

NEWS

June 2011

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Official publication of



www.mcleodcoop.com

School safety programs partner with Dairy Queen



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MCPA was presenting electrical safety programs in April and May in area schools. The Cooperative promotes electric safety training to help educate youngsters to be safe when using electricity and to know how to avoid dangerous situations. Students who participate in the class will receive a voucher from Dairy Queen for a free treat. This is the first year Dairy Queen has



partnered with Co-ops state-wide to promote electrical safety and energy efficiency.

Schools and groups that accepted our invitation to present safety training were GSL Lakeside 4th grade in Silver Lake, St. Paul's Lutheran School 4th-6th grades in Arlington, First Lutheran School in Glencoe and the Acoma Acorns 4-H club of Hutchinson.



Attention Winsted area members! — Wrong outage # in TDS Winsted phone book

The publishers of the Winsted TDS telephone directory made a typographical error when publishing the Co-op's outage telephone number. The correct # is 1-800-927-5685. Please write in the correct # in your book or rely on your light bulb refrigerator magnet with the correct number. We have requested that TDS's publisher correct the number in next year's book.

The cost of doing business is rising



The cost of overhead transformers has increased more than 60% in the past decade.

Rising costs are a reality that we have all been facing for years — McLeod Cooperative Power Association (MCPA) is no exception. From the basics like poles and wires to the ever vital power supply costs, the numerous components necessary to deliver reliable and affordable electric

energy have simply been increasing.

We have all felt the rising costs of most things in our daily lives. Some of the costs that have increased are fairly common and similar to ones that you have experienced in your own home. For example, in the last decade the cost

of a postage stamp increased 33 percent from 33 cents in 2000 to 44 cents in 2010. The cost of gasoline increased 146%, from a cost of \$1.56 per gallon to \$3.84 per gallon in 2011. You could purchase a gallon of diesel in January

Continued on page 3



The MCPA office will be closed
Monday, July 4

in observance of Independence Day.

In case of an emergency or outage call
1-800-927-5685.

\$100-\$200 rebate when you join the Water Storage Program

The average family of four who participates in the Water Storage Program offered by the Co-op saves \$30 a month on their electric bill. That is \$360 a year. Plus members get a \$200 rebate when they go from having an uncontrolled electric water heater to a water heater on the Storage Program or a \$100 rebate for new construction water storage.

If they put their central air conditioner on the Cycled Air Conditioning Program, they also get a savings greater than 50% on their summer cooling. That is significant savings just for participating in off-peak programs offered by the Cooperative.

Call McLeod Cooperative Power today for prices on Marathon® water heaters. They have a lifetime warranty for leaking and are super-insulated with R25 insulation. The Co-op provides the off-peak meter socket, mixing valve, and radio receiver at no charge. We also provide free delivery of water heater and control box to our members. You have your plumber/electrician do the installation. Once you are on the program you immediately start saving on your monthly water heating/air conditioning rate. Call 1-800-494-6272 today.

Manager's Message —

by Kris Ingenthron, General Manager
McLeod Cooperative Power Association



Home is where our heart is

Directors and employees at McLeod Cooperative Power Association want to see the communities we serve succeed. Why? The answer's simple: we live here, too.

Local people working for local good. That's the essence of the Seventh Cooperative Principle, "Concern for Community," one of seven guidelines that governs electric cooperative operations.

First and foremost, McLeod Cooperative Power strengthens our communities by doing what we do best: providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity at an affordable cost. As our service area grows, so does our distribution system. So it's easy to see why strengthening the local economy makes sound business sense. Your board of directors and staff supports policies and projects that are good for the communities we serve because what's good for our community is good for the Co-op.

We have strong community roots. McLeod Cooperative Power has been in business for 76 years — we're not going anywhere. Our business was founded here by

members just like you, and we are not going to pull up stakes to pursue greener pastures elsewhere.

We pay our employees fair wages because that in turn helps strengthen the economy when they spend that money here. And by providing good-paying jobs, we keep our towns healthy because employees and their families don't have to move away to make a decent living. The more people we retain here paying taxes and contributing to their communities, the more vibrant they will be.

We also provide services our community might not otherwise have. We offer DirecTV, Wildblue Satellite Internet, Mainstreet Messenger, and are part owner of Heartland Security Services.

Benefits our communities reap from our presence aren't only financial. We open doors for our young people with scholarship programs and the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. We teach children safety through programs in schools and online. We help members identify ways to save money by performing home and

business energy audits. We also strengthen our communities by supporting local charities. We help members and neighbors in need by sponsoring such things as Operation Round Up.

Your Co-op was formed locally, and it's still managed by your friends and neighbors. Our employees go out of their way to serve by coaching youth sports teams, volunteering on school committees, participating in church activities, and even serving in various elected offices. Many are Co-op members like you, and like you, they want to make their communities stronger.

