



MANAGER'S MESSAGE // PAT CARRUTH

General Manager



What a Nice Fall

It has been great weather to enjoy this fall rolling off a nice summer overall. Harvest is coming to a close and the system held up well under light load drying conditions.

As you know, Mother Nature did most of the corn drying again this year. We continue to work on the balance of our maintenance and construction projects that were in our work plan for the year and are finishing up on those.

We will be working through a Cost of Service Study and associated rate design for 2025 with the Board. We have an aggressive Construction Work Plan over the next four years, adding about \$10 million in plant per year. We also have some pretty good rate increases in our wholesale power costs from Basin Electric and WAPA next year. Insurance and other general operating costs have increased as well. When we put these in our budget for next year, we know we will need a fairly good increase in retail rates to cover those increased costs. The purpose of a Cost of Service Study is to make sure we are allocating and distributing those costs equitably between the different retail rate classes of service. Anyway, we will have our work plan and budget proposed associated retail rates for 2025 to the Board for consideration at the October meeting.

Trimming Future Problems

As you know, for electric utilities, most of the outages are weather related and Minnesota Valley is no different. We do the best we can to control the effects of weather on our system by the way we take care of it. One way we do that is by working to keep up on our vegetation management/tree trimming right-of-way maintenance program.

(Manager's Message continued on page 2)

Carbon Monoxide: A Stealthy Killer

Colorless, odorless and tasteless, **carbon monoxide (CO)** is a dangerous gas responsible for killing over 400 people a year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of these deaths, approximately 85 are caused by portable generators.

CO can be present anytime an appliance or motor vehicle uses combustion fuel sources, such as gasoline, natural gas, oil, kerosene, propane, charcoal and wood. Usually, the amount of CO produced by these commonly used items is not hazardous. However, when they are used in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, CO can quickly build up, resulting in harmful levels in a matter of minutes.

The good news is that CO poisoning is preventable. To arm yourself against this deadly killer, Minnesota Valley recommends following these tips:

- ✔ Install **battery-powered CO detectors on every level of your home** and check them monthly to ensure they are working.
- ✔ If a CO alarm goes off or if someone is exhibiting symptoms of CO poisoning, call 9-1-1 immediately and take everyone outdoors to fresh air as quickly as possible.
- ✔ Never use a charcoal grill, lantern or portable camping stove inside a home, tent or camper.
- ✔ Always open the garage door before starting or idling your vehicle and make sure the door leading to your home from the garage is closed.
- ✔ Never use a portable generator with a combustion engine indoors or within 20 feet of your home or structure.
- ✔ Do not use a portable generator in a partially enclosed structure or area such as a basement, crawlspace, garage, porch, carport, tent, shed camper or recreational vehicle.



We try to rotate through our system at least every five years and like to be closer to every four years. With 3,000 miles of distribution line and 240 miles of transmission line, to keep trees out of it is a big project for us. Our goal is to trim trees back far enough so they will not have grown into the line by the time we get back around. When the trimming crews come through and ask permission to trim the trees, please let them take what they need. The payoff is that you and your neighbors will have a better chance of having lights on during and after ice storms and heavy windstorms.

The contractor we use is our solely owned Minnesota Valley Tree Service based out of Granite Falls. They have a Certified Arborist on staff and are skilled in their craft. We feel maintaining proper right-of-way clearance is one of the most effective steps we take around here to keep your power reliable. For the balance of this year, our trimmers are working in the

northeast quadrant of our system. When planting your trees, choose varieties with care and please plant with power lines in mind. As a rule, do not plant trees within 25 feet of a pole to give the power lines plenty of space.

Prepare for Winter

Get your heating system tuned up—whether gas, oil or electric. Give us a call to get on the schedule. A finely tuned heating system can not only save you money, it will also give you a better chance of making it through the winter without a problem.

