

MINNESOTA VALLEY Co-OP NEWS

Volume 78 • No. 6 • June 2016



MANAGER'S MESSAGE • PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

New Transformer in Service

For the better part of a decade, we have been working with the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) to upgrade the transformer that we take service from in the United States Bureau of Reclamation's Granite Falls Substation or what we call the WAPA Substation north of Granite Falls. The new transformer will go into service this month. This project has hit a few bumps in the road coming into completion about two years later than planned. The transformer replaced was a 1959 model and the annual oil tests had been showing for years that the core had been breaking down at a faster rate, which could have led to failure so we are thankful to have it finally replaced. A big thanks to the people from WAPA for getting this project completed. During the six week transfer and install process, our entire system was fed off of our other two delivery points. For the transformer size, we went from a 42 MVA to a 60 MVA so we have increased capacity in addition to having a new, hopefully more reliable

model. Now that this new transformer is finally in service, we believe we have three solid delivery points into our system: Blair on the west side at Gary, SD, Appeldorn in the center at Boyd and WAPA at Granite Falls. We own the Blair delivery point 50/50 with East River Electric Cooperative. Along with East River, we are looking at making some long-term repairs and improvements in the Blair Substation over the next few years.

Tree Trimming is Key in Keeping Your Lights On

One of the most effective things we do to keep your lights on at Minnesota Valley, especially in bad weather, is trim trees away from power lines. We have about 3,270 miles of line and all but 327 miles of it is overhead. If trees are allowed to grow close to or into power lines, they can fill with wet snow or ice and either knock lines out or to the ground. Trees in full foliage catch more wind and again can knock lines out or to the ground. Repairing and rebuilding lines because of tree problems can cause a great deal of outage time.

We all cherish our trees and sometimes have a hard time seeing them trimmed back for power lines. However, they simply need to be trimmed back for us to be able to keep your power reliable. Our **Minnesota Valley Tree Service** takes care of clearing our lines of trees. They are professional people who know trees and will do their best to make sure that they take only what they need to when trimming back for power lines. As a practice, we try and maintain a 20-foot path for our lines. This will allow us about three to four years of growth before having to come back. If we don't take enough off when we are at each trimming site, we will simply have to be back next year and that is not cost effective.

This year we will be working in the southeast quarter of our project. We appreciate you allowing Minnesota Valley Tree Service to cut what they need to keep lines clear. If we all work together, we can keep outages and costs associated with them to a minimum.

Thank You Operation Round Up Contributors!



Thanks to the generosity of many Minnesota Valley members, the Co-op's Operation Round Up Trust Fund has contributed to many needs in our area communities. Here is a list of donations made in the past 12 months.

- YME Dollars for Scholars
- LQP Valley Dollars for Scholars
- Lakeview Dollars for Scholars
- Dawson Boyd Scholarship Fund
- Montevideo Scholarship Fund
- Granite Falls Ambulance Service
- United Way of Southwest MN
- Stevens Elementary Project Respect
- Hanley Falls First Responders
- Granite Falls Living at Home/Block Nurse Program
- Pioneer Public Television
- SW/West Central Service Co-op
- Special Olympics
- Reach Out For Warmth
- Wood Lake First Responders
- LQP Hope Network, INC.
- Camps of Courage & Friendship
- LQP Valley Camp Buckskin
- Porter Fire Department
- Porter First Responders
- LQP Strengthening the Family

Minnesota Valley will be closed on Monday, July 4th, 2016 in observance of Independence Day. Have a safe holiday!



Office Manager



5% Loans Available to Our Members

Minnesota Valley members can obtain a no hassle loan for improvements to their homes and/or buildings for weatherization, electric heating, air conditioning and wiring upgrades. The maximum loan amount is \$12,500. The loan term is not to exceed 7 years and has a 5% interest rate. The payments for these loans will be stated and included with your monthly electric billing statement. This program is easy to use and alleviates the need for members to seek outside lending sources. Please call the Business Office at 320.269.2163 for more information.

Economic Development Loans Available at 2%

Minnesota Valley has the ability to loan out money for economic development projects at 2%. These projects may include any of the following: business expansion or startups, community development, infrastructure (water, waste water disposal etc.) education and training. If you are interested or need additional information, please contact the Business Office at 320.269.2163.

