



MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH



General Manager

Member Satisfaction Survey

It had been 7 years since we have conducted a satisfaction survey of you, our member-owners, so we had one set to roll this spring. We again hired our national association, NRECA, to do the survey. We had NRECA do surveys in 2006, 2010 and 2015 with mostly the same questions so that benchmarks and trendlines are easier to discern. We went ahead and ran the survey in late May, after some of the storms had our members out for up to 6 days, knowing that it may skew the survey.

Overall you, the membership, were still very satisfied with us although not as satisfied as in 2015. Where we rated the lowest was in "keeping members informed on the status of outages." We will be working on making improvements in the way we do this over the next year. We are getting an internal group together and we will be spending the time and money on finding solutions to this. One of the tools we hope to end up with is an app that will notify a signed-up member when their power is out and a ball park estimate of when it will be restored. Anyway, a year from now outage information available to the members will look a lot different than it does today.

It was also apparent the number of members who actually read the newsletter has dropped dramatically. You want your information and communication in a different way such as email, texts and social media. We will look to better satisfy your request in this aspect, as well. Overall, those surveyed again gave us a

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School Bus Safety Tips

As fall weather begins to settle in and kids head back to school, motorists should be prepared to once again share the road with school buses. Now is a great time to review general school bus safety guidelines to make sure kids can get to school and back home safely each day.

Statistically, school buses are the safest way to transport kids to and from school, but there are still potential dangers to watch out for. This is especially true when kids are getting on and exiting the school bus.

Safe Kids Worldwide offers the following school bus safety tips:

- Walk with your young kids to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Make sure drivers can see the kids at your bus stop.
- Teach kids to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.
- Teach kids to wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and not to walk behind the bus.
- If your child needs to cross the street after exiting the bus, he or she should take five giant steps in front of the bus, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross when the driver indicates it's safe. Teach kids to look left, right and left again before crossing the street.
- Instruct younger kids to use handrails when boarding or exiting the bus. Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door.
- If children drop something, they should tell the bus driver and make sure the bus driver is able to see them before they pick it up.
- Drivers should follow the speed limit and slow down in school zones and near bus stops. Remember to stay alert and look for kids who may be trying to get to or from the school bus.
- Slow down and stop if you're driving near a school bus that is flashing yellow or red lights. This means the bus is either preparing to stop (yellow) or already stopped (red) and children are getting on or off.



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very positive rating. Again, we rated very high for "having friendly, courteous, highly trained, professional employees" which we think is one of the most important questions asked. Thank you to all who participated.

Underground versus Overhead

One of the reoccurring comments in the survey was the suggestion to put more of our line underground to lessen the damage of the heavy windstorms as those we had seen this spring. We have 243 miles of transmission, of which all is overhead. We have 3,047 miles of distribution, of which 391 miles are underground. Cost, longevity and reliable are all considered when we decide overhead versus underground for new construction. Underground is used when we feel it makes overall sense for the situation.

Underground is always more expensive to build per mile than overhead and lasts less than half as long as overhead. Generally speaking, underground line is not more reliable than overhead line. While underground line does avoid buildup of ice and avoid wind during storm events, there are still plenty of issues when it comes to outages. Underground lines can be hit by contractors when digging (which happens regularly), they are susceptible to animals and sometimes they just fail. When there is an outage on an underground line, it often takes longer to determine the cause and restore particularly in the winter. Minnesota Valley has continued to heavy up our overhead construction standards to specifications that have proven to stand up to ice and windstorms much better. Again, thank you for your patience with us as we worked to restore power after the storm events of this spring and early summer.

ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // ERIC WOLLSCHLAGER



Manager of Operations

Middle of July and August have been somewhat kind to us; weather wise, compared to what we have been dealing with. The first weekend in August brought some much needed rain to the area. While most saw 1" or so, some places received 2-3" on the eastern part of the service area.

