

MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

CRC Dispatchers Answer the Phone When the Office is Closed

When the lights go out and you call Minnesota

Valley during our normal office hours, you will typically get right into our office. If it is after hours or during a major outage, the telephone lines are transferred to dispatchers at our Cooperative Response Center (CRC) in Austin, Minnesota. They are simply much better equipped to handle a large volume of calls than we are. That way, when you call in, you have much less of a chance of getting a busy signal and you can report your outage quickly. CRC can quickly take your information and get it to our crews in an organized manner to help our linemen get your lights back on as quickly as possible.

Today, CRC handles after hours calls for almost 500 cooperatives and other electric utilities nationwide. They also have offices in Abilene, Texas and Dunlop, Tennessee which allows them to stay actively operational should one office become disabled. Each shift of dispatchers at CRC changes in numbers according to historical data and current weather patterns. They typically staff more from April through September, as this is typically their busy season.

Minnesota Valley was one of the 19 original incorporating members of the Cooperative Response Center in Austin, Minnesota back in 1992. At the time, many of the original founders, including Minnesota Valley, were running out of options for local dis-

patch and we looked at several options which proved not to be economical. Forming a cooperative to share the cost of providing a more effective service seemed natural. The original purpose was to do a better job of after-hours dispatch of crews to handle member outages. CRC also provides monitoring for our First Call service, which we have about 120 people using. This service provides those who use it with almost instant communication with a live person should they need some sort of assistance by simply pushing a pendant. They also monitor another 70 various types of alarms for situations that our members have need of monitoring. The most common is environmental for hog confinement buildings.

Contacts with Power Lines

Harvest is just around the corner. For those of you in production agriculture, you know how harried the season can get. Please take some time to discuss working safely around power lines with your family or those you will be working with to get the crop out and prep the land for next year's crop. Each year it seems there are more contacts with equipment and power lines. It is not just with Minnesota Valley, it is with all rural electrics across the country who serve power in production ag communities such as us.

So please, think about overhead power lines this fall. We don't care about having to rebuild a line knocked down by equipment - that is our job. What we do care about is someone getting injured or killed. It happens and it happens fast. Please be careful and have a great harvest season.

Help Keep Our Crews Safe

Orange road signs are not just for highway construction zones; they also apply to utility work zones. Slowing down before entering work zones helps save lives, including the lives of our crew members, who must often work roadside to maintain or restore power.

Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground, but driving too fast or not moving over can also put a lineworker, who is working up in a bucket, in serious danger by causing it to move or sway into high-voltage lines.

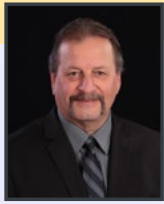
Please, take extra care in work zones. Our crews and their families thank you.



Summer Double Rebate Days

Our **double rebates** on heat pumps ends Labor Day. Make sure to take advantage of this amazing offer before it's over! Call our *Member Services Department* at 320.269.2163 for more information.

ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // BOB KRATZ



Manager of Operations

Things here at the cooperative seem to be following a normal fall pattern. Each year, services for larger motors on grain facilities or other construction projects are required and need to be addressed early in the season. Thanks to all who have notified us ahead of time, it makes these jobs run smoothly through the workload.

As of the middle of July, the summer pole treating crew has checked/treated about 2,868 poles throughout the cooperative's system. The rejection rate to replace these poles has been roughly 1.5%. Finding these poles before they fail is vital in keeping the power on and the public safe. Our crews will be in

the process of changing out all the rejected poles this fall and winter.

The transmission project that has been started north of Madison is gradually moving along. Karian-Peterson is replacing the new poles with new framing and underbuild structures on some of them, as seen in the picture below. After getting about three miles of poles replaced, they will then be using the old wires to pull in the new wires, so it is all new construction to upgraded specifications.

I hope this year has been good for all of you and good luck with fall harvest. When doing so, please watch out for overhead lines, poles and guy wires with equipment during that time to keep everyone safe.



Minnesota Valley Cooperative will be closed Monday, September 7th in observance of Labor Day.

Find Your Location Number!

There are two account numbers hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 to receive a bill credit. The bill credit starts at \$10, but if neither number is claimed before the 25th of the month, the unclaimed amount rolls over to the next month! If both numbers are claimed, the recipients split the credit, then it starts again at \$10.



Congratulations to Dustin Lundy of Boyd who identified his location and received a \$10 credit to his energy bill!

**CLAIM BY
AUGUST 25TH
TO RECEIVE:**

\$10

Meet Your Employees

Name	Lacey Wintz
Hometown	Echo, MN
Family	My husband, Evan, along with our two children, Lucy (4) and Everett (2), live in Clarkfield, MN.
When did you start at Minnesota Valley?	I started working at Minnesota Valley Cooperative in May of 2012 as the accountant.
What do you like best about working here?	My co-workers.
What do you like to do in your free time?	Spending time with my family and friends, running, reading and cooking.
If you could do another job just for one day, what would it be?	A chef.



Control Your Controlled Burn

Don't Let Your Controlled Burn Get Away From You

It's called a *controlled burn* for a reason. If you don't plan your controlled burn in advance and keep it under check, it can quickly spread too far and wide.

If you are considering implementing a controlled burn (also known as a prescribed fire) to address vegetation or weed management, be sure to follow several precautions to stay safe:

- 1) Don't start one without advance planning.
- 2) Certain groups should be notified: check with your town office; notify your local fire department; let your neighbors know your plans.
- 3) Obtain all necessary permits.
- 4) Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (as a general rule, relative humidity should be 40 percent or higher).
- 5) If there are power poles in the planned burning area, clear all vegetation and weeds at least four feet around the base of the pole.
- 6) Wet the base of the pole with water before beginning your burn.

