McLeod Cooperative Power

NEWS

September 2009

Inside this issue...

Official publication of

McLeod COOPERATIVE POWER

www.mcleodcoop.com

August 28 outage caused by car taking down power poles in Renville County

We had 256 electric members in Renville County out of power for roughly 72 minutes the morning of Friday, August 28, when a car lost control, struck one of the cooperative's power poles and came to rest in an adjacent corn field. The accident caused damage to multiple power poles and caused energized wires to fall to the ground. One member's residence near the accident site was without power for nearly seven hours until repairs could be completed. Crews were able to back-feed lines to get most members power back on in slightly more than one hour.

The driver and juvenile passengers were transported to the Hutchinson Hospital by the Buffalo Lake ambulance service. No serious injuries were reported.

Situations like this scare accident passengers into thinking they should get out and walk away from the vehicle. But exiting the vehicle is probably the most dangerous thing anyone can do. You can't tell if a downed power line is energized or dead just by looking at it. It doesn't have to spark to be energized. If wires are down on a vehicle or the ground, the safest place to be is in the vehicle until utility crews arrive! Only if a vehicle were on fire would there be an immediate need to exit the vehicle. If this becomes necessary, jump away from the vehicle and any downed lines with feet together. Make sure you do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time, as electricity always follows the easiest path to ground, even if it is through you.

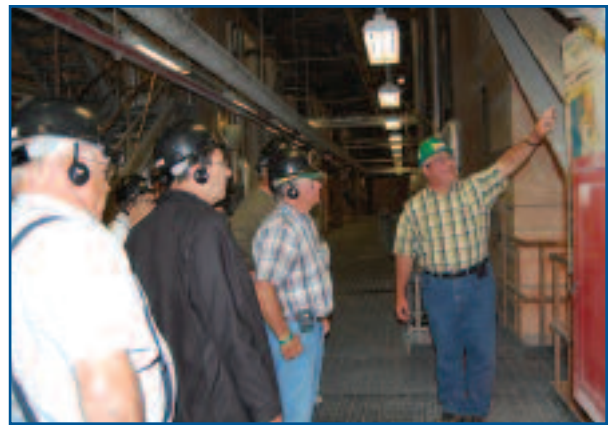
Share this safety message with your spouse, children and grandchildren, so they know what to do if they are ever in this situation.

Presorted Standard
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #60
HUTCHINSON, MN
55350

Members enjoy Coal Creek Tour

Forty-two people enjoyed a three-day trip to North Dakota August 4-6 on the Cooperative's Coal Creek Tour. Members toured Falkirk Coal Mine, Coal Creek Generating Station, and a variety of scenic and historic sites in North Dakota.

Members are posed for a group photo in front of one of the draglines at Falkirk Mine. They are also pictured touring Coal Creek Station and getting a great view from the roof of the power plant.



About 900 members to receive survey from Great River Energy in October

Please complete and return it!

If you are one of the random members to receive an appliance saturation survey from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), please take the time to complete it. The data from this survey helps predict our future load growth and what the summer cooling peak will be. It also helps our power supplier know where and when to build new generation to meet our needs. This survey, which will be mailed out in late October, is a critical part of GRE's long-range load forecast. The last survey of this type was done in 2005.

Each McLeod Co-op Power member who receives, completes and returns the survey will be entered in a drawing for three $100 electric bill credits. So it could be worth your time to fill in your appliance information.

Autopay saves you and the Co-op money every month

This is an especially good time for members to sign up for the Direct Payment Plan. You no longer need to read your meter. **You also can get away from writing a check, putting on a stamp, and mailing your payment to the Cooperative.** It is so simple to sign up. Once on the program, MCPA will automatically take care of the bank draft from your account. **You save time and money each month and so does the Cooperative.**

Here is how it works:

- You will receive your normal monthly bill around the 15th of each month, giving you 13 days to review the charges.
- Your bank account will not be charged until the 28th of the month (or the next business day if it falls on a weekend).

To get on the Direct Payment Plan, just fill out the Authorization for Direct Payment Form and return it to the Cooperative along with a voided check. In 3-4 weeks you will be on the program.

Call 1-800-494-6272 today if you need assistance signing up.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DIRECT PAYMENT

I authorize McLeod Cooperative Power Association and the financial institution named below to initiate entries to my checking/savings account. This authority will remain in effect until I notify you in writing to cancel it in such time to afford the financial institution a reasonable opportunity to act on it. I can stop payment of any entry by notifying my financial institution three business days before my account is charged.