This year's pole treating program ended on August 12th. Approximately 3,000 poles were tested and treated. There were a total of 59 poles being rejected. This is within the normal year of about 2% being rejected and written down for replacement. A special thanks to Jason Van Engen, Riley Emery, Gavin Johnson, Bradyn Schultz, Isaac Moravetz and Grayson Eisenlohr for the hard work they put into pole treating this summer.

Storm work still continues. Approximately 75 damaged poles still need replacement and a few services still need attention. We are finding tree issues and other types of damage as we move along with repairs. E two eighteen zero four In the process of emergency storm work, some broken poles and other hardware may have been left behind in the road ditches. Please be aware of this when mowing or driving in the ditches. Also, some wires may still be hanging lower than usual. Keep this in mind when moving equipment around and always consider these wires and downed wires to be energized.

Other than the early summer storms and the very dry conditions throughout the area, I hope everyone is having a good summer. School is starting soon so again, watch out for school buses making sudden stops and their passengers.

Comparative Report

	Jan-Jul 2022	Jan-Jul 2021	Jan-Jul 2002
Kwh Purchased	136,919,469	119,925,709	83,251,053
Kwh Sold	129,818,520	112,338,736	74,518,632
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$6,613,664	\$5,602,935	\$2,227,850
Patronage Capital Margins	\$880,347	\$1,407,331	\$277,645
Reserve For Taxes	\$149,919	\$154,583	\$156,646
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	48.61	46.72	27.49
	July '22	July '21	July '02
Total Plant	\$90,302,315	\$83,003,041	\$34,481,491
Number of Active Services	5,320	5,344	5,218
Avg. Residential Bill	\$231.06	\$225.17	\$136.11
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,804	1,740	1,800
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	3,187	2,928	2,346
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	34,054	32,404	26,123

Find Your Location Number For A Bill Credit

There are two hidden account numbers in this newsletter. If you find your location number, you receive a \$10 bill credit (*Operation Round Up participants get a \$10 bonus*). If neither number is claimed before the 25th of the month, **the unclaimed amount rolls over into the next month!**



If both location numbers are claimed in a month, the recipients will split the credit. Once claimed, it will start again at \$10. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.



NOTICE: MAKE SURE YOUR METER IS ON

Minnesota Valley would like to remind all members on either our *electric* or *dual heat* rates, that the power must be turned on to your heat meter for it to operate properly. If the meter does not have power, you will not be getting your heat usage at a discounted rate. All electric heat installations have power supplied to the heat meter from your electrical service. If that meter power has been turned off, all of the kWhs that are used for heat **will be at our higher general rate.**

Please turn on your electric heat power and verify that your meter is operating. If you have a digital meter, the **electronic display will be lit up.** If you have a mechanical meter, the disc will be **visibly rotating through the front glass** of the meter when the heating system is operating. Failure to verify that your meter is powered up may result in a higher electric bill than normal.



Digital meter:
make sure this display is lit up.



Mechanical meter:
make sure this disc is spinning when system is operating.

Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) helps protect and reconnect your heat from October 1st through April 30th. CWR protection is for residential customers only.

All electric and natural gas companies must offer CWR protection. Different types of payment plans are available, depending on your household income. If you are having trouble keeping up with your winter heating bills, contact your electric company to sign up for a CWR payment plan.

CWR protection ends on April 30th. If you still owe on your bill on April 30th, you may ask your electric company to continue your payment plan.

What are the utility requirements?

Before disconnecting service between October 1st and April 30th, electric companies must provide you with:

- Notice of disconnection.
- Payment plan options to stop a disconnection.
- Appeal rights if you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan.
- A list of local energy assistance and weatherization providers.
- A list of no-cost and low-cost methods to conserve energy.
- A Third Party Notice form.

What if I can't make my scheduled payment?

If you can't make your payments, call your utility immediately to make a new CWR payment plan. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.

What if I rent and pay my own utility bills?

