

NEWS

January 2013

Inside this issue...



Tips for increasing the energy efficiency of your garage door

5



Apply now for power line worker scholarships

7



Coal Creek Tour
June 17 - 19

8

Official publication of



www.mcleodcoop.com

New internet service is sure to Exede your expectations

The new Exede high-speed internet service offered by McLeod Co-op Power for nearly nine months has been exceeding our expectations. It has been exceeding the speed and performance standards with our customers also. The program advertises speeds up to 12 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, however, we have found

download speeds to significantly exceed that 12 Mbps when testing new Exede installations.

This is many times faster than the WildBlue internet service we have offered for several years at 512 kb to 1.5 Mbps. Quite a few of the Co-op's

WildBlue subscribers have switched to the Exede service and have been very pleased with the faster performance. Exede works especially well for our small business users and customers who telecommute from home. Exede delivers its broadband signal via a satellite dish that can be located on the side or roof of your home or on a post mounted in the ground.



Speed	12 Mbps download 3 Mbps upload	12 Mbps download 3 Mbps upload	12 Mbps download 3 Mbps upload
Customer	Light Internet Users 10 GB/month	Moderate Internet Users 15 GB/month	Heavy Internet Users 25 GB/month
Price	\$49.99/month	79.99/month	129.99/month

All plans require 24 month commitment. One time set-up fee of \$149.99 and \$6.95/month protection plan. Speeds are "up to" and not guaranteed. Actual speed will vary.

Call the Cooperative to sign up for Exede service at 1-800-494-6272.

Director candidate applications accepted until January 18

Any member from Districts 7, 8, or 9 that would like to submit their name as a director candidate to the nominating committee, should submit a completed director application form to the Cooperative by January 18, 2013. Director application forms were published in the November and December newsletters and are also available upon request.

Changes to ENERGY STAR rebate program for 2013

Rebates for high-efficiency heat pumps will continue to require installation by a "registered contractor" which has been designated as a quality installer and is listed on the hvaceducation.net web site. A list of all "registered contractors" in Minnesota is on our Cooperative web site at www.mcleodcoop.com.

\$2000 maximum rebate per member. There will be no rebates in 2013 for dishwashers, clothes washers, dehumidifiers, or air conditioners. Refrigerator/freezer units will require recycling of the old unit to qualify for rebates.

2013 Rebates

Ground Source Heat Pumps (controlled or uncontrolled)

Residential	\$400/ton
Commercial	\$400/ton

Air Source Heat Pump

13 SEER	\$330
14 SEER	\$480
15 SEER	\$580
16 SEER or higher	\$630

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump\$300

Storage Space Heating\$ 40/kW

ECM Motor\$100

Uncontrolled electric water heater going on the Storage Water Heating with high efficiency water heater*\$300

New construction or gas conversion to Storage Water Heating*\$300

Peak shave to Storage Water Heating*\$300

Heat pump water heater - new construction.....\$100

Heat pump water heater replacing non-controlled electric\$200

ENERGY STAR Refrigerator with recycling of old unit\$75

ENERGY STAR Freezer with recycling of old unit\$75

*(Marathon or equivalent energy rated heater)

Limited rebates in 2013

Rebates for load management, Energy Star appliances, and energy conservation grants will have limited funding for 2013. Rebates will be processed on a first come, first serve basis and when we run out of funding for 2013, rebates will cease. So do not delay if you are planning on making a purchase of an energy-efficient heat pump, refrigerator or other eligible product and you are counting on a rebate. Make your purchase and turn in your rebate paperwork early in the year.

Most rebates remained at the same dollar amount as the 2012 rebates. Changes include: 1) water storage rebates increased to \$300; 2) rebates on central air conditioners will not be offered in 2013, however rebates for air source heat pumps will remain the same; and 3) rebates will be limited to a maximum rebate of \$2,000 per consumer.

If you have questions on rebates for 2013 call the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272. Visit our website at www.mcleodcoop.com to download rebate forms for ground source heat pumps and appliances. Forms for air source heat pump installations are completed by your certified installer.

