

NEWS

November 2011

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Official publication of



www.mcleodcoop.com

Holiday Treats for members visiting the office December 15

The Cooperative invites its members to stop in the office for coffee, apple cider, and cookies December 15 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free scenic calendars will be available to members while supplies last. Our employees will be available to help answer all of your energy management, billing and other questions.

2012 Cooperative Calendar

Scenic 2012 calendars will be available after Nov. 15

This year's 2012 scenic Minnesota calendars will be available in the Co-op office after November 15. Please stop in and pick up a copy. First come, first serve, while supplies last.

Coal Creek Tour to include Medora Musical & Pitchfork Fondue in 2012

The Coal Creek Tour is scheduled for August 20-22, 2012. Coal Creek Generation Station, Falkirk Coal Mine and Garrison Dam are again on the itinerary, but added to the tour this year is a trip to Medora. Participants will spend a night in Medora, take in the Medora Musical and eat at the Pitchfork Fondue experience.

Cost will be \$300 per person double occupancy or \$400 per person single occupancy. If any members are interested, we are starting to take reservations. Call the Co-op at 1-800-494-6272 and ask for Katie.



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 (Autopay) 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 # _____

Bulbs must become more energy efficient

Federal legislation has ruled that starting in January 2012, 100-watt (W) incandescent bulbs — a technology developed in the United States by Thomas Edison in 1878 and largely untouched since — must become more energy efficient.

Federal Mandate

Why is the government shining a light on — well, lighting? The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates we use 13.6 percent of our nation's energy supply to keep the lights on, and a lot of that power is wasted. If you've ever touched a traditional light bulb when it's on, you realized much of the energy (90 percent) is released as heat (ouch!). This leaves a lot of room for improvement.

To tackle this issue, Congress passed the Energy Information and Security Act of 2007 (EISA). By 2014 household light bulbs using between 40-W to 100-W will need to consume at least 28 percent less energy than traditional incandescents, saving Americans an estimated \$6 billion to \$10 billion in lighting costs annually. The law also mandates light bulbs become 70 percent more efficient than classic bulbs by 2020 (LEDs already exceed this goal.)

Look for Labels

Such a massive product change means consumers must switch from thinking about light bulbs in terms of watts (amount of energy used) to lumens (amount of light produced.)

"Lumens, not watts, tell you how bright a light bulb is, no matter the type of bulb," explains Amy Hebert at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). "The more lumens, the brighter the light."

The consumer-focused agency has designed a "Lighting Facts" label and shopping guide that compares a bulb being purchased with traditional incandescent light bulbs based on wattages and equivalent lumens. Beginning in 2012, labels on the front and back of light bulb packages will emphasize a bulb's brightness in lumens, annual energy cost, and expected lifespan.



Is this a Bulb Ban?

Contrary to popular belief, the federal Energy Information and Security Act of 2007 does not ban incandescent bulb technology; it requires bulbs to use less energy.

"It's equivalent to standards passed in the 1980s to make refrigerators more energy efficient, and we're reaping those benefits," remarks Brian Sloboda with the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade arm of local electric co-ops. "Refrigerators use less than one-third of the electricity today than they did in the mid-1970s, but consumers can't tell a difference in how their food is cooled. The premise is, why not do the same for light bulbs?"

EISA halts the manufacture of inefficient light bulbs, but stores will not remove tried-and-true incandescent bulbs from shelves come New Year's Day. Current inventory will still be available for sale until exhausted. And the improved efficiency requirements only apply to screw-based light bulbs; specialty bulbs for appliances, heavy-duty bulbs, colored lights, and three-way bulbs are exempt.

Explore Your Options

Once traditional incandescents go the way of the passenger pigeon, residential bulbs will largely fit in three categories, each stacking up a bit differently:

- Halogen Incandescents: Use 25 percent less energy, last three times longer than regular incandescent bulbs
- Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs): Use 75 percent less energy, last up to 10 times longer

- LEDs: Use between 75 percent and 80 percent less energy, last up to 25 times longer

"LEDs are the up-and-coming solution," predicts Schuellerman. "As they come down in price, homeowners will embrace them. Currently, most residential LEDs are used for outdoor lighting where fixtures are left on for extended periods and changing bulbs is not easily done. LEDs are also great for linear applications like under cabinet lighting, where light sources with thin profiles are needed."