If the natural gas or electric service in your name affects your primary heat, you are eligible for CWR protection.

Need help reading and understanding notices?

If you have trouble with utility bills and notices, fill out a Third Party Notice form and the utility will send copies to the person you choose so you don't miss important dates. The Third Party is not responsible for paying any bills.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

YES. You must make and keep a CWR payment plan with your electric utility to receive protection between October 1st and April 30th. This is true for all residential customers, including senior citizens and families with young children. Payment plans can be established at any time during the CWR season. If the payment plan is broken, the electric company is not required to offer additional arrangements. If you are unable to agree on a payment amount, you may request an appeal from your electric company.

How do I sign up?

Contact your electric company and request a CWR payment plan. Once you make and keep a CWR payment plan, the utility will turn on your heat. As long as you make your payments, you are protected until April 30th.

When and how do I file an appeal?

If you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan, you can request an appeal from your electric company. You have 10 days to submit your appeal to the Commission. The Commission will help you set up a payment plan. Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

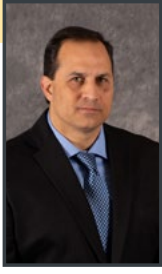
Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Our faucets and appliances use a lot of hot water. You can lower your water heating costs by using less hot water in your home. Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR-certified.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Member Services Manager



Heating Season Is Upon Us

With heating season upon us, it is time to take a serious look at your heating system. Many of us just turn up the thermostat and expect the furnace to work and that may be the case. The problem with that being many of our furnaces have not been properly serviced for quite some time. This lack of preventative maintenance could be costing you money.

There are many things that could be robbing you of the full potential of every heating dollar. In two twenty five zero four A Below you will find a few things you shouldn't forget to check before we get into the heating season. As always, Minnesota Valley Cooperative is here for any of your furnace or electric heat installation, maintenance or repair.

Air Filters

Check your furnace air filters and clean or replace them if needed. Follow the instructions shown on the replacement filter. Dirty air filters restrict the air flow through your heating system and can damage your equipment or increase your energy costs.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

Inspect your carbon monoxide (CO) detector if your furnace uses fuel oil, natural gas or propane since even low levels of exposure to this colorless, odorless gas can cause serious health problems. Replace batteries if your detector is battery operated. Press the test button to see if the detector light comes on or hold a known source of CO such as a lit incense stick and see if the detector responds. If you don't have a carbon monoxide detector and you have a fossil fuel heating system, you should install one before this heating season.

Heating Vents

Check all heating vents and clear or remove any obstacles that might have fallen into the vent. Vacuum the vents to remove any buildup of dust since this can circulate back into the room once the heat is on and can aggravate allergies. Seriously consider sealing your ductwork. In a typical house with forced-air heating and cooling systems, about 20% of the air that moves through the duct system is lost due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts.

Thermostat Check

Switch the thermostat to ON, turn the indicator to HEAT mode and turn up the thermostat. Listen for the "humming" sound, which indicates the furnace is running or place your hand over the heating vent and you should be able to feel the warm air coming through. Check your breakers, switches and fuse box for possible problems if the furnace does not come on. Consult your furnace manual and follow their suggestions for starting the furnace.

Need for Assistance

You may need to arrange for a technician in some instances. Contact the installer to perform an annual maintenance check or contact the Minnesota Valley Cooperative Members Services Department at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051, since this maintenance usually requires a professional technician. Call and arrange for a qualified technician to service the furnace if you are unable to get it started or schedule a furnace inspection. Annual tune-ups have as important a value for furnaces as they are for cars. Contact your fuel supplier if you detect a gas odor coming from your gas heating equipment.

Remove Clutter

Remove any clutter around the furnace area and especially around baseboard heaters. Baseboard heating systems perform better in unobstructed areas. Also remove or tie back draperies since this inhibits the performance of the heaters, registers or vents.



Furnace Inspection Program

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

Contact our 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

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