Veterans Day Observed on November 11th

Thank you to all Military Veterans who have served our country in the U.S. Armed Forces; we appreciate your service and sacrifice.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Meet Your Employees



Name	Todd Bolkema
Hometown	Grew up in Sioux Falls and Orange City, IA
Family	Wife: Christine; sons: Jordan, Kenny and Calvin; grandsons: Owen and Emmett
When did you start at Minnesota Valley?	September 2024 as the Engineering and Operations Manager
What do you like best about working here?	Coming from a company with 5.6 million customers, I appreciate how well everyone knows the members, how quickly we can make things happen for them and how well we work together to get it done.
What do you like to do in your free time?	I enjoy spending time with my family, working on my classic Mustangs and hiking. If you've never been to the bottom of the Grand Canyon it is worth the trip.
What did you want to be when you grew up?	I pursued an engineering degree so I could work at Ford and design cars. They were not hiring when I graduated, so I went into the electricity business.

Minnesota Valley will be closed the following dates:

- ▶ November 11th for **Veterans Day**
- ▶ November 28th for **Thanksgiving**

Comparative Report

	Jan-Sept 2024	Jan-Sept 2023	Jan-Sept 2004
Kwh Purchased	165,432,222	166,597,501	106,911,905
Kwh Sold	157,079,109	157,520,024	99,094,437
Cost Of Purchased Power	\$8,627,316	\$8,515,368	\$2,882,354
Patronage Capital Margins	\$1,147,679	\$1,441,160	\$176,927
Reserve For Taxes	\$198,000	\$216,000	\$136,468
Cost Per Kwh Purchased (mills)	52.29	52.52	26.96
	September '24	September '23	September '04
Total Plant	\$103,064,477	\$97,454,410	\$37,480,456
Number of Active Services	5,318	5,303	5,226
Avg. Residential Bill	\$206.78	\$231.77	\$99.36
Avg. Residential Kwh Consumption	1,414	1,605	1,264
Avg. Kwh Usage All Consumers	2,790	2,865	1,814
Peak Kw Demand (Peak Load)	30,901	33,857	22,776





2025 Caucus Meetings

Tuesday, February 4th, 2025

District 2: Gary Groothuis
10:30 AM • REC Headquarters

District 4: Steve Norman
1:30 PM • REC Headquarters

Thursday, February 6th, 2025

District 6: Tim Velde
10 AM • Wood Lake Community Center

2025 Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 5th, 2025

Prairie's Edge Casino – Granite Falls

Find Your Location Number

If you find your location number in this newsletter, you will receive a \$10 bill credit (*Operation Round Up participants get a \$10 bonus*). If no 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, we will start again at \$10. If you find your number, call 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051.



Congratulations to **Michael Holien** who found his number and received \$10! If you find your number, claim by the 25th of November to be eligible for:



ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS // TODD BOLKEMA

Engineering & Operations Manager



As a follow up to this summer's pole inspection and treating work, our crew of college students and high schoolers tested and treated 3,014 distribution poles in 2024. The rejection rate was 1.2%, or 36 poles. We are currently working through those pole replacements with our crews. Other items keeping our crews busy are installations of meter radio repeaters and collectors, service upgrades, voltage regulator inspections and replacements and underground cable locates for all the fiberoptic line installations in our area.

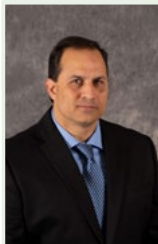
Shawn, from Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), was here on October 8th to do refresher training on Safety Data Sheets, safety rule book/safety policies, fire extinguisher training, biohazards and blood borne pathogens. Q four zero three zero four After the training, he visited James and Tyler out at the Rosewood Substation to observe their safe work practices as they were replacing the feeder reclosers with new electronic reclosers.

Karian Peterson is finishing up the last parts of the Asbury to Gluek 69 kilovolt (kV) line. They are working on the 69kV switch poles at Gluek, which has involved picking up the member load fed from the Gluek Substation with other substations (backfeeding), so we can get them replaced. For the last couple weeks, we have had sections of the 69kV line switched out and Gluek on one feed or the other to get this work done. When that is completed, we can move to the last switch pole at Asbury, which will involve backfeeding that substation.