When it comes to McLeod Cooperative Power, community comes first. That's the cooperative difference.

Cooperatively yours,

Lineman scholarship winner announced

Jared Klein, a 2011 graduate of Waconia High School, has been awarded a \$500 line worker scholarship to attend Minnesota State Community & Technical College in Wadena in the line worker program. Jared is the son of Mark & Janell Klein of Waconia.



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Editor: Sue Pawelk

The *McLeod Cooperative Power News* is the official member publication of McLeod Coop Power Association and focuses

on our members, programs and events.
All member story ideas and comments are welcome.
Send to Sue Pawelk at the address above.

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Monday - Friday
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Phone: 320-864-3148

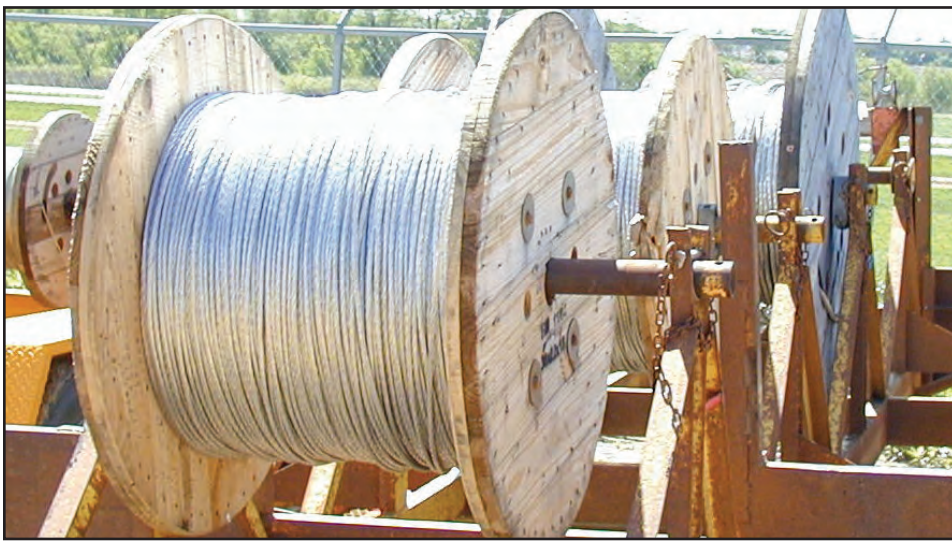
1-800-494-6272

24-hour outage: 1-800-927-5685

Fax: 320-864-4850

Web site: www.mcleodcoop.com

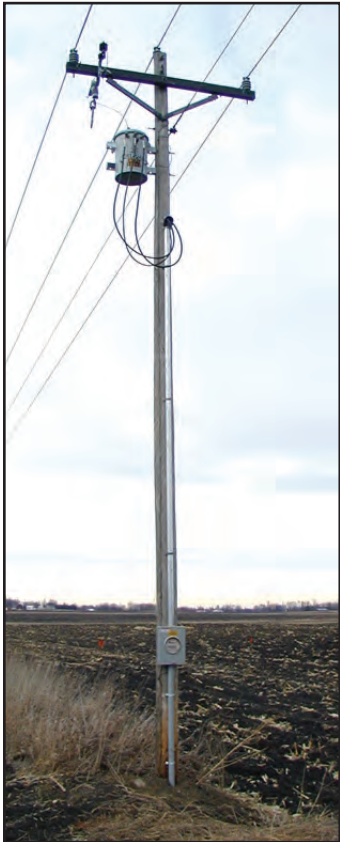
Gopher State One Call 1-800-252-1166



Aluminum wire is used often instead of copper conductor today.



Bucket truck purchased by the Coop in 2010.



Poles, hardware, meter sockets and conductor have all increased in price.

The Cost of Doing Business is Rising
continued from page 1

2000 for \$1.31 but you likely shelled out \$4.02 at the pump in April 2011. At MCPA, as in your home, those costs add up quickly.

A glance at bigger ticket items at the Cooperative can really shine a light on escalating costs. Prices for copper, a critical raw material used for wire and to ground electrical equipment, reached a high in 2010-2011. Going back a little further in time, between 1990 and 2010 in the north

central part of the nation, the price tag on utility poles, towers, and fixtures skyrocketed 98 percent.

Basically, the backbone of the system — poles, wires and transformers — have really seen price increases in the last decade. The Co-op obtains quotes to purchase the best quality material at the lowest price. These materials and equipment are needed for maintenance of existing line and building of new line for MCPA.

Because of the cost of the copper windings inside the transformer, the price of a unit has increased significantly — and the Co-op has bought many thousands of dollars worth of transformers over the past ten years. The cost to purchase the accompanying cable that will lead into and out of those transformers has also increased dramatically. It is all determined by metal prices. And the cost of fuel seems to drive everything else up with it.