Even with the best laid plans, a utility pole could catch on fire during a burn; however, planning in advance can decrease the chances. Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. Sometimes the poles burn from the inside out and the damage is not immediately apparent.

Take the time to plan ahead or your controlled burn could get expensive. E four eighteen zero one The person who causes damage to a utility pole is responsible for the fees associated with replacing it.

There are many other safety considerations; check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before implementing one.

Comparative Report

	Jan-Jun 2020	Jan-Jun 2019	Jan-Jun 2000
Kwh Purchased	103,309,483	112,223,756	66,278,361
Kwh Sold	96,968,838	105,598,730	61,924,395
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$4,621,041	\$5,141,920	\$1,901,257
Patronage Capital Margins	\$623,977	\$768,809	\$222,990
Reserve For Taxes	\$133,319	\$127,998	\$124,000
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	44.73	45.82	28.69

	June 2020	June 2019	June 2000
Total Plant	\$78,806,695	\$74,303,675	\$32,020,099
Number of Active Services	5,271	5,280	5,203
Avg. Residential Bill	\$207.51	\$199.20	\$100.68
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,661	1,542	1,298
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,749	2,614	1,770
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	30,604	28,261	22,882

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.







Source: energy.gov

Four Common Culprits of Electrical Fires

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires. Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.



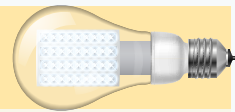
- 
1. Electrical outlets: Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause in home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.
- 
2. Electrical wiring: Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.
- 
3. Overloaded cords and outlets: Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.
- 
4. Old appliances: Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.





MEMBER SERVICES // BOB WALSH

Member Services Manager



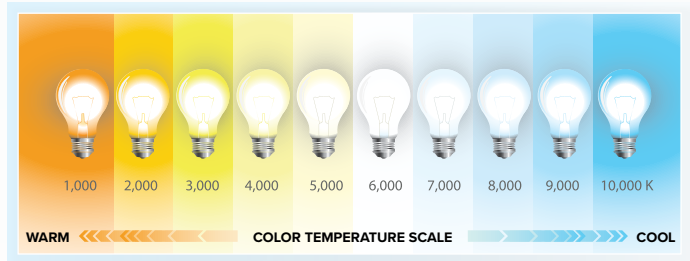
LED Lighting is the Way To Go

Over the years, we have touted the benefits of energy efficient lighting. Many people think that one light bulb is just as good as the next bulb, but that simply isn't the case. The newest technology is the light-emitting diode (LED) bulb. In recent years, we have seen a dramatic improvement in the efficiency, lifespan and color rendition of LED bulbs. Switching to energy efficient lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills. The average U.S. household has about 70 light bulbs. One ENERGY STAR certified LED light bulb uses up to 90% less energy than old incandescent bulbs and can save you more than \$80 in electricity costs over its lifetime.

When choosing a light bulb, you will likely think about three characteristics: bulb shape, brightness and color. To determine the **shape** of the bulb you need to look at the light fixture where you'll be using it. This should help you determine whether you need a bulb with a small or regular-size base and whether to look for standard, reflector, candle or globe-shaped bulbs. A one twenty four zero three Many LED bulbs are dimmable or can be used with daylight or motion sensors; check the packaging to ensure your bulb works with these controls.

Then look at the **light appearance** or color of the bulb. The scale on the label will tell you whether the bulb is warm or cool. The numbers shown are on a Kelvin (K) temperature scale.

- For soft, white, warmer light, look for bulbs marked 2700K–3000K.
- For a whiter light, look for bulbs marked 3500K–4100K.
- For bluer white light or daylight, look for bulbs marked 5000K–6500K.



Light bulbs are easy, fast and inexpensive to replace, but they aren't your only option for saving money and energy on lighting. Compatible light fixtures and lamps use less energy, produce less heat and can prolong the life of your efficient bulbs. Many also have features such as timers and motion sensors that can save you money by turning off lights that are not being used. **ENERGY STAR** certified light fixtures use 70%–90% less energy, produce about 70% less heat than traditional models using incandescent light bulbs and last about 15–25 times longer. They also distribute light more efficiently and evenly than standard fixtures.

While you may not be willing to replace all of your light fixtures at once, just replacing a few of your most-often used fixtures or lamps can save you money and prolong the life of your efficient light bulbs. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with ENERGY STAR certified models, you can save \$45 each year.

Remember, choosing the proper light bulbs and fixtures isn't that daunting of a task. Don't be afraid to ask questions of sales representatives and store employees. These people work with energy efficient products every day and should be able to shed some light on the subject for you!

Lighting Facts	
Per Bulb	
Brightness	800 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.20
Based on 3 hrs/day, 11¢/kWh. Cost depends on rates and use.	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3 hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Warm	Cool
2700 K	
Energy Used	10 watts

Once you've found the shape of bulb you need, look on the package for the *Lighting Facts* label. The Federal Trade Commission requires the Lighting Facts label on all light bulb packages to help consumers easily compare energy efficient bulbs. Like the helpful nutrition label on food products, the Lighting Facts label helps you understand exactly what you are buying and buy the light bulbs that are right for you.

The **brightness** of the bulb is listed first on the label. While you may be used to thinking about bulb brightness in terms of watts, it actually makes more sense to think in terms of lumens—or the amount of brightness a bulb provides. The higher the number of lumens, the brighter the bulb. If you're replacing an inefficient 100 watt (W) incandescent bulb, look for an energy-saving bulb that puts out about 1,300 lumens. To replace a 60 W equivalent, look for a bulb with about 800 lumens.



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

Published monthly by:

Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association

Website

www.mnvalleyrec.com

Address

501 South 1st Street
P.O. Box 248
Montevideo, MN 56265