Name of Financial Institution _____

_____

Branch _____

City _____ State ___ Zip Code _____

Signature of Member _____

Date _____

Name (Please Print) _____

Telephone # _____

Address (Please Print) _____

_____

Bank Acct. #_____ Checking ____ Savings _____

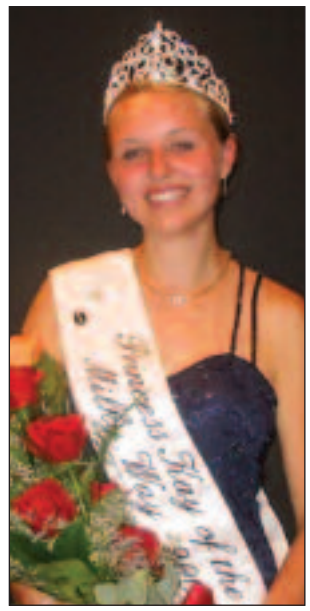
PLEASE ATTACH A BLANK, VOIDED CHECK FROM YOUR DESIGNATED ACCOUNT FOR VERIFICATION.

Electric Acct. # _____

Location # _____

Elizabeth Olson
2009 - Hutchinson

Rebekah Dammann
2005 - Lester Prairie



Christina Rettman
2004 - Buffalo Lake

Sarah Olson Schmidt
2002 - Hutchinson

We serve the cream of the crop

Four of the last eight Princess Kay of the Milky Way winners live on farms served by McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

This could be a wonderful coincidence or it could attest to the excellence of dairy farming families from our area of central Minnesota. Either way, we are very proud of all the family farms in our service area that continue to provide us with real dairy products and those young women from McLeod, Renville, Sibley and Carver Counties who have served as dairy ambassadors at the county and state level.

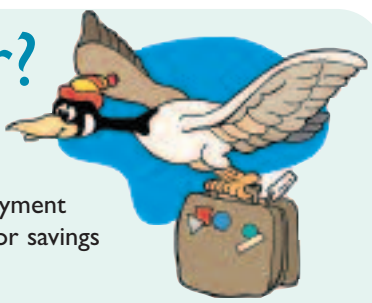
Each year, more than 100 young women from across Minnesota are crowned county dairy princesses. Only 12 are selected as finalists to compete for the Princess Kay of the Milky Way title. This year's crowning of Elizabeth Olson of rural Hutchinson as Minnesota's 56th Princess Kay of the Milky Way gained extra notoriety as she was the sister of Minnesota's 49th Princess Kay, Sarah Olson Schmidt, and sister of Lana Olson, a Princess Kay finalist in 2005. They are the daughters of Loren and Laura Olson.

From 1954, when the first Princess Kay was crowned, through 2001, there were only two Princess Kay winners from this area; Linda Kottke from Glencoe in 1966 and Kristi Pettis from Winthrop in 1996. However, from 2002 to 2009, there were four Princess Kay of the Milky Way winners and all of their family farms are electric customers of MCPA. In addition to the Olsons, we were honored to have Christina Rettmann of Buffalo Lake be crowned in 2004 as the 51st Princess Kay and the following year she crowned Rebekah Dammann of Lester Prairie as the 52nd Princess Kay. They are the daughters of Paul and Laurie Rettmann and Dan and Mary Jo Dammann, respectively.

Again, McLeod Cooperative Power salutes our local dairy ambassadors and their families. Congratulations!

Sarah Olson photo compliments of the Hutchinson Leader

Going south for the winter?



Please notify the Cooperative if you are heading south for the winter. Although the Turtle will send us your meter reading, we still need to know what payment arrangements you prefer. Options are:

- You can pay in advance.
- Have the post office forward your mail.
- You can sign up for auto pay and have the payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account.
- You can call us with a credit card payment.

Just be sure to make arrangements before you leave by calling 1-800-494-6272.

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION NEWS

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The McLeod Cooperative Power Association News is the official member publication of McLeod Cooperative Power Association and focuses on our members, programs and events. All member story ideas and comments are welcome. Send to Sue Pawelk, editor, at the above address.