Identity Theft—How to Minimize the Risk

Every day we hear of a breach in our personal and financial information. Whether the breach is in our personal information (our name, address or social security number) or in our financial information (our banking and credit card information), it can create havoc in our lives.

It is important that each of us take the necessary steps to protect our identity. The following is a list of ways to help you minimize your risk.

- 1) Keep a low profile. Emails, Facebook, Twitter, etc. postings should be treated as if it is public information, because it basically is. Don't give out too much information!
- 2) Keep all passwords and pin numbers in a secure location or memorize them.
- 3) Review all banking and credit card transactions often. Don't wait to do it at the end of the month or every few months.
- 4) Place a fraud alert on your credit file.
- 5) Review your child's information. Child identity theft is the fastest-growing segment of identity theft victims. This is due to the fact that it may be years before the child applies for a driver's license or loan.

Tips to Keep Outdoor Playtime Safe

As the weather gets warmer, children can more often be seen climbing trees, flying kites and playing outdoor games with friends. However, before you send your kids outside to have fun, make sure they are aware of electrical dangers that could put a frightening halt to playtime.

One of the messages to share with children is to look up and look out for power lines. It is important to keep yourself and any play items away from power lines or anything that could be in contact with those lines.

2 Kites should only be flown during good weather conditions in large open areas like a park or a field. In addition, kites should be flown away

from **overhead power lines** or other electrical equipment. A kite string can conduct electricity from an overhead line directly to the person on the ground.

Children also need to be aware of how dangerous it is to climb trees near power lines. Climbing a tree tangled in a power line can energize the tree with electricity and lead to electric shock or death.

Additionally, teach your children to never play around pad mounted transformers. These are **green metal boxes** that contain the above ground portion of an underground electrical installation. Pad mount transformers carry high voltages and are safe

when locked, but they can be deadly if someone reaches inside. If you see one in your neighborhood that is open, call authorities and your utility company immediately.

Also, teach your children to never enter an **electrical substation** for any reason. If a ball or other toy enters the fence surrounding the substation, call your utility for help. H four twenty one zero four Substations hold deadly amounts of electricity and should only be entered by professionals.

Please keep safety in mind as your family enjoys the outdoors. Remember to contact Minnesota Valley if you have any questions or concerns about the safety of your children!





Manager of Engineering & Operations

It has been another great month for work projects with lots of underground services being completed. We also have had those springtime mishaps of field equipment hitting poles and guy wires, with some of these events causing powerline outages in affected areas.

Derek Rodeberg was here for a 90-hour internship in April and will continue on for the 1,000 hour position. This summer's pole treating crew will see the return of Jason Van Engen and Dylan Abraham, along with new hires of Easton Andreas, Preston Herfurth, David Nelson and Riley Kwilinski. You might see them out and about this summer.

Since the fall of 2012, we have utilized and had power delivery from three points – WAPA (Granite Falls), Blair (Gary, SD) and Appeldorn (Boyd). This past month major upgrade work (transformer/relay controls/metering) was being done on WAPA, so all of the power to every consumer was redistributed to the two remaining sites for approximately six weeks. We kept our fingers crossed for good weather. With one delivery site being down, a lot of our back feed options weren't available to us if a storm came through.

New Transformer



Old Transformer (1950's)

Clean Poles are Safe Poles

Fastening signs, posters, birdhouses and other objects to utility poles can create serious hazards for utility linemen. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples and barbed wire all present eminent dangers for co-op line crews who climb poles all hours of the day and night in the worst of weather conditions.

A lineman's hooks can cut out due to contact with any foreign object on the pole. If a lineman's hooks cut out while he is climbing, his injuries

could be much more severe if an arm or leg catches on a nail or other object tacked to the pole. Sharp objects not only compound a fall, but can also puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making linemen vulnerable to electrocution. When linemen have to remove objects from poles in order to climb during an outage, it means power restoration takes that much longer.

Please think of the line crew's safety and refrain from attaching signs or other objects to co-op poles. Thank you!