LEDs are more expensive than other options: a replacement for a 60-W incandescent bulb costs between \$30 and \$60. But costs will fall as manufacturers respond to growing consumer demand.

For example, in 2008 LEDs comprised 10 percent of the output from CREE Inc., a Durham, N.C.-based lighting manufacturer. Fast-forward three years and LEDs are responsible for 70 percent of the company's businesses, and bulb efficiency has doubled. Innovations like a new production line last year are driving down costs.

LEDs are not without their problems. They have to stay cool to operate efficiently, and when several bulbs are placed together for a brighter, more consumer-friendly light, lifespan decreases. However, many manufacturers are accounting for this by adding cooling elements to LED bulbs. Some bulbs feature a spine design to allow air to flow around the base; other models have fans built into the ballast.

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MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

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Editor: Sue Pawelk

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on our members, programs and events.

All member story ideas and comments are welcome.
Send to Sue Pawelk at the address above.

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday
7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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

What is First Call medical monitoring?



Having First Call in the home is just like having someone with you all the time.

phone is coded to a certain person when it is installed. At the time of installation, we will help you provide CRC with a list of responders that can include family, friends or neighbors who live close by and can get to the home quickly to help if necessary. When the pendant is pressed, CRC will contact one of these responders or emergency services and stay on the phone with the caller until help arrives.

Frequently asked questions:

What type of facilities is First Call designed for?

The MainStreet Messenger phone is designed for use in a home or apartment.

Who installs the First Call?

The system can be easily installed by the Co-op's trained staff in a few minutes, with the entire process taking less than an hour.

How large is the pendant? Is it waterproof?

The pendant is very small and lightweight and can be worn around the neck or wrist. Yes, the pendant is waterproof.

How far away from the system will the pendant work?

The system can be activated from up to approximately 100 feet away. If the client frequently works outside in the garden or goes to get the mail, the pendant range can be tested when doing the install to verify how far the client can go.

What is the range of the system's speakerphone and microphone?

The system automatically adjusts its speakerphone sensitivity and volume for varying conditions. In the event of an emergency call, the microphone and speaker volume are maximized, allowing clear two-way voice communication anywhere in the room or adjacent rooms. The microphone's listen-in range is

approximately 2,500 square feet, depending on the design and layout of the structure.

Can the First Call system be used to make outbound calls and receive inbound calls?

Yes — First Call functions as a standard telephone and includes the ability to program speed dial telephone numbers. Users can also answer inbound telephone calls by pressing their pendant, thus activating the speakerphone and end the call by pressing their pendant again.

Does the system operate during a power outage?

Should your power be interrupted, the system has a built-in battery back-up that will operate for six hours.

What does the system cost?

An initial \$49 plus tax installation fee and a \$30 per month monitoring/lease fee. Service is provided on a month-by-month lease, as long as you want to keep it. There is no long-term contract.

What if the system needs to be serviced?

The system requires no regular servicing. In the event of a problem, our trained staff will repair or replace the phone at no added cost to you.

Call McLeod Co-op Power at 1-800-494-6272 to schedule an installation or ask more questions.



The employees and directors of McLeod Cooperative Power wish all of our members and their families a blessed Thanksgiving. Take this time to be grateful for the many blessings we each enjoy.

The MCPA office will be closed Thursday and Friday Nov. 24 & 25. Please use the 24-hour outage number to reach the Cooperative for outages, emergencies or other messages: 1-800-927-5685.

Payments will be due in the office Monday the 28th. Members may use the drop box at the front of the office to deliver payments to us over the holiday weekend.

Ridgewater College scholarship recipients for 2011

When the Cooperative has unclaimed capital credits, the State of Minnesota allows us to either turn the money over to the state or donate it to an educational foundation such as Ridgewater Foundation. The dollars are used to fund scholarships for students attending Ridgewater College in Hutchinson and Willmar.

For 2011, the spring and fall scholarship recipients at Ridgewater from MCPA Co-op unclaimed capital credit funds were: Daniel Wiprud, Jason Willems, Stephanie Olson, Kristan Crotty, Kyle Hoffman, Marissa Walter, Timothy Olson, Brittany Nissen, and Mitchell Bulau.

