

McLeod Cooperative Power NEWS

September 2013

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Hats off to state legislators

McLeod Cooperative Power would like to thank the representatives and senators in the Minnesota Legislature who supported a balanced common-sense approach to the renewable energy mandates and solar legislation this past session. Most of our local legislators, serving the voters in McLeod, Sibley, Renville, and Carver Counties, did a good job of voting to try to protect consumers from bills that would needlessly increase the cost of energy.

We would like to thank the following legislators for their efforts:

Senator Scott Newman
Senator Julianne Ortman
Senator Lyle Koenen
Rep. Ernie Leidiger
Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen
Rep. Dean Urdahl

Please understand that the Cooperative is not opposed to the development and use of renewable energy. In fact, our power supplier, Great River Energy, is well positioned to meet all current renewable generation standards, including Minnesota's 25% by 2025 Renewable Energy Standard requirement. Our cooperatively-owned electric system has made hefty investments into renewable generation. Great River Energy's diverse energy portfolio already includes wind farms, biomass (garbage burning), and member-owned distributed generation installations using wind and solar sources. The Cooperative is opposed to mandates that require utilities to replace existing low-cost generation sources with more costly renewable energy generation sources that will dramatically increase the cost of electricity for our member-owners.

The 2013 Minnesota legislative session produced some alarming energy legislation. Additionally, the process used to pass this legislation leaves many unsettling questions for what may be in store in upcoming sessions. Yet, it could have been much worse for electric cooperative member-owners.

In an attempt to strike a balance between the various interest groups, committee chairs will typically begin crafting legislation by first negotiating agreements with the stakeholders. However, in the case of the Omnibus Energy Bill, the original legislation ignored legitimate concerns raised by the electric industry — the business that you own. It also was not balanced and offered little consumer protection. The final bill blatantly benefits parties who manufacture, market, and install solar technologies at the expense of consumers. The flawed process also allowed sectors of the state's economy to be systematically exempted until enough votes could be attained to pass the bill. And then, the Omnibus Energy Bill was amended onto the Omnibus Jobs Bill in conference committee, apparently to thwart the will of the majority of the body.

In the final bill, we were fortunate that electric cooperatives and municipally-owned utilities were exempted from the mandates and assessments. This would not have happened without the assistance of our industry counterparts. For investor-owned utilities, however, there are new rules for net metering and a mandate that solar produce 1.5% of their electricity output by 2020. Additionally, these utilities will fund the solar incentive programs.

Thank you to members for peak day control

A hearty thank you goes out to all of the MCPA members who were able to voluntarily conserve energy on August 20, 26, and 27. By turning off unnecessary lighting and appliances, members were able to reduce the Cooperative's system demand on the peak days. This saved the Cooperative nearly \$20,000 in monthly demand charges and that lowers the cost of power to members.

The Cooperative uses an automated phone calling system to leave a message asking residential and farm members to voluntarily reduce energy consumption for several hours on the hottest summer peak days. Calls are placed from Cooperative Response Center, our after-hours call center, located in Austin, Minnesota (which explains why your caller ID shows an incoming call from area code 507). The automated system does not call every member each time, so please do not be concerned if you did not receive a call.

Responding to the message means turning off unnecessary lights and appliances, especially those which give off heat. By not using the oven or stove, and postponing using the dishwasher or doing laundry until after 8 p.m., the peak demand on our system is reduced during the most costly billing period of the month. Over the summer months, the Cooperative pays much higher wholesale energy charges than the rest of the year. McLeod Co-op Power uses this cost-effective method to try to keep bills as low as possible during the more costly summer months.

Cooperative loads restored to normal as Highway 15 roundabout project ends

For many of the summer months, the Highway 15 roundabout project in Hutchinson created a detour for drivers. It also created a situation where the Cooperative had to remove overhead power lines in the construction area, back-feed power to members from alternate substations for a few months, estimate meter readings, read meters by doing on-site visits, and install underground conductors where overhead power lines previously carried electricity. The week of August 12, the Co-op line crews were able to switch lines back to their normal substation feeds.

