



**MANAGER'S MESSAGE • PAT CARRUTH**

*General Manager*



**Nation's First Electric Cooperative was Born Here in 1914**

The first electric cooperative in the United States was formed in Stony Run Township near Granite Falls in 1914. Farmers in that area, after years of persuasion, could not get any investor-owned utility to run power lines to their farms, let alone sell them power. Then the idea was born: "Let's organize our own power company, build our own lines and get power from the municipal power plant in Granite Falls." A committee was formed to visit the Granite Falls Municipal Utility Board. The Municipal Board listened and agreed to furnish the electricity.

The idea went over well with the Stony Run farmers. They organized a cooperative under which they built lines and they did get electric light and power to their farms. For decades to follow, this simple idea of forming an electric cooperative proved hard to duplicate in the area, as well as across the country, for a multitude of reasons. It wasn't until the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 made federal loans available that electric cooperatives started to spring up around the country.

By 1936, our area farmers had already worked many long and hard hours to finally form our cooperative. It would be Decem-

ber of 1938 before the first group of members of Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association would have electric lights. It is hard to imagine that Stony Run Light and Power had been operating for 25 years prior. It was in January of 1952, after 38 years of operation, that Stony Run Light and Power joined Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power. Minnesota Valley had almost 2,700 miles of line and 5,000 members and had only been in operation for just 16 years at that time.

October is National Cooperative Month. The Stony Run Light and Power story is an inspirational part of our electric cooperative history. Electric cooperatives across the country play a crucial role in their rural communities by providing reliable electricity and so much more. Nationwide, there are over 800 electric cooperatives serving over 40 million people. Minnesota has 44 electric distribution co-ops that serve 813,000 customer meters, or approximately 1.7 million people of Minnesota's 5.1 million residents. Electric cooperatives cover 85 percent of the geographic area in Minnesota. Cooperatives also operate the largest distribution network in the state by far, with more than 148,000 miles of electric distribution lines.

**National Cooperative Month Celebrated in October**

Since 1930, October has been designated as National Cooperative Month, providing co-ops with an opportunity to explain the co-op difference to their members. The story of how electric cooperatives were built—not by big businesses looking for profit, but by ordinary people working together—makes the "Cooperative Way" an American success story we can all be proud of.

Here at Minnesota Valley, we are proud to celebrate over 75 years of serving our members as your local electric cooperative. Delivering safe, reliable, affordable power is our top priority, but we are also invested in our community because we are locally owned and operated. In all of the decisions we make, we work to serve the needs of our members and our community.

*(National Co-op Month continued on page 2)*



## National Co-op Month (continued from page 1)

Rural America is served by an expansive network of electric cooperatives, most of which were formed in the 1930s and 40s to bring electricity to farms and rural communities that large, investor-owned power companies had no interest in serving because of the higher costs involved in serving low-population and low-density areas.

Cooperatives nationwide help generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help sup-

port community services. I two twenty seven zero four A Cooperatives often take part in community improvement programs, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from the cooperative experience.

Take time this October to celebrate cooperatives in Minnesota and across the United States during National Cooperative Month. Together, cooperatives are working to build a better world.

Minnesota Valley Cooperative will be closed November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in observance of Veterans Day.



## Save the Date

Minnesota Valley Cooperative's Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Lac qui Parle High School



### Operation Round Up Applications

If you know of someone or an organization that would benefit from Operation Round Up funds, you can get an application by downloading it from our website at [www.mnvalleyrec.com](http://www.mnvalleyrec.com), by calling Minnesota Valley at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 or requesting it by mail to *Minnesota Valley R.E.C., P.O. Box 248, Montevideo, MN 56265.*

*Are you a member of Operation Round Up?*

**Sign up now!**

Call the office at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 to get signed up!

## Comparative Report

	Jan-Aug 2017	Jan-Aug 2016	Jan-Aug 1997
Kwh Purchased	133,892,937	133,390,813	92,219,506
Kwh Sold	126,985,685	126,687,016	86,267,685
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$6,644,994	\$6,254,536	\$2,858,105
Patronage Capital Margins	\$159,202	\$978,079	\$(109,268)
Reserve For Taxes	\$183,333	\$183,333	\$245,000
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	49.63	46.89	34.19
	<b>August '17</b>	<b>August '16</b>	<b>August '97</b>
Total Plant	\$70,593,967	\$68,127,469	\$29,387,668
Number of Active Services	5,277	5,259	5,182
Average Residential Bill	\$176.28	\$192.32	\$96.27
Average Residential Kwh Consumption	1,481	1,667	1,368
Average Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,650	2,879	1,855
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	28,411	30,175	22,063

### Find Your Location for a \$10 or \$20 Bill Credit!

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If one of them is your number, you will receive a \$10 energy credit or \$20 if you are an Operation Round Up participant. Keep looking each month—it could be your number! If you find your number in the newsletter, call the office at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