CRC
Cooperative
Response
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Power restoration is a logical process to get the power on quickly and safely

One of the major causes of power outages is damage from fallen trees—usually the result of bad weather. According to the Rel-Tech Group, about 80% of major grid failures from 1965 to 2009 in the United States and Canada were attributed to extreme

weather, including summer and winter storms; hurricanes, and heat waves. High winds, lightning strikes, and ice can knock down trees and power lines, causing either localized or widespread outages.

So what happens when the lights go out?

Your Cooperative's goal is to restore power to the greatest number of customers in the shortest amount of time. A detailed plan helps the Co-op prioritize what to do, which includes communicating to restoration crews and the members to improve efficiency and maintain safety.

In general, the following steps occur:

1. If a storm is approaching, local repair crews are put on standby so they can respond quickly to problems.
2. The first priority is to repair downed transmission lines because these high-voltage lines (between 32,500 and 115,000 volts) supply power from a generating plant to one or more distribution substations and serve thousands of members.
3. Substations (electrical facilities that contain equipment for switching or regulating the voltage of electricity) are repaired next. There are about a dozen of these substations, each serving hundreds or thousands of members.
4. Main distribution lines are 7,200-volt lines along roadways that carry power from the substation. Each line may serve dozens or hundreds of members. When the problem causing the outage is corrected at this stage, all customers served by the distribution line will have power restored.
5. Tap lines are electric feeder lines with limited capacity that run from a main distribution or feeder line to transformer poles or underground transformers outside of buildings. Because these lines serve only a few customers, they have lower priority. Even if these lines are repaired, the member will still

be without power until the main line is repaired.

6. Individual service lines run from the transformer to a building's meter. If this line is damaged, it may explain why your neighbor has power and you do not. This type of damage has the lowest priority since the line only serves one customer.

Tips for Customers

There are a variety of things a customer can do to minimize the impact of a power outage before, during, and after the event:

- Always have a backup generator ready in case of an outage.
- If you see a downed line, stay away from it and call 911 or the Co-op immediately. If a power line contacts your car, stay in the vehicle and keep others away. Never drive over downed power lines.

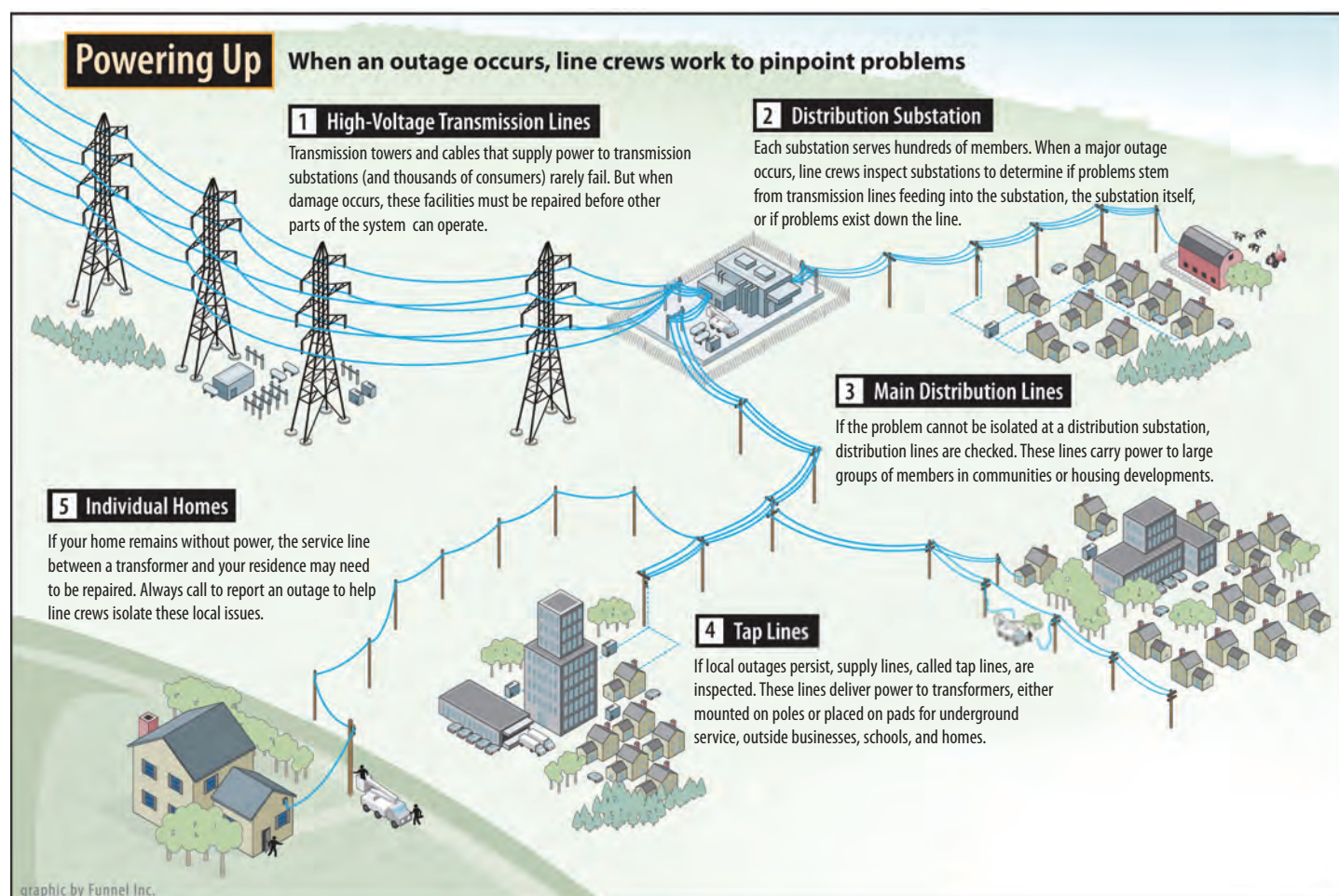
- Call as soon as you are aware of the outage. Member calls help repair crews locate damage. Provide the location number, account number or address.
- Damage to meters or other facility equipment may require repair before reconnection to the grid.
- Crews may be working in your area. Slow down and give the line crews plenty of room when you see orange safety cones or other safety barriers present.