Line crews are replacing a three-phase pole along Highway 15 south of Hutchinson as part of the project. The pole is being changed out "Hot," meaning without de-energizing the line, so power to the customers served by that line is not interrupted.



photo by Deanna Soderberg

July Outage Summary

During the month of July the Cooperative had a total of 43 outages, affecting 374 consumers.

Storms that moved through Tuesday, July 9 from 7-8 PM knocked out power to 145 consumers throughout our service area. Some of the outages were due to lightning and others due to trees in the power lines. All the members were back on in less than 3 hours.

Our second largest outage for the month was a damaged fuse/cutout that caused 60 members to lose power for 20 minutes on July 11 north of Glencoe.

The third largest outage was caused by farm machinery that hit a power line north of Glencoe on Tuesday, July 16 about 2 PM and caused 20 members to lose power for an hour and 14 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.

“All-of-the-Above” Energy Strategy Needed

Climate-change plan will harm rural America

by NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson in the August issue of RE Magazine



In late June, President Obama announced a series of actions to combat climate change. For electric co-ops, the outline hammered one point that has us ready to do battle: reducing the volume of greenhouse gases — primarily carbon dioxide — emitted from fossil fuel-burning power plants, both new and existing.

To that end, the President has instructed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act, a law last updated in 1990 that contains not a single line mentioning carbon dioxide. Under the sweeping mandate set forth, the White House risks shuttering the nation’s entire coal fleet— roughly 37 percent of generation capacity — and driving up electric bills for all consumers.

NRECA and its member cooperatives oppose using the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases and will engage the administration at every turn to inject common sense back into policy discussions. Whether you agree with the President’s underlying concerns about global warming or not, the basic fact is that short of closing all coal-fired power plants there are no economically viable tools currently available to accomplish his goals.

For several years, electric co-ops have warned the Obama administration that employing the Clean Air Act to curb power plant carbon dioxide emissions is badly misguided. Without significant modifications, co-ops feel

the President’s proposal will jack up electric bills for those who can least afford it — our consumer-members.

Rural residents already spend a greater chunk of their income on energy than those in urban communities. One of our first missions as not-for-profit electric co-ops remains keeping rates affordable — an important consideration

since household income in our service territories runs 11 percent lower than the national average and one person in six served by a co-op lives in poverty.

Forcing electric co-ops to shut down coal plants and switch to other fuels amounts to levying a punitive, regressive tax on rural America. History shows us this bad idea was tried once before, with bad results.

In the late 1970s policymakers were concerned the U.S. would soon run out of natural gas, the main energy source for heating and cooking in many parts of our land. Congress’s solution to the issue was passing the ill-conceived Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act of 1978, which prohibited burning natural gas to generate electricity. To meet growing demand for power, utilities were forced to choose either coal or nuclear power facilities.

For electric co-ops the timing couldn’t have been worse. The measure kicked in just as generation and transmission co-ops (G&Ts) were in the middle of a major power plant building cycle. In the end, many found themselves shifting generation strategies midstream — an expensive proposition — and either partnering with investor-owned utilities in nuclear reactors or constructing

state-of-the-art coal stations equipped with scrubbers and other pollution control technologies.

Thanks to the Fuel Use Act, power costs soared, and with them, cooperative electric bills. Realizing its mistake, Congress repealed the act in 1987. Yet because of the legislation, many electric cooperatives became deeply invested in coal. Today, coal accounts for about 74 percent of the power produced by G&Ts and 55 percent of all electric cooperative electricity requirements.