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Gopher State One Call 1-800-252-1166

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Our Energy, Our Future™
A Dialogue With America

Senators are drafting climate change legislation NOW, and you can impact the outcome. Climate change legislation should be:

Fair. Climate change legislation needs to recognize regional differences in how electricity is produced.

Affordable. Any climate change plan must keep electricity affordable for all Americans.

Achievable.
Climate change goals must be realistic to ensure long-term success.

Go to **www.ourenergy.coop** *to make your voice heard.*

An affordable and workable bill is needed to address climate change

Climate change legislation narrowly passed the U.S. House of Representatives in June. In September, the Senate will be debating and voting on this legislation. It is critically important that the bill gets substantial improvements before something is passed. It needs to be affordable and workable. We ask that you take a moment to contact your Senators by e-mail or by letter.

The message we are trying to convey to them is:

- I am concerned about what rising energy costs will do to the average person. Many do not have the ability to pay higher electric bills. Please balance any votes you cast about electricity with the need to keep it affordable.
- Vote for what is fair, affordable and achievable.

You can contact our Senators on the internet at

www.OurEnergyMN.coop

It is a simple way to send a message to both senators at the same time.

Or you can mail separate personal letters to:

Senator Al Franken
320 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington D.C. 20510

Senator Amy Klobuchar
314 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington D.C. 20510

Opinion: Closing Minnesota's borders to affordable energy

On Aug. 1, Minnesota's electric energy landscape substantially changed, yet very few people are probably aware of it. As of this month, unless a project is one of a few already exempted in law, Minnesota's borders are restricted from the importation of new baseload coal electricity, even as new technologies are being developed to capture carbon. This new law places Minnesota in a challenging situation. Over time, our state will need additional cleaner, competitively-priced baseload power, yet access to domestically-abundant and reliable fuel sources has been impaired by state law.

At the time the coal moratorium was passed (as part of the Next Generation Energy Act of 2007), concerned groups asked how Minnesota would make up the gap between energy demand and available sources of baseload power. Two years later, we still do not have an answer to that question. Meanwhile, Minnesota has banned new coal and nuclear plants within the state without a plan for replacing those lost potential sources. The problem is that Minnesota's daily needs for baseload energy are not met exclusively by in-state coal or nuclear plants. Thanks to partnerships between Minnesota electric utilities and plants powered by North Dakota lignite coal, more than 800,000 homes and businesses in Greater Minnesota are guaranteed an affordable and reliable supply of electricity. Absent new coal generation and absent renewable technology available to provide 24-7 power at affordable prices, homeowners and businesses will pay excessive electricity rates compared to surrounding states unless we find a way to maintain a low-cost supply of energy while meeting Minnesotans' environmental expectations.

The good news is that Minnesota can meet both goals if it remains open to opportunities for new, environmentally-sound baseload generation from across our borders. Our neighbors to the west have taken significant steps to stay at the forefront of new energy production technologies. The North Dakota Industrial Commission has committed $6.5 million in state funds for CO2 carbon capture and sequestration projects totaling $424 million in public and private investment. North Dakota is also host to the world's largest CCS project and a pioneering demonstration project that is working to commercialize technology that captures 90 percent of carbon emissions. Unfortunately, Minnesotans will not benefit from this work unless our policymakers rethink the state's relationship with North Dakota. Minnesota still needs to answer that question — where will our homeowners and businesses get reliable, affordable power now that we have shut ourselves off from our most readily available source? The choice seems clear — we can either accept higher energy costs and less dependable electricity or we can encourage the research that will create commercially-viable, environmentally-efficient operations and state-of-the-art facilities for production of our most abundant energy source.

Written by: Christina Pierson, executive director, Partners for Affordable Energy.
-Albert Lea Tribune

Coats *for* Kids

Bring your new or gently used coats for school-age kids to McLeod Cooperative Power mid-September through mid-October. We are helping collect coats for children and youth in need. The drop box located in our lobby is available Monday though Fridays 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Coats will be distributed to local youth October 15-16. If you are in need of a coat request a form by calling Common Cup Ministry at 320-587-2213 or 320-864-5511. All coats not distributed these days will be given to needy families in rural Minnesota.

Coats for Kids is sponsored by Common Cup Ministry, McLeod County Social Services, Heartland Community Action and the Glencoe and Hutchinson Rotarians. More details will be available in next month's newsletter.