The future of outage handling

Cooperatives and other utilities are keeping an eye on what is termed "smart grids", which combine smart devices, automation, and applications that adapt in real time to help improve a cooperative's response time to power outages as well as power reliability.

According to one estimate, smart grids could decrease power interruptions by more than 75% by 2020. Outages resulting from equipment problems will be prevented before they occur. In the case of an outage, smart grids will alert the Co-op to exactly which homes and businesses are out of service before a customer has to call. Before dispatching crews, specialized software will automatically reroute power to isolate damage. Crews will be sent to the exact location with the help of geospatial information systems (GIS), similar to Google maps. Power will be restored more quickly and efficiently than ever before.

Source: Tech Resources, Inc.



Protect your septic system from freezing

All it takes is one cold snap and a lack of snow cover to put the freeze on your drainfield or mound septic system. A frozen septic system is not only inconvenient and problematic, it can be expensive.

If you suspect your system is having problems (slow drains, liquid surfacing in the yard), you should take immediate action with the help of a septic system professional to remedy the problem before winter sets in. If your system is currently working fine, now is the time to take steps to reduce your chances of a frozen system.

Fall is a good time to prepare your septic system for winter cold. Following these steps can go a long way to preventing a real headache when the winter winds howl:

1 Add a layer of mulch (straw, leaves, hay or other loose material) 8-12 inches deep over the pipes, tank and soil treatment system for extra insulation. This is especially important during a milder winter when snowfall may be less. Added insulation is particularly important if you've had a new system installed and vegetative cover hasn't been established. Letting grass grow longer in the late fall also helps add insulation and hold snow in place.

2 Keep off the snow. Snow serves as an insulating blanket over the septic tank and soil treatment area by reducing the loss of

heat from the sewage and the geo-thermal heat from the soil. However, compacted snow doesn't insulate as well. Automobile, snowmobile, ATV, livestock and human foot traffic over the sewer pipes, tank and drainfield should be avoided. This type of traffic not only compacts the snow but also sends the frost deeper into the ground.

3 Keep the lid on. Open and uncapped riser or inspection pipes and manholes allow cold air into the system. All risers, inspection pipes and manholes should have covers, and possibly additional rigid foam insulation.

4 Check for proper alignment. Pipes that don't have proper fall (change of elevation) or pipes that settle or sag after installation can cause sewage to collect and freeze in low spots. Make sure all sewage drains out of the pipes.