Just like 35 years ago, the President’s call for action has co-ops once again faced with shifting fuels — in this case, choosing natural gas or renewables over coal. However, in regions without access to natural gas pipelines, changing from coal to natural gas isn’t feasible. On the renewables front, co-ops have emerged as leaders, adding “clean and green” power systems where it makes economic sense — such as solar photovoltaic arrays in the Southwest and wind farms across the Great Plains and Midwest. But the sun doesn’t always shine (clouds) and the wind doesn’t always blow, especially during periods of peak demand on hot, humid summer weekday afternoons or cold winter mornings below minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit when power is needed most. Keeping the lights on 24 hours a day, seven days a week requires traditional baseload generation — namely coal, nuclear, and hydro — as well as a full mix of fuels.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, on behalf of America’s electric cooperatives, will continue to urge the President and his administration to work with co-ops on a real “all-of-the-above” energy strategy to keep electric bills affordable for rural Americans.

— NRECA

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All member story ideas and comments are welcome.
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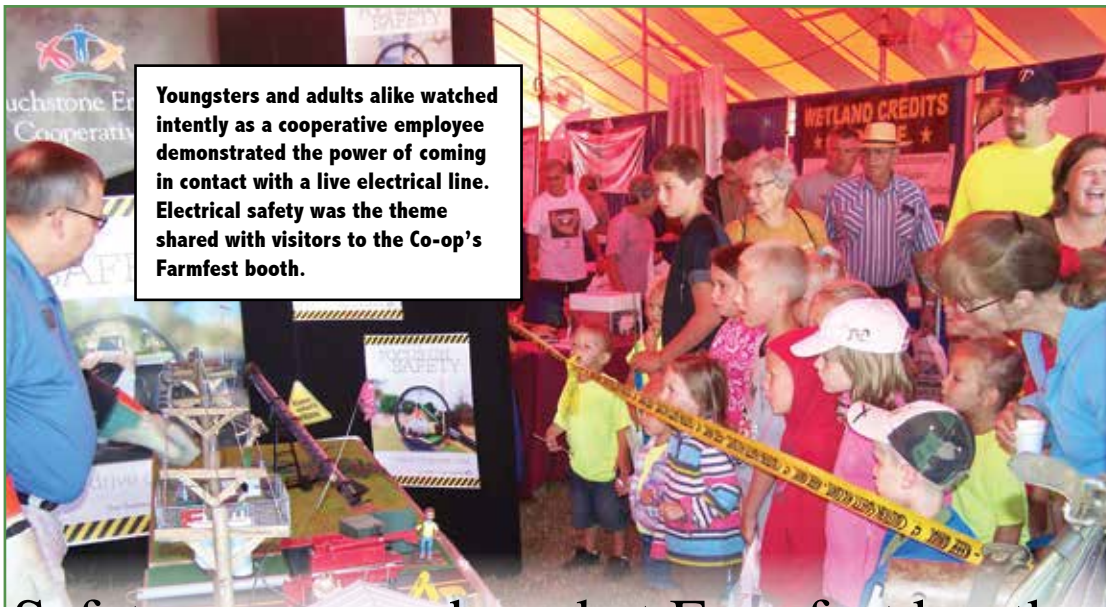
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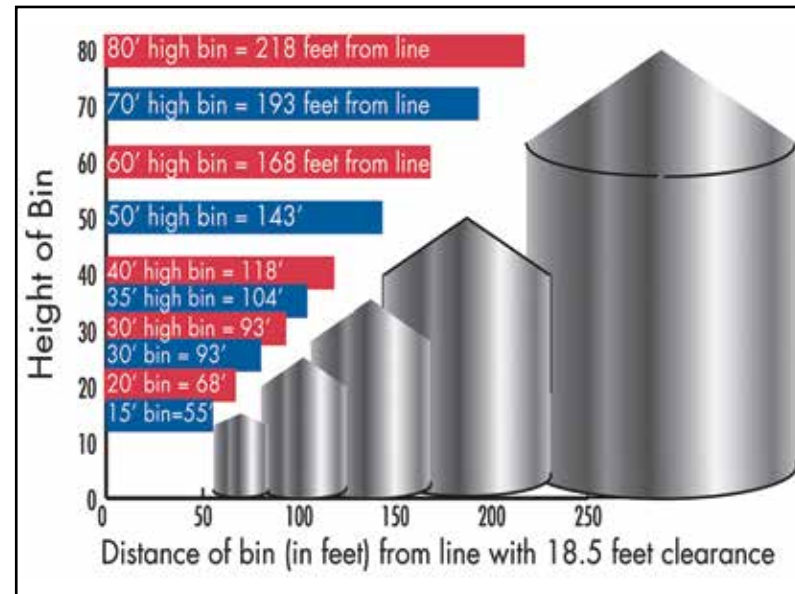
Youngsters and adults alike watched intently as a cooperative employee demonstrated the power of coming in contact with a live electrical line. Electrical safety was the theme shared with visitors to the Co-op's Farmfest booth.