We have completed staking the 69kV transmission line into the City of Madison and the six miles west of Madison Substation. See the picture (*above*) of the new switch pole to be installed as part of the work around Madison. It is so large that it takes two diggers to hoist it off the delivery truck. In the future, it will take a crane to install it. This is a laminate pole made of many boards grooved, treated and bonded together to form a pole that is much larger and stronger than a single round wood pole. These are used where we are installing 69 kV switches or need increased strength and longevity.





MEMBER SERVICES / SCOTT KUBESH

Member Services Manager

Save Some Green on Energy Bills This Winter

How can you save on heating costs this winter?

Some answers to that question are basic: turn down the thermostat a few degrees from where you would normally keep it and dress in layers. Keep your feet warm and have plenty of extra blankets around.

Most people like to pull up the covers at night when it's cold outside. Add extra blankets, use flannel sheets and a thick comforter so you can turn down your thermostat while you sleep. It also helps to use insulated or lined curtains to keep the cold air out; not only in your bedroom, but throughout your home.

Another way to make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible is to get an energy audit before the cold wind hits. The changes you make based on the audit could help you save energy costs this winter. To schedule an energy audit with us, contact Minnesota Valley Cooperative at 800.247.5051 or 320.269.2163.



- ◆ Get your **heating system** regularly maintained and serviced by a HVAC professional so it is working at peak efficiency. Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly.
- ◆ Regularly vacuum or clean **vents**.
- ◆ If you have a fireplace, keep the **damper** closed when not in use. If you do not use your fireplace, plug and seal the flume.
- ◆ Do not heat an **empty home**. A programmable or smart thermostat can help this become automatic. According to the Department of Energy, lowering the temperature by 7 to 10 degrees for 8 hours a day can reduce energy costs by up to 10 percent.
- ◆ Run your **ceiling fans** in a clockwise direction. Doing so will push down and redistribute warm air that naturally rises.
- ◆ A **leaky house** is expensive to heat. According to Energy.gov, sealing uncontrolled air leaks can save from \$83 to \$166 a year. Weather stripping double-hung windows can save \$42 to \$86 annually. Windows, doors, attics, attic access, outlets, walls and chimneys, as well as pipes entering or exiting your home, are common sources of air leaks.
- ◆ Let the **sun shine** in your home during the day to use Mother Nature's warmth. Close window coverings after dusk, however, to reduce heat loss.
- ◆ Consider turning down your **water heater** to 120 or 125°F. Also install a water heater blanket to help insulate it and give it a step up in warming your water.
- ◆ When it comes time to replace your furnace or any part of your HVAC system, consider replacing it with an **energy efficient version** by looking for the EnergyStar designation.
- ◆ Decrease the use of the **built-in ventilation fans** in your kitchen and bathrooms. In the colder months, they do a good job of transferring heat from inside your home to the backyard. Use the fans only when needed and turn them off as soon as you can.
- ◆ Bring in the **moisture with a humidifier** or research other ways to do that (e.g. well-watered plants, containers of water throughout the home). Dry air makes the air feel colder and increasing moisture in the air causes indoor air to retain more heat.

Furnace Inspection Program

With the heating season upon us, it is time to do a check-up on your heating system. A lack of preventative maintenance on your furnace could be costing you money. Annual tune-ups are as important for furnaces as they are for cars.

Contact our *Member Services Department* at 320.269.2163 or 800.247.5051 to schedule a qualified technician for a furnace inspection.



Generator Reminder

Members with *Generac* Generators should be aware that the generator will start and self-test itself every two weeks for 5 minutes. The generator will run but will not transfer off Minnesota Valley power. If you do not notice it testing, check to see if the green light on the side of the generator is lit. If you see an amber or red light instead, this means your generator needs maintenance or repair. To schedule a generator check-up with us, call 800.247.5051 or 320.269.2163.