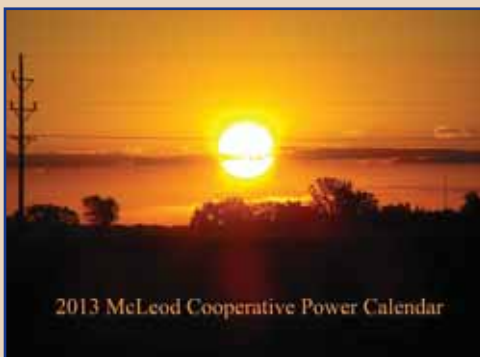
MCPA Office closed the afternoon of February 1

The Cooperative office will be closed the afternoon of Friday, February 1 so all employees can participate in an employee meeting. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

PURPA policy information available upon request

The PURPA (Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act) of 1978 states that McLeod Cooperative Power Association is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers. McLeod Cooperative Power Association will provide information to all interested persons free of charge upon request. Any disputes over interconnection, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Public Utilities Commission upon complaint. If any member has questions regarding PURPA policies, contact McLeod Cooperative Power Association, per Rule 7835.4600.

Scenic 2013 calendars available while supply lasts



This year's 2013 scenic Minnesota calendars are available in the Cooperative office. Please stop in and pick up a copy. First come, first serve, while supplies last.

Manager's Message —

by Kris Ingenthron, General Manager
McLeod Cooperative Power Association



Recognizing the sacrifices of linemen's families

McLeod Cooperative Power Association linemen don't work alone on our power lines.

Whether they are climbing old poles, restoring power after a storm, or clearing tree limbs to prevent future outages, they are never far from the hearts of the people who love them.

At this time of year, we are thankful for the many things we have and receive. But to be honest those sentiments pale in comparison to the bonds of love I see every time a storm sweeps through our area.

If the lights go out, the families of our linemen send their loved ones out into the elements. When other electric cooperatives are in trouble after devastating hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and floods, our linemen have traveled to bring the lights back on for complete strangers. Each

time these brave men leave home to help those in need, their families are left behind, hoping and praying for a safe return.

Working with high-voltage electricity, our linemen find themselves exposed to hazardous situations on a regular basis. That's why all of us here at McLeod Cooperative Power focus on safety first. I know the families of our linemen appreciate the time we take to make sure all of them will get home safe each and every night.

Marrying into this profession isn't easy. McLeod Cooperative Power linemen are often on call, and must be ready to respond at a moment's notice if our members need them. This makes attending their children's sporting events, school functions, family get-togethers, and yes, even Christmas celebrations hard to pull off at times. But these dedicated men

who keep your power flowing do so because they know that without their commitment, many of the things we've come to expect — cold food, lights, heat — wouldn't be possible. By devoting their lives to working on utility lines, they connect all of us to a better way of life.

As the New Year is upon us, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of the families who support and love the men who brave the elements and work long hours to keep the electricity flowing to our homes each and every day. Thank you for putting your love on the line — all of us at McLeod Cooperative Power Association are committed to making sure the men you love return home safe.

Kris Ingenthron

Power cost adjustment is a credit this month

Each month members see a power cost adjustment (PCA) line on their bill. It has usually been an additional charge to member bills. However, this month it is a credit — or a reduction in member bills. The PCA varies from month to month based upon costs from our power supplier Great River Energy. A PCA credit from them has helped to reduce our costs also and allow for the PCA credit this month.

Annual Meeting is April 9

Mark your calendars for the Co-op's Annual Meeting. It is planned to be a morning meeting this year on Tuesday, April 9, at the Hutchinson Event Center.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Oria Brinkmeier, **Lester Prairie**

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Brownton

District 3

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New Germany

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

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Editor: Sue Pawelk

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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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Fax: 320-864-4850**

Web site: www.mcleodcoop.com

Gopher State One Call 1-800-252-1166

Nominations by petition for director candidacy to be submitted by March 15

Cooperative members residing in Districts 7, 8, or 9 may petition to have their name added to the slate of candidates for the 2013 director election in their district. To have another name, in addition to the two candidate names selected by the nominating committee on the ballot, you may file a nomination by petition.