Safety message shared at Farmfest booth

Electrical safety was the key message at the Farmfest booth shared by many rural electric cooperatives August 6-8. A tabletop electrical power display was used to demonstrate what could happen when farm equipment or a youngster flying a kite would come in contact with a live power line or various other scenarios. It was an educational and entertaining display for people visiting Farmfest.



A family enjoyed checking out a Segway people mover at the booth.



New Grain Bins Near Overhead Power Lines

Members can save time, save money, and avoid aggravation by talking to McLeod Cooperative Power before locating new grain bins. The national Electrical Code (NEC) specifies minimum distances and clearance requirements that are required between grain bins and the nearest overhead power line.

As an example, a 35-foot tall grain bin cannot be placed closer than 104 feet away from the nearest overhead power line. Building a grain bin too close to the power line is not only a hazard to the farmers who use the bin, but may mean it will need to be moved, often at the member's expense.

Adequate clearances can reduce the risk of accidental contact between power lines, grain augers, elevators or grain probing devices. Planning electrical needs for crop drying and storage facilities that meet the requirements of the NEC can be explained more completely by the Cooperative's Engineering Department. Please call us at your earliest convenience so we can help you avoid costly mitigation that will be required to keep your electrical service in adherence to the NEC.

Thank you to all load management participants

We thank each and every member that participates in our off-peak water heating and cycled cooling programs, and also our commercial and farm members who participate in interruptible programs. Your participation helps shed critical load on the hottest days of summer. This helps keep the energy rate of all members down. Without these programs and our thousands of participants, our Co-op's summer demand costs would be much higher.

Frozen Quandry

Refrigerated, frozen Foods & Power Outages

By: Sharon Guthmiller, SDSU Extension Food Safety Field Specialist

If you have experienced a power outage, one of the things that may come to mind is your refrigerated and frozen food.

Check your freezer occasionally to be sure it works properly, particularly if the freezer is not in an area that you walk by daily. Purchase a refrigerator/freezer thermometer and keep it in the freezer. If your freezer goes out for any reason and is off for some time, you can see how warm the freezer has become. Knowing the highest temperature that food has reached is the most important factor to determine whether or not the thawed food in your freezer is safe. A freezer thermometer also gives you more control over the quality of your frozen food. Keep the freezer temperature at 0°F or lower to retain best food quality.

It is best to plug the freezer into a dedicated outlet that is not connected to a circuit protected by a GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter) device. GFIs are easily tripped by power surges, shutting off power to the freezer.

It is important to take a few precautions to ensure against loss in case of a power failure, mechanical failure, or other possible problem. If an extended power failure is anticipated, reduce freezer temperature to -10°F or -20°F. The colder the food, the longer it takes to thaw.

If possible, wait until power is restored before opening the freezer door. Each time the door is opened, the interior temperature increases and decreases

time foods will hold safely without power. In most cases, food in a full freezer will stay frozen about two days. Food in a freezer that is only half full may stay frozen up to one day. A freezer full of meat will not warm up as fast as a freezer full of baked food.

If food is safe to eat, it is safe to refreeze. When you find that the freezer is off, check the temperature in two or three locations. Then take a look at the packages of food. If food still contains ice crystals and/or if the freezer is 40°F or lower and has been at that temperature no longer than one to two days, food that was safe when it was originally frozen should still be safe. It can be refrozen or cooked and eaten. If food has been held at 40°F or higher and has been at that temperature for some time, examine it more closely.