For example, a 15-kva transformer increased 61% from 2000 to 2011. The price of a 25-kva underground transformer also rose during the past decade by 94%. The larger 50-kva transformers saw a 69% increase in costs from 2000 to 2011. One

Item	Cost in 2000	Cost in 2011	Percent Increase
First class stamp	\$.33	\$.44	33%
Gallon of gas.....	\$1.56	\$3.84	146%
Gallon of diesel	\$1.31	\$4.02.....	207%
35 ft. Class 4 pole	\$178	\$268	50%
35 ft. Class 5 pole	\$141	\$231.....	64%
15 kva overhead transformer	\$355	\$571	61%
25 kva URD transformer.....	\$676	\$1,310.....	94%
50 kva URD transformer	\$858	\$1,454.....	69%
1/0 ACSR (wire)	\$0.145/ft	\$0.221/ft	52%
1/0 URD	\$1.28/ft.....	\$1.858/ft.....	45%
1/0 Aluminum triplex	\$0.7496/ft	\$1.148/ft.....	53%
Bucket truck.....	\$125,000	\$220,000	76%
Digger derrick	\$150,000	\$240,000.....	60%
Cost for MCPA to purchase energy (Increase from Jan. 2000 to Dec. 2010)			65%
MCPA non-summer energy rates.....	\$0.073/kWh	\$0.1097/kWh.....	50%
MCPA summer rates	\$0.083/kWh.....	\$0.1197/kWh.....	44%

visible component is the miles of distribution line. MCPA maintains over 1,653 miles of overhead distribution line and 227 miles of underground (URD) cable in the service territory. Power line conductor has increased 45-50 % in cost.

The iconic wooden power poles that line the miles of roads in our area have also risen in cost. A Class 4, 35-foot pole costs 50% more than it did in 2000 and a Class 5, 35-foot pole costs 64% more. The Co-op also built one new substation and updated another in the past decade. The ever rising cost of upgrading our system to meet consumer demand has become pretty substantial.

Another item that has seen a growing price tag is the cost of the trucks in the Co-op fleet. In 2000, the Co-op could purchase a bucket truck — a staple in a cooperative’s fleet — for about \$125,000. In 2011, a comparable unit cost \$220,000 — a 76% increase. The cost of replacing a digger-derrick unit — the truck capable of digging the large holes needed to replace poles — rose 60% over that same time period, from \$150,000 to \$240,000.

One of the biggest expenses faced by cooperatives is power. From 2000 through 2010, our wholesale power cost increased by 65%. We anticipate that the cost of power will continue to modestly increase in the next few years. Legislative mandates, environmental regulation, renewable energy, and the cost of fuel will be some of the key factors in determining where our rates will go in the coming years.



This is the digger derrick scheduled for replacement later in 2011. This photo shows it at a storm repair job back in 2004.

Becker Dairy is a family farm of the future



Joe and Karen Becker (left) and Mary Kay and Vern Becker are grateful for their family dairy and that they are large enough to provide income for four families, plus hired help.

Vern and Joe Becker of rural Eden Valley believe the future of dairy farming will be a culmination of constant changes in the industry: changes in size, efficiency, technology and genetics.

Becker Dairy has changed to meet the future, growing from 14 cows and 160 acres in 1964 when Wilfred and Aurelia Becker began the dairy business, to a total of 900 cows and 900 acres today.

“The dairy industry has changed drastically over the years since we took over in 1987,” Vern said. “It’s run more as a business now, with greater risks, volatile markets, swings up and down, loans and interest rates. Keeping competitive means having to grow larger, becoming more efficient, improving technology or supplementing the income somehow.”

Becker Dairy met the challenges by becoming more efficient and growing larger, partly to be able to involve all the family members who wanted to be part of the family dairy business.

“It may appear as if we must be making all this money,” Joe’s wife, Karen, said. “But this business is supporting four families and a full staff. This is a family farm. We had to grow.”

Currently the Beckers employ 12 full-time and six part-time employees, plus the family members who also work the business. Vern and his wife, Mary Kay, along with Joe and Karen have six daughters between them. Like their fathers before them, all six girls grew up milking cows and being active on the farm. Today, four of those girls are or will be involved in the ag and/or dairy business in some way:

Rachael works full-time on a farm the family purchased south of Grove City that is used as a transition calving location. Dry cows are shipped to that

