 18 feet from the highest filling or probing port on the bin; and a clearance of at least the bin height plus 18 feet from the loading side of the grain bin. Electric service cannot be provided to a grain bin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



Wapello Solar Project Reaches Commercial Operation

The Wapello Solar photovoltaic project in Louisa County began delivering energy to the grid in March. Located near Wapello, this new solar field is the state of Iowa’s largest at 127.5 MWDC (megawatts of direct current), and will deliver clean energy to thousands of Iowans. The project was developed by Clēnera, who will also provide ongoing asset management for Wapello Solar LLC.

Wapello Solar includes 318,000 solar panels which are used to power some 21,000 homes in Iowa. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative’s power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), has added Wapello Solar to its energy portfolio after agreeing to purchase 100% of the energy created through the solar field over the next 25 years. According to CIPCO, “CIPCO’s purchase power agreement for Wapello Solar, LLC locks in stable, long-term pricing and avoids the risks associated with rising fuel costs. Renewable energy credits (RECs) are not included in this agreement.” MVEC is proud to deliver clean energy to our member’s homes and businesses through a balanced portfolio of energy sources including both solar and wind. (Learn more at www.cipco.net/energy-portfolio)

“We are pleased that Wapello Solar has reached commercial operation,” said CIPCO CEO and Executive Vice President Bill Cherrier. “This is an important source of energy for our member-owners. With our mission of providing wholesale power and services in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner, the completion of this project helps meet member expectations.”

“Clēnera is ecstatic about this new solar project and the successful partnership with CIPCO that made it possible,” said Jason Ellsworth, CEO of Clēnera. “We look forward to other projects with CIPCO and other excellent utility partners.”



Think Before You Climb

Before you rush into a job that requires you to use a ladder, take precautions before you climb.

1. Use a ladder on a **stable, level surface**.
2. Maintain **three-point contact** on the ladder when climbing.
3. Three points of contact mean **two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand**.
4. Keep your body **near the middle of the step** and face the ladder when climbing.
5. **Do not use the top step/rung** of a ladder unless designed for that purpose.
6. For a stepladder, make sure the base is **fully open** and the spreaders are **locked**.

Use Caution When Burning Ditches

It's that time of year when many of you may be burning off the weeds, grass, etc. in your ditches. Burning close to Cooperative property can not only cause damage and potential electric or internet service problems, but it can be dangerous. Be careful when burning around poles, anchor guy assemblies, underground utility cabinets and other important



Cooperative equipment. In addition to protecting your electric service, the fiber internet network is also at risk for damage. During the month of April, three different ditch-burning projects resulted in loss of services for several MVEC members. Members involved in such fires will be invoiced for damages they cause to Cooperative property and some have seen costs as high as \$10,000.





Improving Your Yard? Know What's Above And Below

When the temperature warms, many of us begin planning improvements to our outdoor spaces. It is important to plan for safety prior to adding an outdoor structure or improving your yard.

Power line awareness

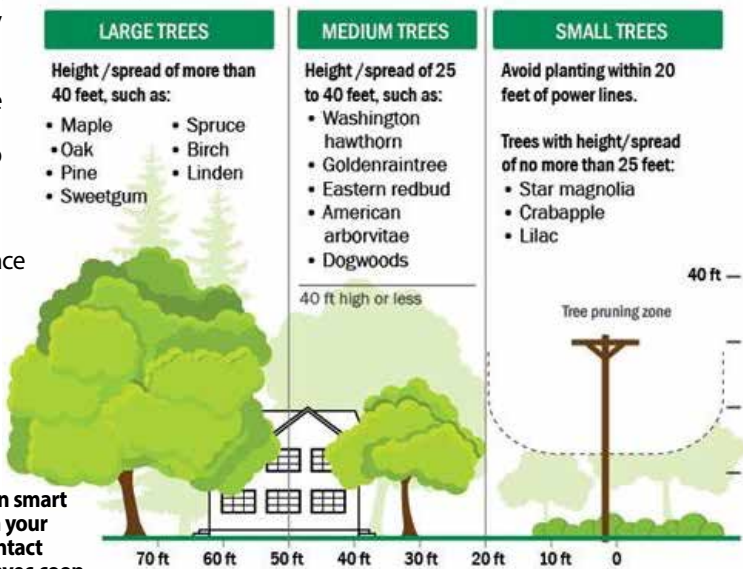
Being aware of utility line locations near your home is vitally important for you and your family's safety. Even drop-down lines, the lines that bring power to a home, have voltages running through them. Always look up and around for power lines, recognizing that electricity can jump or transfer even without direct contact. Also know what's below before starting any digging job.