State commends conservation efforts

The Minnesota Office of Energy Security commended Great River Energy's conservation efforts during a recent review of its 2008 Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) plan.

The CIP plan is a state requirement that established an annual energy savings goal equivalent to 1.5 percent of average retail sales for all utilities beginning in 2010. Great River Energy's members achieved savings of 0.3 percent in 2006, 0.5 percent in 2007, and 1.0 percent in 2008. GRE and its members plan to increase savings to 1.5 percent by 2010, with 1 percent achieved through rebates and projects on the member side of the meter and 0.5 percent through utility infrastructure projects.

GRE and its members will nearly double the current investments in CIP programs to more than $26 million in 2010 to meet the state mandated goals.

Off-Peak Heat is Solution to H

You've finally made the decision that you need to make a change to your heating system. Fuel bills are too high and it just doesn't look like it's going to get any better. In fact, it will likely get worse. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that space heating of homes accounts for 34 percent of the average home's energy budget. Making a change in this area will yield the most savings.

What changes are going to be the best for your home? How much will you save? What should you do first? These are all common questions members have before spending their hard-earned money on a new system. Below are some answers and helpful guidelines to help get you started on the path to greater efficiency and lower heating bills.

What is off-peak heat?

Off-peak heat is a term that refers to a heating system that uses electricity as its primary heat source. When electricity use reaches a high demand or "peak," those electric heating systems are shut down (controlled) for a short time to level off, or "manage", peak demand. During this energy management time, a back-up non-electric heating system is used, such as a propane furnace. That's why we often refer to an off-peak program as a "dual fuel" program.

How does an off-peak or dual fuel program benefits members?

Electric heat has always been the safest, cleanest and most efficient home heating energy source and it will stay that way. With many heating options and products to choose from, you can put the electric heat where you need it.

Like any supply and demand economic system in our country, when energy demand is high, the cost of that energy goes up. Reducing the demand for energy allows our power suppliers to keep their cost of energy lower. In return for our members allowing their primary electric heat to be controlled, the Co-op is able to offer those members a half-price electric rate. Currently, our energy management electric rate is 5¢ per kilowatt hour. Electric heat at 100 percent efficiency at 5¢/kWh is comparable to the following prices for fossil fuels:

Electricity	**Fuel Oil**	**Propane**
100% Efficient	Super Efficient Model	Super Efficient Model
5¢/kWh	$1.64/gal.	$1.21/gal.
Actual price =	**$2.25/gal.**	**$1.35/gal.**

What are my options for installing an off-peak system?

There are many options to choose from, based on what type of heating is currently in use. A Co-op Energy Management Technician can help you decide what will work best for your home and budget. Below are some options, listed from least expensive to most expensive:

- If you have a fossil fuel furnace already, the least expensive, simplest and quickest solution would be to have an electric plenum heater installed on your furnace. The plenum heater would become your primary heating source and your existing furnace would become your back-up heat.

- If you currently have an all-electric heating system, you will need to add a back-up fossil fuel (oil, propane or natural gas) furnace to supply heat when your electric heat is controlled. If your electric heat is radiant, such as baseboard or water, you will also have to install a ductwork system for the furnace to distribute heat, or a gas boiler to supply heated water during times of control.

- For greater efficiency and cost savings, installing an air source heat pump is a popular choice. An air source heat pump is up to 180 percent efficient so it takes less electricity to generate the same amount of heat when compared to a plenum heater, for example. In addition, a heat pump also cools your home in the summer, so you can save year-round. A supplemental heating source will be needed with the heat pump when the outside temps dip below 20 degrees in the winter. However, a heat pump can easily shave off up to 50 percent from an average home's energy bill.

- A storage heat furnace heats specially designed bricks during the night and distributes that heat during the day. This furnace can be used in an off-peak or dual fuel system as well. It is especially efficient when used with an air source heat pump to supply the primary power and the storage furnace to supply supplemental heat.

- A ground source heat pump is the most efficient and low-cost energy available today, operating at efficiencies up to 400 percent. If this system is used as part of an off-peak heating/cooling system, the efficiency combined with the half-price electric rate is unbeatable. This system is the most expensive to install and also requires a fossil fuel back-up for periods of control, adding to the cost. Although some prefer to run a ground source heat pump as a stand-alone heating system, about 70 percent of our members who install this system put it on the off-peak system. The half-price electric rate saves more money and decreases the pay-back period.