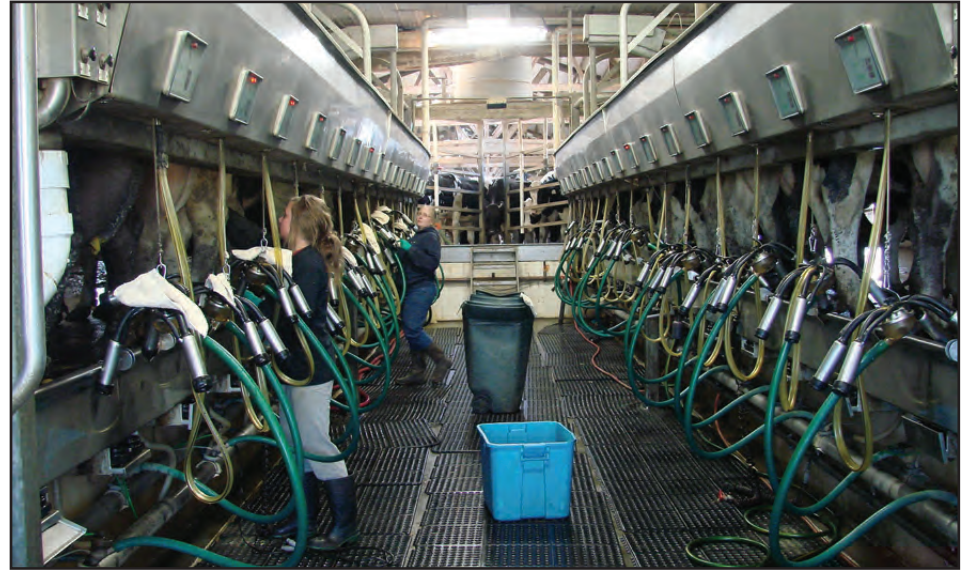
farm, where they are bred, have their calves and are milked for two or three weeks before returning to the main dairy location. Of the 200 cows Rachael oversees, about 60 are milked at any one time.

Megan is a licensed veterinarian who will work in the ag business. Jennifer has a Master’s degree in dairy genetics, a field that will become more important to keep up with growing demand for milk products. Jessica has a double major in dairy production and dairy food science. Ellen works part-time at the farm on weekends, and Katherine, a chiropractor, helps out when she can and spent six months last year helping Rachael manage the transition site. Megan’s husband, Tim Schrupp, is also employed full-time on the farm.

Joe and Karen live on the original farm site on Highway 22 south of Eden Valley, where they raise heifers. Karen also keeps all the books for the business. Mary Kay enjoys the most variety in her duties; running errands and filling in wherever help is needed. She and Vern live across the road from the dairy.

The future is now

The need to make a living and stay competitive with other farmers means looking at different ways of increasing production, milk quality and efficiency, and decreasing risks, costs and production losses. One of the ways the Beckers have done this is through cross-breeding their Holsteins.



All three dairy barns are connected to the walk-through milking parlor. Cows housed on the dairy location are milked three times a day. The Beckers rely on excellent staff to do most of the milking.

“It used to be that milk production was increased by breeding larger Holsteins,” Vern said. “But larger cows often meant foot and reproductive problems. The advantage of cross-breeding is breeding in greater health traits.”

The Beckers, along with nine other dairy farms, are taking part in an eight-year



The white-faced cow is a Holstein/Swedish Red cross. Cross-breeding can result in greater health traits.

cross-breeding trial managed by the University of Minnesota. Each herd will retain at least 100 pure Holsteins, and another set number of cows are cross-bred. Advanced computerized tracking systems measure every aspect of

the trial, from milk production, to quality, to health.

One of the trials involves cross-breeding Holsteins with Swedish Red cows.

Swedish Reds produce roughly the same milk as a Holstein, but are smaller and better known for their robust health, increased fertility, calving ease, udder health and longevity...all crucial elements to a successful business.

“The U of M is being very scientific in this trial, so they are accurately measuring apples to apples,” Vern said.

Vern and Joe realize that not every dairy farmer is ready to change the breeds they grew up with and enjoy working with.

“Many don’t want to see cross-breeding of Holsteins. They grew up with Holsteins, their father and grandfather raised Holsteins and they don’t want to consider anything else,” Vern said. “But I see that in 20 years, there’s going to be a lot of cross-bred cows. It’s just going to take time for people to change.”

They have decreased costs dramatically by working together with their Cooperative on a gen-set program. In exchange for allowing the Cooperative to control their electricity during peak times of demand, the entire dairy operation receives a lower electrical rate. The



Vern (left) and Joe Becker own 900 cows in all. About 700 are housed on the dairy location in three barns; two of which were built as the dairy expanded over the years.

Beckers utilize three generators to run their farm during periods of control.

“We’ve had a really good relationship with Darrell Ward and the Co-op,” Vern said.

Looking down the road

The Becker family believes that milk products will have an increasing share in the diets of Americans. Although they say that the demand for fluid milk has slightly decreased, people are eating more ice cream, cheese, and other items.