Tips to keep in mind while working in your yard:

- Assume that all power lines are always energized and keep at least 10 feet between a utility line and yourself or any item you are holding.
- Perform a hazard assessment of the work area, noting all utility line locations.
- Call 8-1-1 to mark underground utilities as part of planning and before any digging. The service is free, locating utilities is a state law.
- Utility locators do not mark private lines. Private underground lines - typically installed by the homeowner or a contractor - include:
 - Irrigation or septic system lines.
 - Lines that service outbuildings
 - Lines between the meter and your home.
 - Lines to other outdoor items like grills or hot tubs.

Planting the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our homes, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be hazardous... especially to utility lines.



For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact MVEC or visit mvec.coop.

Private lines need to be marked by an independent locating service.

- Once underground utilities are marked, 811 recommends that the area 18 to 24 inches of either side of the marked lines be dug by hand with a fiberglass-handled shovel, not by machine.
- Do not install tree houses, playsets, pools, decks or any structures within 25 feet of a utility line. Consider the height and reach of play equipment and all deck and pool structures in relation to utility lines.
- Use extreme caution when moving ladders and operating long-handled tools, such as pool skimmers, around trees and utility lines.
- Educate your children about power line safety. Teach them to never touch a utility line or get too close to one, either directly or with a toy or object.
- Also use extreme caution and look up and around for utility lines when you are elevated, on a ladder, a boom lift, scaffolding or your roof.
- When trimming trees, experts certified by OSHA in utility clearance are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.

Please contact us with questions about utility line clearance recommendations concerning your yard.

ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these SEVEN basic tips:

- 1. DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS**
Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.
- 2. DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS**
Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.
- 3. HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE**
Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.
- 4. BE CAREFUL AROUND H₂O**
Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.
- 5. EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES**
Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.
- 6. TEST YOUR GFCIs**
Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.
- 7. MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE**
Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.



TECH LINK

Understanding VoIP Telephone Service Through MVlink's Fiber Internet Convert your landline to VoIP

MVlink uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to provide telephone services. VoIP uses your internet connection for making and receiving calls over the internet instead of using the traditional copper wires associated with a Plain Old Telephone System (POTS). Instead of plugging into a wall telephone jack, your phone plugs directly into your internet router just as your computer does.

VoIP is the technology that converts your voice into a digital signal and sends it over the internet to produce a high-quality audio on the other end. Simply put, VoIP allows you to make a call directly from either your computer or your phone.

With telephone service from MVlink, you can generally continue using your existing telephone and phone number to make and receive calls. Users will find the most clear connections when plugged directly into their router versus an old copper-wired telephone jack. VoIP is easy to use, provides a clear connection, can be set up in minutes and offers many features such as voicemail to email, call waiting and caller identification.



What are the benefits of a VoIP telephone service?

The initial setup and ongoing costs are generally less for operating this system than a more traditional phone system. You only need to deal with one account, one bill, for both internet and phone.

Is VoIP better than landline?

In terms of features, landlines are no match against MVlink's telephone service. If you prefer having more control over your calling experience, MVlink's telephone service is your best bet. You can use your computer or home phone to make phone calls; the device only needs a stable internet connection.

Can you use your own phone?

Yes, it connects into the back of your router and operates the same as your existing phone.

Can I keep my phone number if I switch?