The petition must be signed by 20 or more McLeod Cooperative Power Association electric members residing in your district and it must be submitted to the Cooperative secretary not less than 25 days prior to the Annual Meeting. The last day that a petition can be submitted is March 15, 2013.

The Cooperative secretary shall post at the Cooperative office the names of additional nominations and also persons selected by the nominating committee.

District 7 includes: Hale, Rich Valley and Glencoe Townships in McLeod County and part of Stockholm Township in Wright County.

District 8 includes: Melville, Palmyra, Martinsburg, Bandon, Norfolk, Wellington, and Bird Island Townships in Renville County, and Grafton, Moltke, and Bismarck Townships in Sibley County.

District 9 includes: Hollywood, Camden, Watertown and Young America Townships in Carver County, and parts of Woodland and Franklin Townships in Wright County.

A change will do you good

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, dirty air filters could add \$82 to your electric bill every year. Checking, changing, or cleaning your filter once a month saves money and extends the life of your home's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.



More than half of your home's energy bill goes toward keeping your home comfortable. While air filters prevent pesky dust and annoying allergens from clogging your HVAC system, dirt and other particles build up over time. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder to keep you warm or cool — wasting energy and money. A clean filter will help prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system, which could lead to expensive maintenance and possibly early system failure.

Successful filters have a short lifespan. The better a filter is at catching dirt, the faster it will get clogged and must be cleaned or replaced. Leaving a dirty air filter in place reduces a home's air quality and HVAC system airflow. While removing a clogged filter altogether relieves pressure on the system; the system can't perform well without one. Unfiltered dust and grime accumulate on critical parts like the evaporator coil, causing unnecessary wear and tear.

The U.S. Department of Energy advises checking an air filter once a month and replacing it at least every three months. It is critical to inspect and replace filters before seasons of heavy use like summer and winter. If you have pets or smokers in the home, filters clog quickly. Remodeling projects or furniture sanding contributes more pollutants than normal.

Turn your heating or cooling system off before checking the filter. Slide the filter out of the ductwork and inspect it for dust and dirt. When replacing the filter, make sure the arrow on the filter indicating the direction of the air flow points toward the blower motor. To help schedule monthly check-ups, write the date on the side of the filter so you know when it needs to be checked. Once you have made the change, turn your system back on.

No Worries. Just Hot Water



Rebate for joining Water Storage Program goes up to \$300

While rebate funds last, the Cooperative is providing a \$300 rebate for each member installing the Water Storage Program. Get on board now and start saving more than 50 percent on your water heating costs today by heating water at night on the storage rate.

By installing a Marathon water heater or equivalent high-efficiency water heater with at least 100 gallons of capacity on the storage program, you will receive the rebate plus savings every month of the year on your water heating. A water heater that is 85 gallons with a mixing valve qualifies as 100-plus gallons of capacity.

Call the Co-op to sign up for the storage water heating program today. Over 1,100 Co-op members participate. They are all saving over six cents per kWh on all of their water heating by charging their water heater from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. when excess energy is available. The larger tank is needed because the water heater remains off for the 16 hours from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

November Outage Summary

During November there were 20 outages reported on the Cooperative's system. We had three outages caused by lightning, which is unusual for November.

- The largest outage was on Tuesday, November 6 about 6:25 a.m. It affected 20 members in Judson Woods Development north of Hutchinson. It was caused by a underground cable failure and the outage was restored in two hours and twenty minutes.
- The second largest outage was southeast of Hutchinson on Saturday, November 10, at 10 p.m. It affected 19 members and was caused by lightning. The outage was restored in one hour and seventeen minutes. This same storm produced two more outages from lightning; a single location outage in the same area and a line outage affecting 14 members southeast of Winsted from 3:00 to 4:30 a.m. on Nov. 11th.
- The next largest outage was west of Winthrop on Friday, November 23, at 9:30 a.m. It affected 19 members. Cause of the outage was a jumper that fell off of the line. Power was restored in one hour and eleven minutes.