“The milk plant in Litchfield is building a big addition, so that’s a good sign,” Vern said. “Exports are also growing, but the volatility in the milk market is dictated by the export market.”

“Some of the difficulties in running a profitable dairy business includes interest rates and government regulations,” Joe said.

“The pay price has not gone up too much,” Vern added. “When adjusted for inflation, the milk price has declined since the 1970’s.”

If the Beckers were to give advice to other dairy farmers, it would be not to depend on the government to increase their profits, but to make the changes necessary themselves.

“We’re profitable and we’ve been profitable because of the changes we’ve made,” Vern said.

The Beckers believe that people are beginning to see greater value in agriculture over the past few years.

“The economy has gotten so bad in this country, but Minnesota isn’t in the dumpster economically because of the agriculture business,” Joe said. “We’re doing well because of agriculture in this state.”

The Beckers wouldn’t have chosen any other way to make a living.

“Our girls have said they can’t imagine having grown up anywhere else,” Karen said. “They just love coming back here.”

“Just as we took the farm over from the last generation, we intend to pass it on to the next generation,” Vern said. “The lifestyle and the family all working together on the farm...that’s what it’s about.”

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

A free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit call811.com for more information.

Are you harboring energy vampires in your home?

Several devices found inside your home are commonly referred to as “parasitic loads,” “phantom loads,” or “energy vampires”—consuming electricity even when switched off. Phantom loads can be found in almost every room, but a favorite location is your entertainment center.

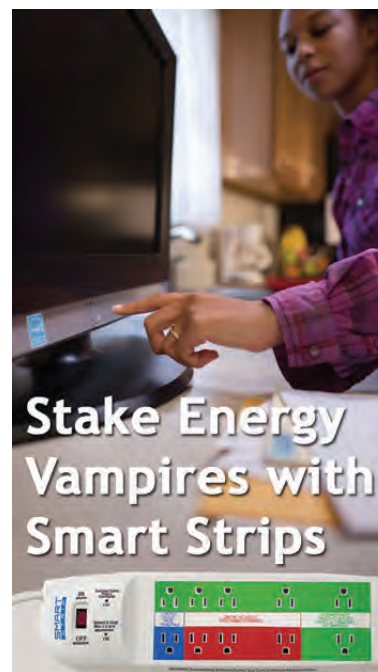
Most TVs today slowly sip electricity while waiting patiently for someone to press the “on” button. They also use energy to remember channel lineups, language preferences, and the time. VCRs, DVD players, DVRs, and cable or satellite boxes also use energy when we think they’re turned off.

The average North American household consumes roughly 10,800 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per year. If you estimate that an average of 6.5 percent of your total electricity consumption comes from phantom loads, the amount drained by these vampires equals about 700 kWh annually—or \$70 every year.

Smart Strips = Easy Savings

Most smart strips feature three outlet colors, each with a unique task. The blue outlet serves as a control plug, and is ideal for a heavily-used device like a TV or computer. Anything plugged into red outlets stays on—electricity to these receptacles never cuts off; making them perfect for satellite boxes or other appliances that need constant power.

The remaining outlets, generally neutral or green in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet, so turning off the TV or computer cuts power to them as well. Some smart power strips can be made even smarter with timers or occupancy sensors that



In an average home, 5 percent to 8 percent of electric use stems from “energy vampires”— devices that use power even when turned off. Smart power strips help you unplug energy-draining devices when not in use easily.

There are typically three different types of outlets on a smart strip:

The blue outlet serves as a control plug (ideal for a TV or computer).

Devices plugged into red outlets stay on—electricity to these receptacles never cuts off, making them perfect for satellite boxes and other items that need constant power.

Remaining outlets, often green or neutral in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet. Turning off a device plugged into the blue outlet cuts power to items connected to these outlets.

Smart strips are available online or at specialty electronic retailers and generally cost \$20 or more depending on their size.

Source: Cooperative Research Network, Bits Ltd.

determine when to cut power to various devices. Smart strips are available online or at specialty electronic retailers and generally cost \$20 or more depending on their size. Payback generally can be achieved in under one year, depending on the type of equipment the strips control and how often they are used.

INDUSTRY News

New report predicts coal will remain dominant fuel in future

Coal is likely to remain the dominant source of American electricity for decades to come, according to a new report from the U.S. Energy Department's Energy Information Administration. EIA's American Energy Outlook 2011 predicts that, absent overly stringent new federal regulations, electricity generation from coal will increase by 25 percent from 2009 to 2035 and that coal will generate 43 percent of America's electricity in 2035.

“This report underscores the important role that coal will play long into the future,” said Steve Miller, president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. “Coal will continue to be America's fuel for decades to come because it will remain affordable, reliable and will be used in an increasingly clean manner.”