5 Plan for extended leaves. When homes or cabins are unoccupied for long periods of time, sewage isn't entering the system in sufficient amounts to maintain temperature above freezing. Perhaps someone could visit occasionally and use sufficient quantities of water to keep the system operating. Better yet, pump out your tank before leaving.

Remember, preventing freeze-up is easier and less expensive than thawing out or repairing a frozen septic system.

INDUSTRY News

Wet conditions lead to messy mining

If you've ever tried to dig a hole in wet soil, you know that a little water can make for a lot more work. You dig and dig, but dirt always finds its way back into the hole.

Workers are facing a similar situation at Falkirk Mine, the fuel source of Great River Energy's largest power plant, Coal Creek Station. Record precipitation has led to immense flooding across much of North Dakota and saturated soil to the point that mining has slowed. Not only does the soil have more moisture, there's also more soil (called overburden).

Heavy rain and deeper overburden means more fuel, workers and tires — and higher costs. Although these cost increases are significant, Coal Creek Station still provides some of the most cost-effective electricity in the region. It's most significant advantage is location. The plant was sited close to the coal reserves of the Falkirk Mine, which minimizes fuel transportation costs. Great River Energy is exploring new ways to overcome the latest challenge so that its members continue to receive reliable, affordable power.

~Great River News

Electric heat cheapest heat this winter

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the cost of heating with natural gas, propane and oil are all expected to increase primarily due to higher fuel prices.

"The number of households heating with electricity is expected to increase by 1.7 percent from last winter," EIA said. "About 80 percent of the increase occurs in the South, where heat pumps are popular." The winter will not be as kind to those heating with natural gas, propane or oil, with household heating expenditures expected to rise by 3 percent, 7 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Approximately half of all U.S. households use natural gas as a heating fuel, according to EIA, and the increase in costs represents a 4-percent increase in fuel prices and a 1-percent decrease in expected consumption. Five percent of U.S. households heat with propane, and specific fuel price increases are expected to vary widely across regions. For the 6 percent of households heating with oil, high fuel costs—the highest average winter price on record—will drive up average winter heating costs by \$193, according to EIA.

Residential heating oil prices are expected to average \$3.71 per gallon this winter, 33 cents per gallon higher than last winter.

-CFC Solutions News Bulletin

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Water Storage program works like storing energy in a big battery

For decades, members on the Hot Water Storage Program have been heating their water during the middle of the night, storing it in an extra large hot water heater (85 or 105 gallon tank or two 52 gallon tanks) and then having hot water available to use all day. The benefit to the consumer is that they pay the 5 cent off-peak electric rate, saving over 50% most of the year and 58% during the summer when energy rates are higher. A family of four saves \$35-40 a month on their electric bill by heating water on the storage program.

Members who heat their water at night also help the Co-op. For decades, there has been more energy (cheap energy) available for sale at night when most folks are sleeping and not using electricity. But with the increase of energy generation from wind turbines, which are pumping more kilowatts into the grid during the night than during the day, it has become especially important to find a place to sell those kilowatts during the night time hours. Using the energy generated at night by renewable sources to heat up a tank full of water and store it for use 24/7 is just like storing that energy in a big battery. The water tank is just like a big battery — taking in the BTUs, storing them in the water, and using the hot water throughout the day.

The Co-ops have been using this

technology for decades. It is such an economical system. Members save a lot of money by participating in the Hot Water Storage Program, which comes with a satisfaction guarantee. The utilities are able to make use of more of the renewable energy produced. It is good for members and the environment and it makes a lot of financial sense for everyone involved.

So, we encourage any member that is not already on the Hot Water Storage Program, to get on the program and heat water at night. Use your water heater as a big battery. It will reduce the bill of any member currently heating their water at the regular rate. There is currently a \$200 rebate for members with an uncontrolled electric water heater that converts to the Hot Water Storage program before Dec. 31. Call the Co-op to check out the details today. If your current water heater is less than 80 gallons, the minimum to qualify for the storage program, the Co-op has 85 and 105 gallon Marathon water heaters for sale.

McLeod Co-op Power has over 1,000 members that have been participating in this program for years and satisfaction ratings are very high. Members hardly notice they are on the program and they save a lot of money on their monthly electric bill. If you have central air conditioning, that can qualify for the lower rate also.