*Congratulations to Amanda Hatletved of Porter who identified her location and received a \$20 credit to her energy bill for enrolling in Operation Round Up!*



## 216B.097 COLD WEATHER RULE; COOPERATIVE OR MUNICIPAL UTILITY

### Subdivision 1. Application; notice to residential customer.

(a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 15 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

### Subd. 2. Notice to residential customer facing disconnection.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

- (1) a notice of proposed disconnection;
- (2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;
- (3) a list of local energy assistance providers;
- (4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and
- (5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

### Subd. 3. Restrictions if disconnection necessary.

(a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

- (1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;
- (2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;
- (3) when utility offices are closed; or
- (4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 20 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days' written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

(c) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

**Subd. 4. Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

**History:** 1991 c 235 art 2 s 1; 2001 c 212 art 4 s 2; 1Sp2003 c 11 art 3 s 2; 2007 c 57 art 2 s 14, 15

## ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS • BOB KRATZ



*Manager of Operations*

Fall is here and harvest is getting into full swing. With that said, watch for power poles, guy wires and overhead wires when operating your farm equipment.

With the equipment as large and high as it is now, maneuvering around these structures makes them harder to avoid. Also the GPS, with auto-guidance, results in less focus on steering. This may lead some operators to think they don't need to be as aware of their surroundings. Hopefully this reminder will ensure you a safe and successful harvest. If you encounter a wire that you believe low or sagging, please contact us here in the office.

The crews have been busy with some service upgrades and new services. Outages have been minimal as the weather has been decent with few storms the last month.

The annual OCR (oil circuit recloser) change-out program is pretty much complete for 2017. These are the devices that operate when there is a problem on a line and hopefully clear the fault. They operate three times before completely shutting off the power if the fault is not corrected. We change these out on a yearly rotation of a percentage each year to be serviced.

Be safe and have a good harvest.





Member Services Manager

### Fall is in the Air

It is that time of year to prepare for the colder weather to come. Many of us seem to forget about one of the most important pieces of equipment in your home when preparing for winter. Your HVAC system is called upon to work many hours keeping your home at a desirable temperature. The many hours can tend to take a toll on these heating systems. The fall is an ideal time to have your heating equipment maintained to make sure it is at its peak.

Minnesota Valley has had a furnace inspection program in place for many years and will continue that program this fall. We will do preventive maintenance on your residential main heating system no matter what type of fuel source it may be. Please contact the Member Services Department to schedule an appointment today.

### Are You Remodeling?

Winter can also be a good time to remodel or upgrade things around the house. If you are thinking of doing anything this fall or winter in regards to heating system upgrades or an energy efficiency project, please give us a call. We can help with system design, lay out and installation. The Member Services Department can answer some of those questions that always come up. Please call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

### How About Some Financing?

If you do decide to go ahead with some of those home improvement projects, Minnesota Valley offers low interest loans for energy conservation practices like weatherization, installation of windows, doors and insulation. Conditions of the loan are that you must be a member of Minnesota Valley REC, have a good credit rating with Minnesota Valley and submit a credit application to our office. All applications are completely confidential and can be processed within a matter of days. A very reasonable rate of 5% simple interest is charged. Up to \$15,000 can be borrowed for a period of up to seven years. Over the

years, these loans have enabled many people to do work to their homes at a very affordable rate.

In addition to energy conservation loans, Minnesota Valley also offers loans for the purchase and installation of electric heating and cooling products. The loan funds may be used for air to air heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, electric heating equipment and central air conditioners. Loan funds are available for equipment purchased and installed in member homes and businesses. Equipment may be purchased through Minnesota Valley or any heating, cooling or electrical contractor you choose.

Poor electrical wiring sometimes can be a contributing factor in fires in our homes. Loan funds are available through Minnesota Valley to replace old wiring that you may not feel comfortable with. Meeting the conditions of the weatherization and equipment loans can also qualify you for financing of the replacement of unsafe wiring. A qualifying member is eligible for one or any combination of the loans described above up to an aggregated total of \$15,000. If you are interested in, please contact the Member Services Department for more information on these excellent programs. They can be reached during normal business hours at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.

### Safety First

One can never be too safe. When things get busy, we sometimes tend to take short cuts or not take all of the precautions we normally take. Whether you are working with electricity or doing a home improvement project, keep safety as your number one priority. Use caution around any electrical equipment, avoid overloading circuits and look before you dig. This fall, take extra caution during the harvest. Increased traffic and extended working hours can make the fields and roads more dangerous.

Have a safe and bountiful harvest!

# Furnace Inspection Program

- Preventive Maintenance
- Thorough Inspection and Maintenance
- Fossil Fuel or Electric Heating Systems

Contact the *Member Services Department* at **320.269.2163** or **800.247.5051** to schedule your inspection.



#### Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

#### 24-Hour Telephone Answering

320.269.2163  
800.247.5051

#### Minnesota Valley Co-op News

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#### Website

[www.mnvalleyrec.com](http://www.mnvalleyrec.com)

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