Earlier this year, ACCCE released a report showing that among energy used by American households, electricity has experienced relatively low price increases since 2001. Coal currently provides nearly one-half of America's electricity supply, and has contributed to the relative stability of consumer electricity prices.

~Energy Central

WIRES study shows benefits in transmission investments

A new analysis commissioned by WIRES shows that annual investment in new electric transmission facilities could soon reach \$12-\$16 billion in the United States, resulting in \$30-\$40 billion in annual economic activity. This translates into support for 150,000-200,000 new full-time jobs in the U.S. in each of the next 20 years and between 20,000 and 50,000 new jobs each year in Canada.

The study, conducted for WIRES by senior economists at The Brattle Group, an international economic consulting firm experienced in electricity industry matters, finds that expanding and upgrading the grid to meet identifiable economic and reliability needs, as well as state renewable energy mandates, will help drive economic recovery and set the stage for the electric economy of the 21st century.

In addition to the employment and downstream economic impacts of transmission manufacturing and construction, investment in needed transmission will annually support 130,000-250,000 full-time U.S. jobs in the emerging renewable energy industry to which transmission capacity is so critical.

~Press Release

Coal Creek Tour rescheduled for August due to flooding



A few seats are available for August 22-24 trip

Due to record high water levels at the Garrison Dam and the release of water into the Missouri River resulting in flooding downstream in Bismarck, the Coal Creek Tour 2011 needed to be postponed until August 22-24. Members with reservations for the June trip have been contacted. A few seats remain available for the August 22-24 date, so call the Cooperative if you are interested in joining the tour in August.

Wondering why your kilowatt usage has increased?

Don't be surprised, go online!



MyMeter is a free, online tool for McLeod Co-op Power members. View your daily energy use online. Set goals for reducing your energy use. Get an email or text message when your energy use hits a predetermined threshold. Find high use problems before you receive your monthly bill.



It's simple to view. Go to www.mcleodcoop.com and click on MyMeter on the homepage. Have your account number handy for that initial login and you will be on your way to managing your energy use.

Using Water Wisely:



Inside and Out

Though we often take our water supply for granted, the truth is that clean, healthy water is not an endless resource. The average American home uses 350 gallons of water per day; that is more than 127,000 gallons each year, according to the American Water Works Association. Using hot water also adds to your energy bill. A few small changes to your daily routine will help you save money and preserve water supplies for future generations. The tips that follow will help you use water more efficiently in your home.

Around the House

- Check for and repair leaks. Even the smallest leak can waste thousands of gallons of water per year. To check for leaks, read your meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used.
- Insulate water pipes. This will limit the time necessary to run water in sinks or the shower to get hot water.

Kitchen

- Run your dishwasher on a full load only.
- When replacing your dishwasher, be sure to install an ENERGY STAR® rated, energy-efficient unit; they use significantly less water.
- Garbage disposals require a lot of water to operate properly; compost piles are an environmentally friendly alternative.
- Do not rinse hand-washed dishes under running water. Fill one sink with soapy water and another with water for rinsing.

Bathroom

- Do not leave water running while shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Take shorter showers.
- Install low-flow faucets and showerheads; low-flow showerheads save two to three gallons per minute.
- Leaky toilets waste up to 200 gallons of water per day. You can check for leaks by putting food coloring in the tank, and letting it set for 15 to 30 minutes without flushing. If the water containing food coloring seeps into the bowl, you have a leak.
- Older toilets use up to seven gallons of water per flush. Replace these units with new models that use less than 1.3 gallons per flush—a savings of 60% to 80%.

The information has been compiled by Tech Resources, a contractor to McLeod Cooperative Power; however, no representation is made by either Tech Resources or McLeod Cooperative Power as to the completeness or accuracy of the information contained therein. In particular, some information may be incomplete, may contain errors or may be out of date. In addition, neither Tech Resources nor McLeod Cooperative Power endorses any product or service mentioned therein.

Laundry

- Only operate your washing machine when you have a full load.
- When replacing your washing machine, choose a new, energy-efficient machine that uses less water. An ENERGY STAR® rated machine only uses 18 to 25 gallons per load, compared to 40 gallons for conventional machines.

Yard and Garden

- Only water your lawn every three to five days during the summer.
- Water your lawn in the early morning or late evening to avoid wasting water through evaporation.
- Install timers on sprinklers so they turn on and shut off at a set time or after a set amount of water has been dispensed.
- Choose water-efficient drip irrigation systems for shrubs and flowerbeds. These systems use 30% to 50% less water than conventional watering methods.
- Set up rain barrels to use an alternative source for watering your garden or flowerbeds.

Water may be easily accessible, but it is certainly not free. The average residential water bill is more than \$500 annually, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). By making an effort to conserve water, you will save up to 35% (or \$170) each year. See the EPA's Water Sense program for more information on how to make your home more water efficient.