Most outages affect only one or two members. They are frequently caused by small animals, trees in the line, equipment failure, or motor vehicle/machinery accidents. Larger outages affecting hundreds of members at a time are usually caused by transmission outages, storms, equipment failure to substation equipment, or accidents.

Restoration time on weekend and evening outages, when line crews are called out from home, usually take a little longer to get back on than outages when crews are already out working on the project.

Prepare now for winter storms

The snow we received this past December is just a foretaste of what we know January through March usually holds in store! Although we live in the Midwest and are used to snow and ice, we can often be surprised by the ever-changing Minnesota weather.

The most worrisome occurrence during a storm is a power outage. If the outage lasts several hours or days, keeping warm and having enough water and food on hand is crucial. Your Cooperative urges you to be prepared with the following safety tips:



If you venture out during or after a snow or ice storm, watch for downed power lines. Always assume the line is energized. Stay away and call your Cooperative.

If stranded in your car or pickup

When heading out during the winter, make sure your gas tank is above half full. A winter storm can come up suddenly and you don't want to get stranded with frozen gas lines.



It's always a good idea to have a winter survival kit stashed in your trunk or cab, too, in case you find yourself stranded for several hours waiting for a storm to pass. Taking a couple of hours now to prepare could save your life later. It's well worth it!

Here are some suggestions for a winter car survival kit:

- Cell phone with extra batteries
- Blankets, sleeping bags
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Flares
- Extra dry clothing for everyone
- Extra gloves, hats, scarves, boots
- Can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking
- Energy foods, such as granola bars, nuts, dried fruit, etc., as well as non-perishable canned foods that contain protein, such as tuna
- Non-electric can opener
- Plastic eating utensils
- Sand or cat litter for traction
- Shovel
- Tow rope and booster cables
- Piece of brightly-colored cloth to use as a signal to a search vehicle
- Plastic sheeting as a waterproof barrier
- A tool kit that contains such items as pliers, tape, a compass, aluminum foil
- Contact lens solutions and a pair of glasses
- Games, books, etc., to pass the time

In your Home

Extra supply of water

A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water every day. Children, nursing mothers and ill people need even more. You also will need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least one gallon per person, per day.

Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food that requires no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Examples are:

- Ready-to-eat canned meat, fruits and vegetables, including dried fruits
- Canned juices
- High-energy snack bars/nuts
- Extra food for infants

- Comfort/stress foods

Medical Supplies

- Extra medicine/drugs
- First-aid kit

Don't forget your pets and/or farm animals. They need adequate food and water, too. Animals often die from dehydration during prolonged winter storms. Check pet shelters to make sure they are wind-proof and snug.

Battery-operated equipment

In case the phone lines are down, be sure to have the following on hand for emergencies:

- Extra batteries
- Battery-powered weather and commercial radios
- Cell phone with extra charged battery
- Flashlight

Know your winter storm and extreme cold terms

Freezing Rain: Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.

Sleet: Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.

Winter Storm Watch: A winter storm is possible in your area. Tune in to Natl. Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, commercial radio or TV for more information.

Winter Storm Warning: A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.

Blizzard Warning: Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

Frost/Freeze Warning: Below freezing temperatures are expected.

Resources include FEMA, Red Cross and Safe Electricity. For more information, go to www.fema.gov/hazard/winter, www.redcross.org/services/prepare or www.safeelectricity.org

Protect What Matters Most

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Upgrade Garage Door for Comfort, Efficiency, Safety

Q & A with James Dulley
Energy Home Improvement Specialist

Dear Jim: I do projects in my garage, which also has a bedroom above it. The garage door is an old metal one with no insulation, so I think I should replace it. What type of garage door is best?—
Stephen K.