- **What about using a fireplace, wood or corn burner as a back-up?**

  In the past, when peak energy control periods usually occurred during the late afternoon or evening when folks were home, it was a common practice to use such systems as back-ups to save money. Unfortunately, control periods don't always come as regularly as they used to. Morning controls are becoming more common and controls at other times of the day are not out of the question. Unless you plan to be home all day every day to stoke the fireplace or burner, you run the risk of coming home to a cold home. That's why we require an automatic back-up heat source.

- **How do I install an off-peak or dual fuel system?**

  Call the Cooperative and ask to speak with one of our Energy Management Technicians. Once a decision is made on the type of system that works best, the Cooperative will provide an energy management meter and controls to be installed. If you aren't sure who to call to have the equipment installed or to purchase the heating equipment you need, your Co-op will have a list of contractors who handle that type of work. The Co-op is a great resource to answer any questions and work with you to get the installation complete.

Rising Energy Costs

How does energy management control work?

The Cooperative's energy provider tracks demand peaks through a sophisticated computer system that measures energy use, tracks historical peaks from previous years and helps personnel determine when a peak may occur. Many times peaks are the result of temperature extremes, but not always. Energy management control times may result from unexpected power plant outages or other higher-than-normal energy use, such as increased use of grain dryers, for instance. An electronic signal is sent to a meter at the homes of members who are enrolled in our energy management (or off-peak) program. This signal alerts the system to switch heating systems. This automatic and seamless switch is usually not even noticed by members, unless the back-up heating system is not automatic or is inadequate. Electricity that powers lights, ovens, refrigerators, washers, and other small electric appliances, are never affected during an energy management control.

How many members currently use some form of energy management system?

Nearly 60 percent of Meeker Cooperative members and 50 percent of McLeod Co-op Power members are enrolled in an energy management or off-peak program to control their heating, cooling and water heating costs. These members saved a combined 125,329,000 kWhs or more than $6.2 million during 2008! As energy prices continue to climb, these members will save even more in the years ahead.

What kinds of incentives are available to help with the cost?

Your Cooperative has rebates available for installations that meet efficiency requirements and are installed by a qualified contractor (get a list of contractors that have met the qualifications at your Cooperative).

There are also tax incentives that you can qualify for:

30% of installation up to $1,500 for installing:

- Air Source Heat Pump
- Fossil Fuel Furnace
- Fossil Fuel Boiler

All these units must meet certain efficiency guidelines as published at www.energystar.gov or speak with the Cooperative for details.

30% of installation with no limit for installation:

- Ground Source Heat Pump

All Energy Star labeled systems qualify. For more details, go to: www.energystar.gov or speak with the Cooperative for details.

Industry News

Construction starts on ND wind farm

Construction is under way on what Basin Electric Power Cooperative says is the largest cooperative-owned wind farm in the nation. Project manager Ron Rebenitsch says the $250 million PrairieWinds ND1 project will include 77 turbines on about 30,000 acres south of Minot. The wind farm is scheduled to start operating early next year.

Basin is planning a similar wind project in South Dakota. That 101-turbine project is in the permitting stage.

~Associated Press

Minnesota getting $15M in stimulus funds for energy conservation projects

Minnesota will receive more than $15 million in funding from the federal stimulus package to spend on energy efficiency and conservation activities, according to Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Sen. Amy Klobuchar's office. The money comes as part of $354 million in funding that will go toward clean-energy endeavors in 22 states through the Department of Energy's Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

According to the Department of Energy, Minnesota primarily will use the money to meet its energy-conservation and greenhouse-gas-emissions goals by "enhancing the energy efficiency of local government facilities." Applications were ranked on multiple criteria including energy savings, jobs creation and retention, carbon emission reductions, geographic diversity, and indirect economic value within the state, the energy department said.

-MinnPost

MnSCU system adding energy technician degree

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system will begin offering a new two-year degree this fall that aims to prepare students to work in the renewable or traditional energy industries.

The system says that development of the energy technical specialist degree is funded with a $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. MnSCU says it's the first degree of its kind in the nation.

Besides the degree, students will be able to earn a certificate in one of four specialties - ethanol production, biodiesel production, wind turbine maintenance, and solar energy assessment.