McLeod Cooperative Power *Power Up* has been prepared solely for the purpose of providing helpful information to users of this service.

Know how to survive auto accidents involving power lines

Instincts tell us to flee danger. Unfortunately, in vehicle accidents that bring down power lines, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

McLeod Cooperative Power wants everyone to know that if your car hits a power pole or otherwise brings a power line down, stay in your vehicle and wait until the local electric utility arrives on the scene and ensures that the lines have been de-energized. If you come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the scene.

Indiana teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power line safety demonstration at their high school and never dreamed their new knowledge would be put to the test. Five days later, they and two classmates were in a car that crashed into a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

Fortunately, they heeded the safety advice they'd received and survived because they knew the right actions to take. And they helped others who approached the scene by warning them to stay away. A video of their story can be seen on www.safeelectricity.org.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, tens of thousands of accidents each year occur where power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive without knowing the right moves to

make. It happens too often that someone survives the crash, exits the vehicle and walks into or steps onto a live power line.

In the vast majority of those incidents, the safest place to remain is inside the car. Only in the rare instance of fire should people try to exit a vehicle. Then they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear, landing with feet together and hopping away. It is difficult to get out without creating a path for current to flow, which is why one should get out only if forced to. You never want to be touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time and you do not want your feet any distance apart as they will be in differing voltage zones.

"When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on anyone's mind," Safe Electricity Executive Director Molly Hall notes. "We're often more concerned about whether anyone was injured or how badly the vehicle was damaged. We forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

Lee and Ashley are grateful to their local electric cooperative for sponsoring a safety demonstration at their school. The students are encouraging everyone to learn from their experience. McLeod Cooperative Power coordinates safety presentations with local schools and also has a 20 minute video it can loan out to girl scouts or boy scouts troops. Contact McLeod Cooperative Power at 1-800-494-6272 for information.



Tune up your cooling unit and receive a \$25 credit

Announcing the 2011 air conditioning tune-up program.

Just schedule a tune-up of your central air conditioner or air source heat pump (unit must be at least 5 years old and in working condition to qualify) and when your licensed professional HVAC contractor performs the service work, have them complete the rebate coupon below. Send the completed rebate form to the Cooperative with a copy of the contractor's invoice. His tune up must include the items on the coupon. After the Co-op receives your documentation, we will credit your electric bill \$25 within 4-6 weeks.

Air Conditioner/Heat Pump Check List

Owner _____
 Acct. # _____
 Address _____
 Location # _____
 Phone # _____
 Company doing Tune-Up _____
 Technician's Name _____
 Company Phone # _____

CHECK LIST

Brand Name _____
 Model # _____
 Serial # _____
 Tons/BTU Rating _____ SEER Rating _____

- Clean Outdoor Unit
- Clean and Inspect "A" Coil
- Check Blower Belt
- Compressor Motor Amp Reading Check
- Compressor Amp Reading Check
- Blower & Oil
- Blower Motor Amp Reading Check
- Check Filter
- Check Refrigerant Level & Pressure
- Blow Out Drain Line
- Visual Inspection of Cooling System

Recommendations _____

Technician Signature _____
 Date _____

Simplify home security from this...

To this...

Heartland key fobs turn system on and off for easy entrance and activation. Plus, their panic feature quickly calls assistance. Heartland systems can detect smoke, water and temperature changes within your home. Plus, they automatically notify the authorities in the event of an emergency. They can also be customized for livestock, surveillance and medical monitoring. Call 1-888-264-6380 with questions or visit www.heartlandss.com for more information.

Sign up for a monitored system by July 31 and receive a free key fob! (Special not valid with other offers.)

May 10 power outage in Carver County

The New Germany and Hollywood Substations were out of power on Tuesday, May 10 in the late afternoon. An insulator exploded and also damaged another insulator nearby in the Hollywood Substation. This took out the 69 kV transmission line back to St. Boni, including the New Germany Substation. Cause of the damaged insulator is unknown but lightning is suspected.

Crews were able to back-feed power to bring the New Germany Sub back on after 1 hour and 18 minutes.

Hollywood remained off for about 2 hours and 14 minutes, while repairs were made.

Just a reminder for members that the fastest way to report a power outage is to call 1-800-927-5685. It is also the only way to report an outage after regular office hours. This should be the number on the light bulb magnet stuck on your refrigerator. If you do not have a magnet showing the Co-op's outage number and need one, please call our office.

A few estimated bills and meters read by the Co-op in May

About 80 members living near Brownton, and a few members south of Hutchinson and near Winthrop, could have estimated bills for May usage. If the account is one of about 36 that have a subtractive load management meter or is a field pump, it could have been read by the Cooperative the end of May. This is due to a line construction project that requires the back-feeding of loads from the Bell Substation onto the Winthrop Substation for several weeks, and it interferes with the communication of meter readings from the account to our office.