Power Line Worker Scholarships Offered

Students accepted into one of Minnesota's three power line technology programs for the 2012-13 school term may apply for a \$500 scholarship. The Cooperative will award up to four \$500 scholarships for local students.

If you are graduating from a high school in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or Carver County or are a resident of one of those four counties, and have been accepted into the line worker program at Minnesota West in Jackson, Minnesota State in Wadena or Rosemount Technical College in



Rosemount, you are eligible to apply.

Applications and informative career brochures are available by calling the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272. Applications must be completed and returned by April 16, 2012.

Contact Gopher State One Call before you dig



Gopher State One Call is a non-profit organization formed to act as a communications link between excavators and member utility companies. The service provided to you is free as Minnesota utility companies support the system. Minnesota law requires that everyone who intends to excavate must provide two full working days' notice. During those 48 hours, the utility companies will mark the approximate location of their facilities. Avoid or dig with extra care in the tolerance zone (two feet each side of the utility marks). Watch for private facilities such as sprinklers, secondary power lines to house or garage or out buildings, gas grill line, or invisible fencing, as these lines will not be located by Minnesota utility companies. It is your responsibility to conduct excavation in a careful and prudent manner. Never assume the depth of a utility, or multiple utilities, are consistent.

You can call in to Gopher State One Call on the phone 1-800-252-1166 or you can process your request using Gopher State One Call's E-ticket system by visiting www.gopherstateonecall.org.

You may contact Gopher State online 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Office hours for phone calls are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m..



Give safety for Christmas — the perfect gift for the elderly parent who has everything else

As winter settles in and the holidays approach, have you thought about your parents living at home by themselves during the long winter season? How about the neighbors or other family members who have a hard time getting around or have some medical problems and need someone to check on them often?

McLeod Cooperative Power can help. One of the many services we have to offer you is First Call. It is a 24-hour emergency response system which offers assistance by simply pushing a button.

Whenever the alert key on a special telephone or the button on a cordless pendant is pressed, the phone automatically dials a preprogrammed help number at the monitoring center. Once the connection is made, the speaker phone is automatically

activated to allow hands-free, two-way voice communication. The monitoring center then contacts pre-determined numbers, such as a family member, neighbor, or 911, to let them know that help is needed while still staying on the line with the individual who needs help.

The cordless emergency response pendant is ideal for those who live alone and for people with mobility problems. In a crisis or any situation requiring immediate action, pressing the button on the pendant will initiate the emergency help sequence. In addition, incoming calls can be answered from across the room by the cordless pendant.

For a low monthly cost, you may have this easy-to-use security telephone system in your home or that of a family member. Call 1-800-494-6272 for more information.

MCPA Director Candidate Application

The undersigned, a member of McLeod Cooperative Power Association, hereby applies as a nominee for director of McLeod Cooperative Power Association from District _____ and requests that my name be considered by the Nominating Committee to be placed on the ballot for the next election for director from said district to be held at the next Annual Meeting, April 10, 2012.

I certify that my account is current and I am a member in good standing with McLeod Cooperative Power Association from District _____.

I certify that I am a resident of District _____ and am receiving electric energy from McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

I certify that I am not in a competing business with McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

If elected director, I agree to attend as many meetings of the Board of Directors as possible and to abide by the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws and Policies of McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

What makes a good director?

At McLeod Cooperative Power we believe that our Board of Directors comprises a pillar connection with our membership and the community at large. Besides meeting the legal requirements for Director nomination, we are seeking individuals who hold some important personal characteristics. We've summarized these attributes below.

Possess a sincere interest in preserving the strength of the Cooperative's operations and maintaining a productive relationship with its consumer-members. McLeod Cooperative Power has assets of about \$25 million, employs 33 people and is responsible for providing quality electric service to more than 6,000 sites, as well as a variety of ancillary services. Our electric distribution system serves a diverse membership consisting of residences, farms, businesses and industries. While representing all members of the district, **Directors must work with each other to ensure equitable treatment to all members across the entire distribution system.**

Be willing and available to fully participate in the business activities of the Cooperative. Attendance is expected at all scheduled Board of Directors meetings. In addition, from time to time, Directors will be called upon to represent the Cooperative at other meetings and events where their presence is deemed to be beneficial to the Cooperative.