If the color or odor of thawed beef, pork, lamb, or poultry is poor or questionable, discard the meat. If questionable food is consumed the result may be food borne illness.

It is difficult to tell by odor whether vegetables, shellfish, and cooked foods are spoiled. Bacteria multiply rapidly in these foods so do not eat or refreeze any that have thawed completely.

As a general rule, completely thawed foods should not be refrozen. If ice crystals remain in the foods, it's usually safe to refreeze them. However, the texture will be mushier, the nutritional value may be lower, and the flavor and color will not be top quality. For best quality, refreeze food quickly.

New home utilizes storage program for low-cost heating

When the Greg Schwarzrock family decided to build a new home at their residence north of Hutchinson, they opted to utilize electric storage technology for most of the heating for their home and garage. Storage heat is often not the cheapest system to purchase and install. However, it is one that will deliver comfortable heating at a low cost year after year. The Schwarzrock's chose a Steffes central storage furnace that can heat the upstairs with forced air and the lower level with hydronic in-floor heating, all with one furnace. In the garage, they used 19 electric heating mats manufactured by Stiebel Eltron. They also will operate on the storage strategy.

The Storage Space Heating Program utilizes electricity generated during the middle of the night when there is little demand for electricity, so members who use stored heat technology pay some of the lowest rates per kWh. Storage heating and water heating programs are very beneficial to the Cooperative as they sell kilowatts during the night when wind generation is often selling a lot of energy into the grid and there is no one to purchase it. So members heating their homes with storage heat get 24-hour-a-day comfort by using the cheapest

off-peak energy generated when most of us are sleeping. It is good for the Cooperative and it saves the consumer a lot of money.

The storage furnaces are able to do this by heating up ceramic bricks at night (that stay hot all day) to heat the home continuously. The mats in the garage use 12 inches of sand as the storage medium. The sand is able to store enough heat to radiate warmth through the floor all day. Water storage systems work the same way. A tank of water is heated from approximately 11 PM to 7 AM each day, and that stored hot water is used by the family throughout the day for showers, baths, dishes, and laundry.

The Schwarzrock's worked with the Cooperative's Energy Management Specialists to help them plan their system. They also worked with Ziemer Plumbing and Heating of Hutchinson and CR Electric of Winsted on the installation of their off-peak heating, cooling, and water heating systems.

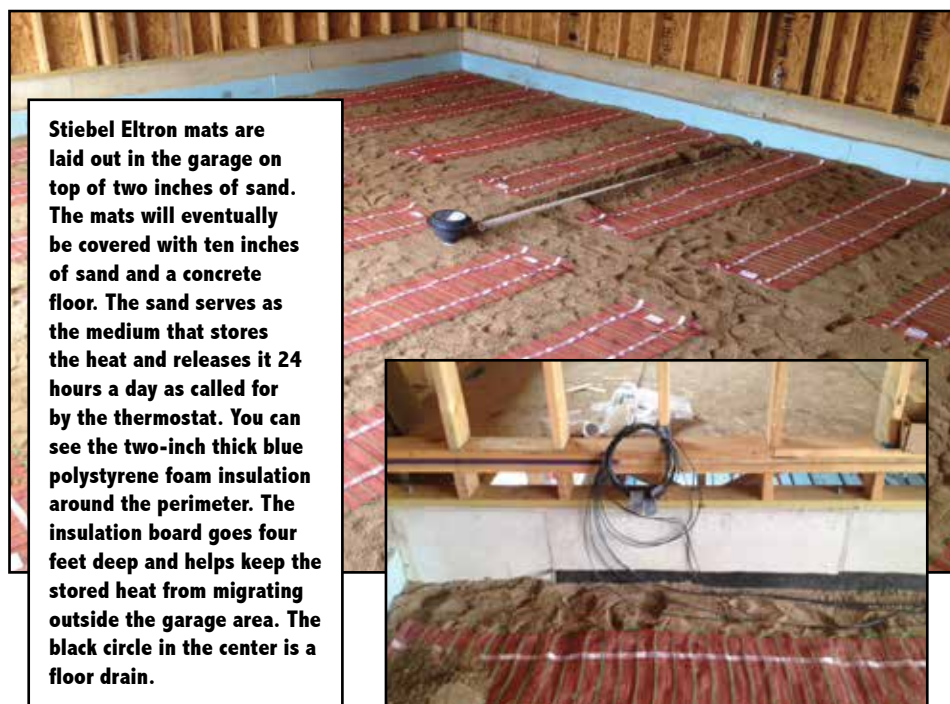
The family chose a very efficient combination of the 45.6 kW Steffes central storage furnace with an air source heat pump. The storage furnace will heat the basement floor and the living space in the house during the cold months of the year.