Dear Stephen: It sounds like you definitely need to make some efficiency improvements to the garage door, for both your comfort while working and for the energy losses from the bedroom floor above it. If the builder installed an inexpensive, inefficient garage door, as many do, or it's an older building, it's likely the bedroom floor above the garage isn't well-insulated either.

When evaluating energy efficiency projects, keep in mind: Hot air goes up, but heat energy moves in all directions, including down. If your garage doesn't have a furnace duct going to it, but it stays reasonably warm, it's getting heat from somewhere. It's probably from an adjacent house wall and down from the bedroom floor above it.

Before you invest in a new, efficient garage door, inspect your existing door. If it's in relatively good condition and there are no significant drafts coming from the joints between the panels, consider installing a garage door insulation kit. Some kits provide an insulation value as high as R-8, but they won't seal air leaks through the joints between the door panels.

Owens-Corning makes an easy-to-install garage door insulation kit. It includes vinyl-backed fiberglass insulation batts, retaining clips, and tape. Cut the batts to fit the door panels. Apply strips of double-sided tape on two spots on each panel. Stick the retaining clips on the tape and push the insulation over them. A top clip snaps over each clip to hold the insulation securely in place.

Several other advantages of installing an insulation kit are reduced outdoor noise and lower lighting costs. The exposed white vinyl backing reflects light so you need fewer lights on in the garage.

If you decide you need a completely new door, there are several options. The most common garage door materials are wood, insulated steel, insulated fiberglass, and



This garage door panel has polyurethane foam insulation and interlocking seals between the panels to minimize air leakage. Source: Raynor



After clips are stuck to garage door, the fiberglass batts are pressed over the clips. Source: Owens Corning

aluminum/glass. Of these, the insulated steel or fiberglass offer the best efficiency because of the insulation value and the rigidity of the door to remain airtight over its life.

Many insulated steel doors are "wind rated" for severe weather. Even if your area doesn't have frequent high-wind storms, install the horizontal

As a safety feature, this pinch-resistant design uses unique hinge placement to keep fingers from getting pinched as the door closes. Source: Amarr



galvanized steel supports across the inner surface of the door if they were included with it. As the door rolls up to open, the edges are not interlocked to support each other. Without the supports, the panels may flex and begin to form cracks over time.

If you prefer the appearance of wood but want higher efficiency, select a clad-insulated steel garage door. Clopay developed a method to apply a one-half inch-thick polymer coating on the exterior steel skin. It has authentic wood grain molded into the surface so it looks identical to real stained wood. Another option is an embossed simulated wood finish that's painted on.

A very popular garage door style today is a simulated swing-open carriage type. It still rolls up like a typical panel garage door, but from the street it appears that two doors would swing open. These attractive doors often have some type of decorative glass across the top panel for aesthetics and for natural light in the garage.

An insulated steel door is probably the least expensive design to meet your efficiency and comfort needs. Some foam insulated steel doors, such as the Clopay Gallery Collection double-wide door that I installed at my home, have insulation values as high as R-19. The foam inside the door can be either glued-in rigid polystyrene or blown-in urethane foam. Urethane foam has a higher insulation level, but either should be satisfactory.

When choosing a steel door, look for one with a thermal break separating the outdoor and indoor metal skins to reduce heat loss. This is not a factor on a fiberglass door. If you have children, look for pinch-resistance panels. These are designed to push a finger out of the panel joints as the door closes. If you want glass in the door, make sure it's at least double-pane, insulated glass or low-E for better efficiency.

For more ways to save energy in your home, visit www.dulley.com.

INDUSTRY News

We'll help you save energy...and lose money

A new twist on the home-improvement scam targets folks who want to cut their energy bills with rooftop solar panels or windmills. Solar energy, of course, can reduce your electric bill. But making the big up-front investment can be the equivalent of paying for 30 to 40 years of electricity in advance. And lots of variables can confound payback, including living where cloudy weather is common-place or in the shadow of towering trees, terrain, or nearby tall buildings.