Remain accessible to the members whom they represent. Since the Directors are elected from and by the Cooperative's membership, it is important that they work to **maintain open lines of communication with their constituents. They should also strive to be knowledgeable about trends and circumstances that may impact the people and communities of central Minnesota,** and be capable of using basic pc skills to receive electronic communications and reports from the co-op.

Be enthusiastic. During these times of accelerated change, we look for proactive, resourceful and inspired leadership.

Director elections in 2012 will include Districts 4, 5 and 6

District elections in 2012 will be held in **District 4** which includes *Boon Lake, Preston Lake, Brookfield, Hector, Osceola, and a portion of Kingman Township, all in Renville County, and a portion of East Lake Lillian Township in Kandiyohi County, served by McLeod Co-op Power.* In **District 5**, volunteers and candidates may reside in *Lynn, Collins, or Round Grove Townships in McLeod County.* The election in **District 6** includes *New Auburn, Arlington, Green Isle, Dryden and Transit Townships, all in Sibley County.* If you reside in one of these townships, you may volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee for your district.

2011 Year-to-date load management control through Oct. 31

<u>Program</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Days</u>
Cycled Cooling	97	17
Dual Fuel	48	21
Interruptible Water Heating	268	43
Irrigation	64	16
C&I Gensets	58	7
C&I Curtailable	41	7

Keeping your household pets safe from the dangers of electricity

Puppies and kittens are cute and curious. The cute part can sometimes keep them from getting into trouble, like when they start chewing on a shoe. But cute won't help them if they begin to chew on or play with electrical equipment - doing that can put your pet in serious danger of injury or death and create a shock or fire hazard in the home. Spending a little time pet proofing your home will help you avoid a pet-related accident.

- Make sure all plugs are inserted completely into their wall sockets. Small paws, noses and tongues can easily find their way onto the partially-exposed prongs.
- If your pet demonstrates an interest in electrical cords, check the cords frequently for signs of fraying and replace any damaged cords immediately. If you must leave your pet unsupervised, make sure any loose electrical cords are unplugged or tucked out of sight. If your pet continues to seek them out, coat the cords with bitter-tasting pet deterrent available at your local pet store. If that fails, you can wrap the cords in flexible cable, or encase them in PVC. Some stores also offer pet-proof cords that serve the same purpose.
- Appliances near sinks and bathtubs should only be plugged into outlets equipped with ground fault interrupter (GFCI) protection in case an electrical appliance is knocked into the water. If your cat enjoys playing in the sink, make sure no electrical appliances (like radios or curling irons) are left unattended on the bathroom counter.
- Lamps with exposed bulbs — especially halogens — can reach very high temperatures. Do not allow pets to play near lamps. If the lamp is knocked over, a fire could break out.

- Some pets, especially cats, will often seek out warm, secluded spots in the home. Do not allow your pet to hide or sleep behind your computer, or TV equipment where numerous electrical connections are housed.
- If you have an aquarium, make sure you create a drip loop on every electrical cord that enters the tank. This will prevent water from running down the cord and into the electrical outlet. To be sure the cord stays looped, stick a cord clip on the wall just below the outlet and thread the cord into the clip.
- If you have a fenced, outdoor area for your dog, be mindful of any underground electrical or cable lines running through that area. Make sure the lines are buried at appropriate depths, especially if your dog likes to dig. In the event of an electrical storm, bring all pets indoors immediately.
- Take special care during the holiday season. Pets may be tempted to chew on, or play with decorative light strands.

If you think your pet may have suffered an electrical shock, approach it with caution to keep from being injured by the same electrical danger, and to keep from being bitten. Inspect the animal for injuries and get your pet to an animal care center as soon as possible.

Heed the precautions to keep your playful pet and your home safe!





Update for any consumer considering solar or a wind turbine

Any MCPA member that is thinking about purchasing and installing solar or wind generation and interconnecting to the grid to sell power back to the Co-op, needs to follow certain steps. We also caution consumers to do their homework. Considerable research should be done before you are ready to make a decision to purchase a distributed generation system. Request a renewable energy packet from the Co-op. We can also provide you with an application form, rates, details, etc.