~Associated Press

Energy assistance providers

Kandiyohi, McLeod & Meeker County areas
Heartland Community Action Agency
PO Box 1359, 200 4th St. SW
Willmar, MN 56201
Toll free: 1-800-992-1710
McLeod: 320-587-5244

McLeod County area
McLeod County Social Service Center
1805 Ford Avenue North
Glencoe, MN 55336
(320) 864-3144
(320) 587-9533
1-800-247-1756 (Toll Free)

Renville County area
Renville County Energy Assistance Program
105 S. 5th Street, Suite 203H,
Olivia, MN 56277
320-523-2202
(320) 523-1161 Emergency 24 hr phone

Sibley County area
Sibley County Social Services
400 Court Street
Gaylord, MN 55334
(507) 237-4000

MN Valley Action Council
464 Raintree Road
Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-6822
1-800-767-7139 (Toll Free)

Carver County area
Scott-Carver-Dakota Community Action Agency
712 Canterbury Road South
Shakopee, MN 55379
(952) 496-2125

Wright County area
Wright County Community Action
130 West Division Street
Maple Lake, MN 55358
(763) 963-6500
1-800-627-3529 (Toll free)

Cold Weather Rule helps Co-op members with utility bills during winter months

The Cold Weather Rule, which is part of the Public Utilities Act, prohibits utilities from disconnecting a residential customer for nonpayment during the coldest months of the year. Your Cooperative strictly adheres to that law and offers sources of help for those unable to pay their bill. The law reads as follows:

1 From Oct. 15 through April 15, a Cooperative cannot disconnect a customer if it would affect that person's primary heat source and if:

- You declare an inability to pay.
- Your total household income is less than 50 percent of the State Median Income.
- Your account is current for the billing period immediately prior to Oct. 15, or if you have entered into a payment schedule and are reasonably current with your scheduled payments.

2 Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the cold weather month, the Cooperative will provide the following information to the customer:

- Notice of the proposed disconnection.
- A statement of the customer's rights and responsibilities.
- A list of local energy assistance providers.
- A statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

3 Any residential customer whose service is disconnected on Oct. 15 may be reconnected if:

- The outstanding balance is paid.
- A mutually acceptable payment schedule is arranged.
- A re-connection plan is requested by an income eligible customer who agrees to pay the current bill and arrearages over the cold weather months by agreeable payment arrangements.

4 The Cooperative will not disconnect service to a residential customer who has not responded to a disconnection notice without first investigating whether the dwelling is actually unoccupied. This investigation shall include a personal visit to the dwelling. If the unit is found to be occupied, the Cooperative will immediately inform the occupant of his or her rights under this policy.

5 Number of days after notification before disconnection. If an involuntary disconnection is to occur between Oct. 15 and April 15, then the disconnection will not occur on a Friday or on the day before a holiday.

6 Any disputes over a residential customer's inability to pay for service, income eligibility, reasonableness of payment schedule or any other issue which a customer could raise under the Cold Weather Rule shall be referred for hearing, after reasonable notice, to the Cooperative's Board of Directors. The Cooperative and the customer shall have the right to present evidence and be heard in person at that hearing. The Cooperative's Board of Directors shall issue a written decision within 10 days after the hearing. No disconnection shall occur while a dispute is pending.

7 The Cooperative will notify all members, prior to Oct. 15, of its Cold Weather Rule and provide the names and addresses of human service agencies and local energy assistance providers that my be of assistance in paying electric bills.

Military Service Personnel Assistance

Utility Payment Arrangements for Military Service Personnel

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

How to Apply

Contact McLeod Co-op Power at 1-800-494-6272 to obtain an application and make a payment plan, which you must keep to qualify for protection.

Payment Plans

- If your household income is below the state median household income, pay ten percent of your households gross monthly income toward gas/electric bill; or
- If you receive energy assistance, pay ten percent of your household's gross monthly income toward your gas/electric bill; or
- If your household income is above the state median income, make and keep a payment plan.

Right to Appeal

If you and McLeod Co-op Power cannot agree on a payment plan, you have the right to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. McLeod Co-op Power will not disconnect your service during the appeal process.