Consumers unfamiliar with those caveats give double-dealers an opportunity to lowball costs and talk up savings. The promised best-case scenario can lure you into paying a big deposit to a contractor who skips town or otherwise never delivers the system or savings. Some victims have been burned for several thousand dollars. Home-improvement companies are the third-most complained-about businesses, according to the latest survey of consumer-protection agencies by the Consumer Federation of American and the North American Consumer Protection Investigators.

California is the leader in residential solar, so go to its electric utility website, at pge.com/cal, to see whether solar makes sense for you. If it does, work only with licensed contractors specializing in solar installation. Conduct an energy audit, and get bids from at least three companies. Check their Better Business Bureau rating and references. Never pay the full price up front or a deposit of more than \$1,000 or 10 percent of the project price, whichever is smaller.

~Reader's Digest

Solar variability adds to the complexity of grid management

The amount of solar power on the Midwest's electricity grid is minuscule enough that a cloudy day doesn't cause problems for the system. As solar makes inroads, though, utilities may eventually need new tools to make sure they can continue providing cheap, steady power when the sun goes behind a cloud.

"The utilities are scared they won't be able to manage too much solar on the grid," says Manajit Sengupta, a senior scientist with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado who studies solar radiation. Managing an electric grid requires a constant balancing act, making sure the amount of electricity generated is always in line with what's being used by customers. Variable electricity sources like wind and solar add a layer of complexity. Solar is barely a blip today, so grid operators don't need to react every time it clouds over. If the share of electricity coming from solar increases, though, an unexpectedly overcast day could cause problems.

"The moment we start reaching 3, 4, 5 percent, that's huge. When you suddenly lose half of that, making that up is significant," says Sengupta.

~Source: Midwest Energy News

Emerson Named as Next NRECA CEO

During its Winter Board Meeting on December 3, 2012, the NRECA Board of Directors announced that U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.) will assume the role of NRECA CEO effective March 1. Emerson, who will become the fifth CEO in NRECA's 71-year history, will officially join the organization on February 11 and be formally introduced to the membership at the NRECA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, La., the following week.

"We conducted an exhaustive search to identify the very best individual to lead a great association," remarks NRECA Board President Mike Guidry of Louisiana. "We found that person in Jo Ann Emerson. Her background as a member of Congress and a trade association executive — coupled with

her extensive knowledge of the issues facing electric cooperatives and rural America — make her eminently qualified to lead NRECA and represent the interests of its members. The respect she has from both sides of the aisle and her proven ability to bridge political and policy divides and find common ground will serve us well."

Emerson, first elected to the U.S. House in 1996 from Missouri's 8th Congressional District, most recently served on the House Appropriations Committee and as chairman of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations



Subcommittee, which has oversight of the U.S. Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, and various independent federal agencies, including the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, the General Services Administration, and the Small Business Administration. In addition, she has taken a leadership role on agriculture, health care, and government reform issues during her congressional career and won recognition for her work on energy, including being presented with the NRECA Distinguished Service Award in 2006.



Experience
Washington D.C.

*Time for high school
juniors and seniors to apply*

High school juniors and seniors have until March 1, 2013 to apply for the Cooperative's Washington Youth Tour competition. One local youth will win an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington D.C. June 14-20, 2013 from the Cooperative.

Tips for buying a new freezer

Before you go shopping for a freezer, decide whether you want a chest freezer or an upright freezer. Which would meet your needs better? Then choose a model based on size, capacity, and energy efficiency.

Most manufacturers say that their freezers can operate in a room where the temperature is between 32 and 110 degrees Fahrenheit. If you plan to house the freezer in an unheated area, such as a garage, check out the manufacturer's

specified operating range and buy one that says it will operate below 32 degrees.

What size do you need to hold all your food? Do you need a 5 cu. ft. compact, a 6-9 cu. ft. small, a 12-18 cu. ft. medium, or a large model that is greater than 18 cu. ft.? Choose the right size for your needs.