Recommended sequence of events before a renewable energy source can be selling power into the grid:

1. Start researching wind or solar.
2. Get Co-op packet and read requirements.
3. Continue researching products, wind speeds, payback, financial and technical data.
4. Make sure that the turbine being installed is pre-certified by Underwriters Laboratories or another approved testing agency if you mark it as "Pre-certified" on the application. A certificate of compliance will be required before interconnection. If the distributed generation package (interfacing components, inverter, and generator) is not pre-certified, we require a certification of compliance for the distributed generation system design and installation from a licensed Professional Engineer recognized by the State of Minnesota. The Co-op has a list of items to be included in the Professional Engineer Certification if you need to go that route. Solar units require a certificate of compliance also.
5. Get approval of township/county planning & zoning if necessary.
6. Complete application form. Return to Co-op with \$50 application fee and required documents/drawings. **(Don't order or pay for generation equipment until you have completed Items 1-6).**
7. When approved, if no interconnection studies are required, meet with Co-op at the site to discuss plans. Get a quote on any costs from the Co-op. Consumer pays for special metering, transformer upgrades, or service extension costs.
8. Meet all requirements per state and federal regulations. Have liability insurance coverage in place.
9. Sign standard Minnesota contract with Co-op. Pay any upgrade/service extension costs.
10. Proceed with construction. Co-op to proceed with our upgrades, metering, service extensions.
11. State electrical inspector must inspect and approve components, system and electrical installation for safety and compliance with codes before you can interconnect. (It is recommended that inspection of components be done with inspector before generator is assembled or install.)

Please call Sue Pawelk at McLeod Co-op Power 1-800-494-6272 for helpful information if you are considering investing in any distributed generation project.

Make The SWITCH LED Christmas light strings eligible for \$2 rebate

Turn in your old lights and get up to \$10 off new LED light strings instantly

To get members to decorate their homes — both indoors and outdoors — with the very efficient LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights, the Cooperative is offering a rebate of \$2 per string of lights.

The three participating hardware stores in our service area are: Hutchinson ACE Hardware, Hite Hardware in Glencoe and Home Solutions in Norwood Young America. The rebate offer is available only to McLeod Cooperative Power members November 1 through December 24, 2011 or while light supplies last. Each member may use this coupon in the newsletter to get the \$2 per string rebate on up to five strings of LED holiday lights, for a maximum rebate of \$10 per member. Save this coupon because reproductions will not be accepted!

LED Christmas lights come in mini-light sizes, icicle lights, larger C6 lights (sized like the larger outdoor lamps used 20 years ago), LED rope light and many other varieties. They can be used indoor or outdoor. LED strings use 90% less energy than a string of mini-bulbs. They last 50,000 to 100,000 hours. They are safer and are cool to the touch. If one bulb goes out, the rest stay lit. They also are sturdier and are difficult to damage. Many even come with a lifetime or many-year warranty. LED light strings are the best and most efficient way to decorate for Christmas or any holiday.

YOU MUST FOLLOW THESE STEPS CAREFULLY TO GET YOUR REBATE:

1. Cut out the coupon from your October newsletter or contact the Co-op if you no longer have your coupon.
 2. Take the coupon and up to 5 old strings of holiday lights to one of the hardware stores listed on the coupon.
 3. Purchase one to five strings of LED Christmas lights that have at least 50 bulbs per string.
 4. Present your completed coupon at the checkout with your old strings to get \$2 off each string you are purchasing, up to a maximum rebate of \$10 per member.
- If members purchase ENERGY STAR LED holiday light strings from a different retailer than these three participating stores, and want to receive the rebate, they must bring five old strings of lights to the Co-op, and give us a sales receipt for their light purchase along with the completed rebate form. These alternate rebates will be accepted through December 27, 2011. A credit for the rebate amount will be applied to the next electric bill.

Holiday light recycling program

Announcing a holiday light recycling program that will give local residents a place to get rid of their holiday light strings, where their components will be recycled. And best of all the recycling service is providing jobs to local disabled persons via Adult Training and Habilitation Center (ATHC), located in Winsted and Hutchinson. Co-op members and the general public may drop their light strings into recycling boxes located at McLeod Co-op Power, ACE Hardware in Hutchinson, Hite Hardware in Glencoe, or Home Solutions in Norwood Young America and a variety of other locations where ATHC have set up collection boxes. There is no charge to drop off light strings. Old electrical, appliance and telephone cords are also accepted. Only battery chargers and adapters are not accepted. All the old holiday light strings brought in by members when they participate in the \$2 rebate for new LED holiday light strings, will be recycled through this program.

Coupon was available in the October newsletter