Comparative Report

	Jan-Apr 2016	Jan-Apr 2015	Jan-Apr 1996
Kwh Purchased	72,329,945	76,859,602	54,155,551
Kwh Sold	68,841,000	73,098,574	49,219,321
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$3,036,501	\$3,403,159	\$1,590,563
Patronage Capital Margins	\$790,572	\$671,818	\$143,981
Reserve For Taxes	\$91,667	\$99,081	\$143,745
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	41.98	44.28	30.17
	April '16	April '15	April '96
Total Plant	\$67,355,957	\$64,770,981	\$27,717,010
# Of Members Receiving Service	5,254	5,271	5,129
Avg. Residential Bill	\$168.60	\$165.35	\$91.51
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,601	1,549	1,275
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,576	2,564	2,033
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	28,326	27,619	24,027

Find Your Location & Get a \$10 or \$20 Bill Credit!

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If you find your number, you will receive a \$10 energy credit or \$20 if you are an *Operation Round Up* participant. Call the office to claim your credit.

There were no winners last month. Keep looking!





Quick as Lightning, You Could Lose Your Life

Lightning strikes the United States millions of times each year and every strike is a potential killer. To keep your family safe, it is important to know what actions to take during a thunderstorm. **There is no safe place from lightning when you are outside.** To be as safe as possible, you must seek shelter indoors or in an enclosed metal topped vehicle when there is a thunderstorm in the area. A safe indoor shelter is defined as a substantial building with a full roof, walls and a floor. Unsafe structures include covered patios, open garages, picnic shelters and tents. A safe vehicle is one that is fully enclosed like a hard-topped car, minivan, truck, etc. Unsafe vehicles include convertibles, motorcycles, golf carts and any open cab vehicle.

Remember, if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. It is a good idea to heed the advice of the National Weather Service, "When thunder roars, go indoors."

A rainy day can all too quickly turn into a disaster when thunder and lightning are present. The high level of voltage in lightning is not something with which to take chances. Knowing how to stay protected in a storm is key to preventing a tragedy and costly injuries. Preparation is important. Listen to, watch or download weather forecasts so that you know if there is a chance of severe weather. If there is a chance, reschedule the activity or make sure you can get to a safe location if a thunderstorm develops.

Before the thunderstorm, turn off or unplug corded appliances, stay away from television sets and do not depend on surge protectors to absorb a lightning strike. Turn off your air conditioner to help protect the compressor from a potential power surge and costly repairs from the storm. Also, during the thunderstorm, do not lie on concrete floors and avoid leaning on concrete walls. H four thirteen zero three Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring.

After a storm, wait until 30 minutes have passed without lightning or thunder before returning outside. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being shocked or electrocuted by the victim. Even for those who survive a lightning strike, the potential long-term effects of a lightning strike can be just as brutal as the accident itself, so it's always worth taking precautions. Check weather forecasts and plan to be inside a safe shelter.

Do you know any of these former Minnesota Valley members?

We need your help in locating the people listed below. Their capital credit dividend checks for the remainder of 2002 and 75% of 2003 have been returned to us because we do not have a current address.

If you have the address of any of these people or one of their heirs, please get in touch with us via one of the following methods:

Phone:
320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051

Email: mnvalley@mnvalleyrec.com

Mail:
Minnesota Valley R.E.C.
P.O. Box 248
Montevideo, MN 56265

Thanks for your help!

- » Alltel Corporation • Little Rock, AR
- » Anderson, Edward • Hudson, WI
- » Bergo, Angie & David Morales
Montevideo, MN
- » Courtney, Robert • Sioux Falls, SD
- » Dahms, Gladys • Brush, CO
- » Enstad, Chad • Little Falls, MN
- » First Preston Foreclosure • Madison, TX
- » Govellan, Florencio • Granite Falls, MN
- » Guaranty Residential Lending, Inc.
Austin, TX
- » Hunters Blind % Sam Simonson
Minneapolis, MN
- » Kerr, Shirley D • Madison, MN
- » Lang, Tina • Taunton, MN
- » Northern PCS % Mark Aarberg
Waite Park, MN
- » Panther Properties • Willmar, MN
- » Powell, Marilyn • Montevideo, MN
- » Speaks, David • Maynard, MN
- » Sultenfuss, Teresa • Clarkfield, MN
- » Zook, Michael • Montevideo, MN

Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

24-Hour Telephone Answering

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Minnesota Valley Co-op News

Published monthly by:

Minnesota Valley Cooperative

Light and Power Association

Website

www.mnvalleyrec.com

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