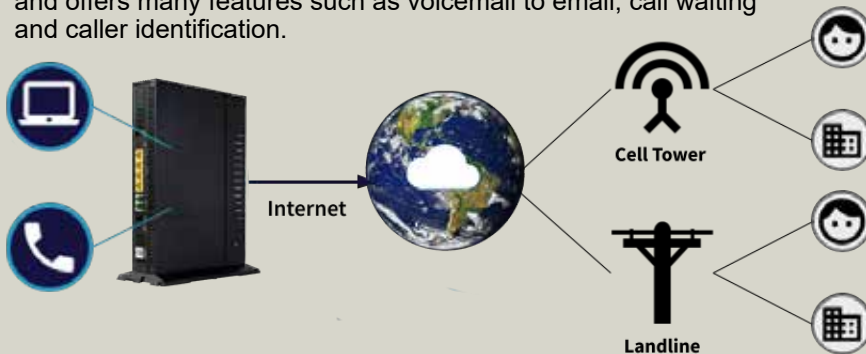
Generally, yes you can bring your existing number over with you to MVlink's telephone service.

Do cordless phones work with MVlink's telephone service?

Yes, cordless phones work the same way as a regular corded phone with a standard phone connection.

Does telephone service slow down my internet?

MVlink's speeds allow for both phone and computer use with no issues. In fact, talking on a call for an hour uses less bandwidth than surfing the internet for an hour so it won't significantly affect your bandwidth.



With MVlink's telephone service, you can call anyone in the world provided there is an internet connection for all parties. MVlink allows unlimited calls making communications easier, faster and less expensive.



With MVlink Fiber Internet	\$34.95/month*
Without MVlink Internet	\$49.95/month*
Add Fax Line	\$14.95/month*

*Plus applicable taxes

FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Unlimited local calls
- Unlimited long distance calls within the Continental United States; excluding Alaska and Hawaii
- Voicemail to Email
- Call Waiting
- Caller ID
- Call Forwarding



Shining The Light On Community Volunteers

Guided by our commitment to community, Iowa's electric co-ops are launching a new contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. The Shine the Light contest, sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, will accept nominations and select three winners who will each receive a \$1,500 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

Members and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. If you receive electricity or internet service from MVEC, you're a co-op member and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in your community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The three winners will be announced during the Iowa State Fair in August. In addition to the \$1,500 donation, each winner will be featured in the September issue of Living with Energy in Iowa magazine.

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to review the contest rules. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination.

Nominate a local volunteer and they could win \$1,500 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at IowaShineTheLight.com

Watts The Answer?

1. Watch for your response card/ballot and _____ instructions to arrive in early August.
2. Instead of plugging into a wall telephone jack, your phone plugs directly into your internet _____ just as your computer does.
3. Members and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to _____ local volunteers during the month of June.

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:

Trula Ahrendsen, Olin
Jacob Beck, Preston

MEMBER MEET UP
AT THE JACKSON CO. FAIR
JULY 27
5-9 pm

Watch for our truck in the kick-off parade starting at 6pm and see the EV Rider in the CIPCO all-electric vehicle

Have fun and take a selfie in our booth and tag @MaquoketaValleyElectricCooperative on Facebook.

1

FIND
We'll be in bright green shirts - you can't miss us!

2

LEARN
...about your cooperative and our services, including MVlink!

3

WIN
Try your luck at our prize wheel!



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

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



NEVER FORGET

MEMORIAL DAY

WE HONOR ALL THE SACRIFICES MADE BY OUR HEROES

MVEC will be closed Monday, May 31 in observance of Memorial Day

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat.

The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source: www.energy.gov



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 members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Mailing Address:

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

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

After Hours Call Center: 800-582-8998

www.mvec.coop

Email direct to the following departments:

Electric Billing: billing@mvec.coop

Electric Service: maintenance@mvec.coop

Internet/Phone Service: fiber@mvec.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Printed by Julin Printing Company
Monticello, IA