If your bill was estimated it will state "Estimated Bill" on your statement. This one-month estimate is based on an average of your past usage and should be very close to what was actually used. At the end of June when we get your current reading,

it will correct any slight over or under billing for May use.

If the account has a subtractive meter, we prefer to visit the location and get an actual reading, as these accounts are more difficult to accurately estimate. A handful of field pumps in the affected area will also be read as usage will likely be greater this time of year.

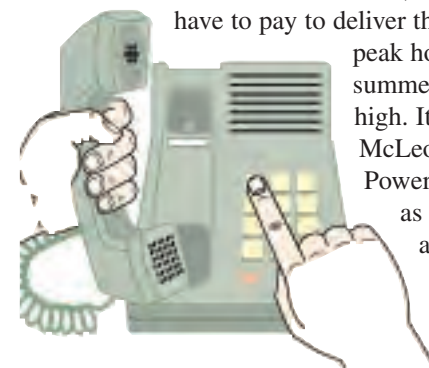
We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. During the weeks of back-feeding, members in the affected area that use MyMeter will notice no daily readings are available for their meters or on the graphs. Once loads are restored to the regular substation, data will again be available. Please feel free to call our office if you have questions on your bill or on your MyMeter data.

Be ready for a phone call on an EXTREME PEAK DAY

If hot weather hits or the market price of electricity is very high, we could experience an EXTREME PEAK DAY. That is a day when the demand for energy is so high that we will ask our members to conserve energy. Whether you take action to conserve is totally voluntary. On such a day, the Cooperative will use an automated recording system to call your home and notify you that it is an EXTREME PEAK DAY. If you are home, please listen to the recorded message. It will provide the announcement that it is an EXTREME PEAK DAY. It will also tell you the hours of requested conservation and provide a list of ways you can conserve. If you are not home and you have an answering machine, we will leave you the same message. If you do not answer, the system will try to call you back later in the day.

By conserving energy for a few hours, you can help the Cooperative avoid expensive peak day demand and energy charges. This helps manage electric rates for all of our members. Our power supplier, Great River Energy, is able to supply us with plenty of energy to meet the power needs of all of our members, even on an EXTREME PEAK DAY. However, the price we may

have to pay to deliver that energy during peak hours of the hottest summer days may be very high. It is the goal of McLeod Cooperative Power to keep rates as low as possible. We greatly appreciate any effort our members can make to conserve on these days.



Burning garbage in the backyard

We've been doing it for generations, so what's the big deal now?

The answer is that garbage has changed in the last 50 years. Today's garbage contains plastics and other synthetics that release a hazardous mixture of carcinogens and other toxics (such as lead, mercury, and arsenic) when burned. Backyard garbage burning, whether done in a traditional burn barrel, wood stove or fire-pit, is far more harmful to our health and environment than previously thought. Even seemingly harmless items like paper, mail, packaging and cardboard boxes used for frozen pizzas and vegetables can give off toxic emissions.

This pollution not only increases the health risk to those exposed to the smoke, which can increase the risk of heart disease and cause rashes, nausea and headaches, but also produces toxic substances, including dioxin, a cancer-causing pollutant. **The U.S. EPA has determined that one burn barrel (from an average family of four) can produce as much or more dioxin as a full-scale municipal waste incinerator burning 200 tons per day.** Backyard garbage is now the single largest source of uncontrolled airborne dioxin emissions in the United States; more than all other known sources combined. In addition, backyard garbage contributes to nearly half of all the wildfires in Minnesota each year.

Regardless of whether it is legal or illegal, the most important thing to understand are the risks associated with backyard garbage burning and to change behavior. Most counties in Minnesota have set up comprehensive waste and recycling collection programs and drop-off sites to properly manage our garbage but there are still parts of the state that don't offer convenient options for all rural residents. That is why the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is working with our local units of government and other interested groups to close those gaps and educate people about the real dangers posed by backyard burning. For more information, including links to waste-hauling services, drop-sites, and recycling options, go to www.pca.state.mn.us/burnbarrel.



On EXTREME PEAK DAYS we will ask you to:

- Do laundry early in the day or after 10 p.m.
- Wait until after 10 p.m. to start the dishwasher.
- Go out for dinner, cook in the microwave or on the grill, instead of using the stove or oven.
- Turn off or unplug the dehumidifier, computer equipment that is not being used, unnecessary lighting or rechargeable appliances until after 10 p.m.
- Turn your thermostat up a degree or two during the peak hours so your air conditioner run time is reduced.

Doing some or all of these conservation practices will keep your house cooler on hot summer days. Doing activities that add heat or humidity to your home on an extremely hot day requires your air conditioner to run longer and use more energy.