Manual defrost freezers are generally more energy efficient (cost the least per cubic foot to operate) and quieter than self-defrosting models but manual defrost models require periodic labor-intensive defrosting. You will have to decide which is more important to you — convenience or cost.

For over 40 years, electric cooperatives have sponsored the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour by sending their high school students to experience first hand the essence that is our republic. An information packet is available upon request to any high school junior or senior. Just call the Co-op at 1-800-494-6272. Students have until March 1, 2013 to submit an application and complete a questionnaire. Members, please encourage your child or grandchild to apply. They need only attend a high school in, or reside in, McLeod, Renville, Sibley or western Carver County to qualify.

Why electric bills go up in the winter

Even if you don't use electric heat, you may notice that your electric bills are higher during the cold winter months. Below are several factors that can contribute to those higher bills as well as some ideas to lower your energy costs:

- Warm baths feel great on cold days, but extra water heating will increase your electric bill — if you have an electric water heater. To reduce your water heating bill, consider converting your electric water heater to a more efficient off-peak or storage water heater.
- Winter brings holidays, which often means additional cooking

and baking — and, of course, those bright holiday lights.

- Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer both inside and out.
- Most heating systems use electricity for some functions, such as operating the fan, and many run almost continuously when it's very cold.
- You may be using space heaters in garages, basements or other unheated spaces.
- Electric blankets and heating pads feel cozy on cold nights but will add to your electric bill.

- Engine block heaters on your cars or equipment, or heating wraps on exposed plumbing will increase the amount of energy you use.
- Most families use the clothes dryer more often in winter.

Even if your bills are higher during winter, electricity remains one of the best values around. However, it's important to know what behaviors are having a significant impact on your energy usage, so there are no surprises when you get your bill.



Power Line Worker Scholarships Offered

Students accepted into one of Minnesota's three power line technology programs for the 2013-14 school term may apply for a \$500 scholarship. The Cooperative will award one \$500 scholarship for a local student.

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, 2013.

A memorable holiday with Grandpa

*'Twas the night before Christmas & out on the ranch
The pond was froze over & so was the branch.
The snow was piled up belly-deep to a mule.
The kids were all home on vacation from school,
And happier young folks you never did see-
Just all sprawled around a-watchin' TV.
Then suddenly, some time around 8 o'clock,
There came a surprise that gave them a shock!
The power went off, the TV went dead!
When Grandpa came in from out in the shed
With an armload of wood, the house was all dark.
"Just what I expected," they heard him remark.
"Them power line wires must be down from the snow.
Seems sorter like times on the ranch long ago."
"I'll hunt up some candles," said Mom. "With their light,
And the fireplace, I reckon we'll make out all right."
The teen-agers all seemed enveloped in gloom.
Then Grandpa came back from a trip to his room,*

*Uncased his old fiddle & started to play
That old Christmas song about bells on a sleigh.
Mom started to sing, & first thing they knew
Both Pop & the kids were all singing it, too.
They sang Christmas carols, they sang "Holy Night,"
Their eyes all a-shine in the ruddy firelight.
They played some charades Mom recalled from her youth,
And Pop read a passage from God's Book of Truth.
They stayed up till midnight-and, would you believe,
The youngsters agreed 'twas a fine Christmas Eve.
Grandpa rose early, some time before dawn;
And when the kids wakened, the power was on..
"The power company sure got the line repaired quick,"
Said Grandpa - & no one suspected his trick.
Last night, for the sake of some old-fashioned fun,
He had pulled the main switch - the old Son-of-a-Gun!*

-anonymous

Members may begin donating to Operation Round Up® any time of the year



Members helping members and members helping their community = Operation Round Up

The few cents that our members give by rounding up their electric bill can multiply to dollars for local charities that build up our whole community. It is easy to sign up, painless to participate in, and a great opportunity for your small donations to make a big difference.