ENERGY STAR® RATED WASHERS

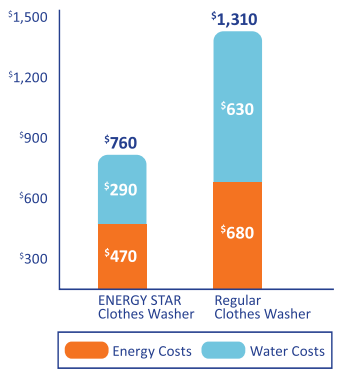
By choosing an ENERGY STAR rated washing machine, you can save up to 7,000 gallons of water a year and $550 in operating costs over the lifetime of the machine. And, because ENERGY STAR rated washers use less energy, you'll help reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases caused by burning fossil fuels.

ENERGY STAR Features and Models

Clothes washers that meet ENERGY STAR criteria use next-generation technology to cut energy and water consumption by more than 40 percent compared to conventional washers. Look for these popular ENERGY STAR features:

- Front-loaders that tumble clothes through a small amount of water.
- Redesigned top loaders that flip or spin clothes through a reduced stream of water.
- High-speed spin cycles that rely on efficient motors and extract more water so clothes need less time in the dryer.

Residential Clothes Washers Lifetime Operating Costs



Energy-saving Tips

The average household does about 400 loads of laundry each year, consuming 13,500 gallons of water. Choosing an ENERGY STAR rated washer is a great way to cut water use in half and reduce your annual utility bill by an average of $50. Since clothes dryers all use about the same amount of energy, ENERGY STAR does not label them. However, use these tips to save money, save energy and save the environment every laundry day.

- Replace conventional top-loading washers with ENERGY STAR rated models.
- Wash clothes in cold water to reduce the water-heating energy needed for hot cycles.
- Choose earth-friendly detergents without phosphates or other downstream pollutants.
- Use the moisture sensor option on your dryer to automatically shut off the machine when clothes are dry. You'll save energy as well as wear and tear on your clothes.
- Clean the lint filter after every load to improve air circulation and increase dryer efficiency.

Visit mnbrighterideas.com between August 16 and September 30, and complete a short quiz for your chance to win $500 towards groceries.

Fact or Fable?

When an Appliance is Turned Off, It Is Off

Fable:

Today's appliances are more sophisticated than their predecessors, and most devices continue to consume power even when they are switched off—sometimes a large amount! A significant number of electrical products—from air conditioners to DVD players—cannot be completely switched off without unplugging the devices. These products draw power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every month of the year. Most of us are not aware of this power consumption that is often referred to as standby power.

Standby power is often necessary to power certain core functions or to sense communication for those products that are waiting to provide you with full services. This power is consumed not while the appliance is being used but while it awaits instruction—while it is standing by. The convenience of being able to switch on your television from the sofa using a remote control is one example, since some circuits in the television must remain active, watching for signals from the remote control. Other appliances have clocks that continuously consume a small amount of power that can add up over time. Some devices use significant amounts of energy in standby mode. Newer television set-top or cable boxes actually consume nearly as much power for communication purposes while switched off as when they are switched on! If your microwave oven is not used much, its standby power just from the clock can also approach the actual operating energy use.

The following tips can help you to reduce the standby energy use in your home:

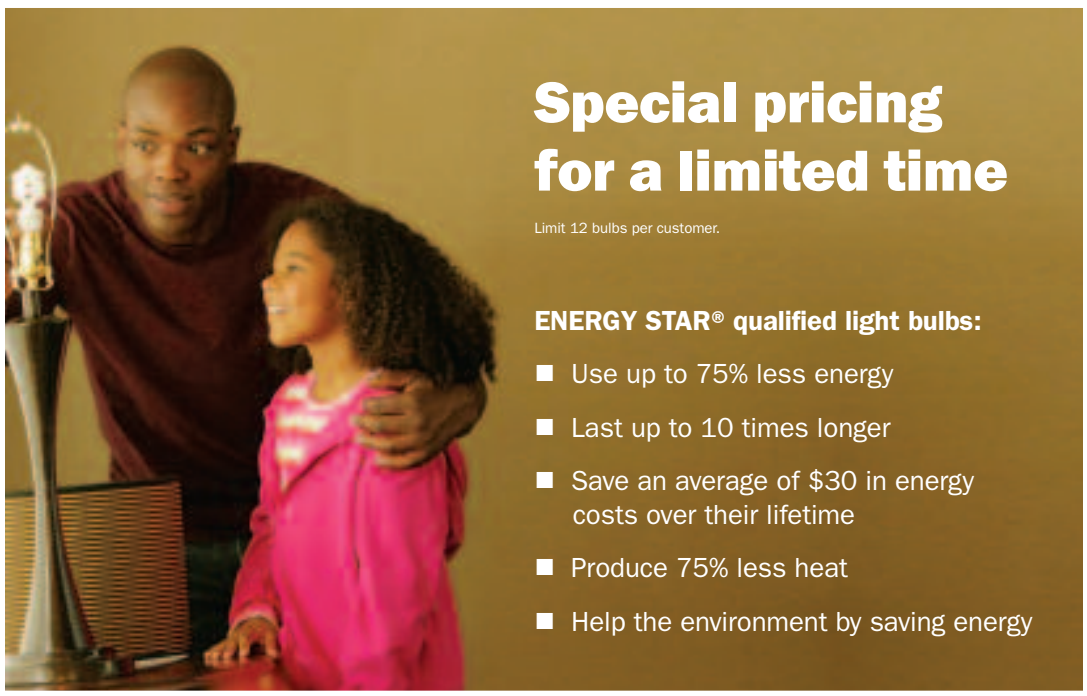
- Be aware of the energy use of an appliance when it is in operating and standby modes. When purchasing new computers or home office equipment, look for the ENERGY STAR® label. It guarantees that the model minimizes standby power consumption—for example, by automatically switching into a "sleep" mode after a set time.
- Make sure to enable the standby function when installing the appliance.
- If possible, switch off appliances instead of leaving them on standby—for example, a TV, DVD player, or stereo system.
- After turning it off, unplug any device you will not be using for any length of time.
- Adjust the time settings to meet your requirements while minimizing energy use.

Appliance Rebates available for a few more months

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER WITH ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR® rebates for the appliances listed below are good through November 1, 2009. So if you are considering purchasing one of these appliances, please make your purchase, get a rebate form from the Cooperative, and send the rebate form to us before November 1, 2009. The rebate below cannot be combined with any other special rebates offered by the Cooperative. Rebates on ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps and air conditioners must be submitted by December 1, 2009.

ENERGY STAR Room Air Conditioners	$35
ENERGY STAR Refrigerator (with recycling of old unit)	$75
ENERGY STAR Refrigerator or Freezer	$50
ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer	$25
ENERGY STAR Dehumidifier	$25
ENERGY STAR Dishwasher	$25



Because CFLs use less power to create the same amount of light, use the chart below to determine the correct wattage for your needs.

Incandescent bulb	CFL equivalent	Lifetime savings
40 watt	9–11 watt	$15–$20
60 watt	13–17 watt	$25–$30
75 watt	18–20 watt	$30–$35
100 watt	23–26 watt	$40–$45
150 watt	32–42 watt	$60–$70

888.476.9548

While supplies last. Valid for Minnesota residential electric customers of participating utilities only. Please see in-store list of participating utilities.

To operate with high efficiency, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) must contain small amounts of mercury. Manage in accordance with disposal laws. See: www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling/

Special rebate on ENERGY STAR refrigerators and clothes washers ends September 30

If you want to take advantage of purchasing a new ENERGY STAR refrigerator or clothes washer and receiving the higher $125 or $75 rebate, you will need to act quickly. Visit one of the merchants listed below. Purchase your ENERGY STAR appliance before September 30. They will give you a rebate form to complete and mail to McLeod Co-op Power by October 10. You will receive your rebate check from the Co-op by mail a few weeks after it is received. Recycling of your old refrigerator is required to receive the $125 rebate.

Local participating dealers:

Home Source in Hutchinson
Home Solutions in Glencoe and Norwood
Thomes Brothers in Arlington
Y-Not Maytag Appliance Center in Arlington
Isakson's in Gibbon

If you still have your Sears $125 or $175 coupon from the Co-op's July newsletter, you can also go to Sears and get your coupon redeemed right at the checkout at time of purchase through September 30, 2009.

Meters read by Co-op employees in Hutchinson area in July and August

In the end of July and August, cooperative employees read meters in the Bell and Hook Lake substation areas near Hutchinson. Accounts in this area have been receiving power through a different substation for much of July and August due to the road and bridge project on 180th Street west of Hutchinson. When power is back-fed through another substation, our Turtles are unable to send us the readings from consumer meters. So we had to manually read meters in this area for July and August usage. By the end of September we should have distribution lines rebuilt through the construction zone, power fed from normal substations, and Turtles restored to reading meters for us.