Members who sign up for Operation Round Up will have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the nearest dollar. The difference between the billing amount and the nearest dollar goes to the Operation Round Up Trust. Members on the program donate from -0- to \$.99 a month, depending on the amount of their electric bill. The average member donates \$6.00 a year to the program. Many worthwhile charities benefit from the proceeds of the trust each year. If you do not already participate, please fill out the form and return it to the Co-op. We will get you set up as an Operation Round Up participant.

Yes, sign me up for Operation Round Up. I understand that my bills will be rounded up to the next dollar amount and the proceeds will be used for local charitable programs.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Account #: _____

Signature: _____

Snowmobilers

Beware of Hazards! Respect property-owner rights!



As snowmobiling has become more popular, the number of accidents have increased. Very few accidents occur on Minnesota's trail system. Most accidents occur along roads and ditches. Obstacles encountered along roads and other cleared rights of way can be very dangerous, especially in low visibility conditions.

McLeod Cooperative Power has guy wires, metal enclosures, and pedestals installed on hundreds of miles of rights of way. When snowmobiling, be aware of these obstacles. Guy wires need special attention as they can be difficult to see.

Some snowmobilers are mistaking the private property where electric transmission lines are located for snowmobile trails. Great River Energy, Xcel and other utilities have been granted easements to build and maintain lines in these cleared areas, but the land still belongs to the landowner. Be sure to check with the landowners before snowmobiling on their property.

Enjoy snowmobiling in Minnesota but keep safety in mind. Slow down, don't drink, and stay alert for obstacles.

MCPA places in holiday competitions



The Co-op office was a landing spot for Santa and his sleigh. The Co-op won 3rd place decorating honors in the City of Glencoe.



Employees, their family members, and even a pet, were part of the entry in the holiday parades.

Decorating the Cooperative office for the holidays won the Co-op a third place prize in the Glencoe Chamber of Commerce decorating contest. A mobile entry into the Glencoe Holly Days Parade brought

back fourth place honors. The group of employees and their families volunteered to be participants in the Arli-Dazzle lighted parade in Arlington and also in the Glencoe Holly Days Parade.

Coal Creek tour to include Medora Musical & Pitchfork Fondue in 2013



The Coal Creek Tour is scheduled for June 17-19, 2013. Coal Creek Generation Station

and Falkirk Coal Mine are again on the itinerary, but added to the tour is a trip to Medora. Participants will spend a night in Medora, take in the Medora Musical and eat at the Pitchfork Fondue experience. Last year, was the first time Medora was included in the tour and it was a very popular addition and seats filled up fast.

Cost will be \$400 per person double occupancy or \$500 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.

Securing your data

Mcleod Co-op Power takes very seriously the task of keeping our member's data secure. After all, the Cooperative is owned and governed by you, our members. You have placed your trust in us, and we are committed to protecting your data while delivering reliable, safe, and affordable power.

As a cooperative, we are part of a national network of consumer-controlled electricity providers working together to constantly evaluate and bolster cyber security measures. While there is no sure-fire way to keep determined hackers out, we are making it a lot harder, raising our level of protection with new tools provided by our national billing cooperative, the National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) and the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a research arm of our national service organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Through our membership in NISC, we share the benefits of a national integrated software system, which not only saves considerable investment in software upgrades and operation, it also allows us to work together with other electric cooperatives to minimize cyber security risks. Of course, cyber security isn't a one-time thing. We are constantly improving and reinforcing our defenses with new technologies and best practices to protect your data and our operations.

The Cooperative has specific procedures in place within our office to protect your data, credit card and payment information. Recently-revised policies make sure our member's information is protected as much as is humanly possible. Our membership lists are carefully guarded, and certainly never sold or shared with third parties who might use them for telemarketing or other uses.

Open house door prize winners

Winners at the Holiday Open House door prize drawing were

**Roger Fimon of Hutchinson,
Ray Wagner of Brownton,
Barbara Pettis of Winthrop,
Miriam Gennrich of Stewart, and
Wallace Carlson of Arlington.**

Each winner received a compact fluorescent light bulb.