The Schwarzrock's new home in rural Hutchinson was planned to provide low-cost heating on the Storage Space Heating Program using a Steffes Central Storage Furnace that provides both hydronic (in-floor heating) and forced air heating. In the garage they are planning to use Stiebel Eltron heating mats, also on the off-peak storage heating rate. Water will be heated by a Marathon water heater on the Storage Water Heating Program. Summer cooling and fall/spring heating will be done by an air source heat pump on the off-peak rate.



The piping going into the floor on the left includes one supply and one return manifold for six piping loops each. The piping goes down into the floor and is embedded in the concrete throughout the entire basement to provide heat as needed. (The white pvc piping has nothing to do with the heating system – it is a sealed sump pump and vent). Just above the piping is a small red and black circulating pump. That pump comes on when any of the zones in the basement floor call for heat and it sends hot water from the primary heat loop out to the floor tubing. A galvanized mixing valve is used to temper the water temperature. On the right is the primary loop. It includes a pressure tank and circulating pump. Unheated water flows into the furnace, through the hot ceramic brick, and back out as hot water that will be sent to the tubing in the floor or to the water coil in the furnace's air handler if the upstairs thermostat calls for forced air heat.



Stiebel Eltron mats are laid out in the garage on top of two inches of sand. The mats will eventually be covered with ten inches of sand and a concrete floor. The sand serves as the medium that stores the heat and releases it 24 hours a day as called for by the thermostat. You can see the two-inch thick blue polystyrene foam insulation around the perimeter. The insulation board goes four feet deep and helps keep the stored heat from migrating outside the garage area. The black circle in the center is a floor drain.

Wires were brought up from the floor mats to a centralized location where the sequencer control relays will be located. They are operated by a thermostat that turns the mats on and off at different intervals so they do not all come on at once (similar to soft-start technology). The electrician will install a pipe with a high limit sensor on top of the mats in the sand. Another pipe will be installed with wire to the thermostat located in the concrete. The sequencer box, relays, wire, mats, high-limit and thermostat are included as part of the package when the system is sold.

An air source heat pump will provide very efficient, low-cost heating in the spring and fall months and on the mild winter days down to 5° outside temperature. The same air source heat pump will provide forced air cooling for the entire house at the low off-peak electric rate. The heating mats below the garage floor will keep the garage more comfortable in winter using energy at the off-peak rate. And the home's Marathon water heater will store water for all the family's domestic hot water needs at the low off-peak rate.



The Steffes central storage furnace is manufactured in North Dakota. It is filled with ceramic bricks that are heated electrically for eight hours in the middle of the night. The furnace is able to heat the home 24 hours a day. It can provide heat to both the in-floor basement heating and the forced air heat for upstairs. The air handler on the right will eventually include an A-coil for the air conditioning and a water coil unit to transfer heat from the furnace to the upstairs via forced air distribution.

Call your Cooperative first when thinking about building a new home, garage, or shop. The staff at the Co-op can explain the storage heating options available and provide you with calculations on cost and comparisons to heating with other fuel sources.

Midwest AgEnergy Group conducts ground breaking ceremony for Dakota Spirit AgEnergy

Midwest AgEnergy Group announced that it is moving forward with plans to build the Dakota Spirit AgEnergy biorefinery that will produce ethanol, distillers grains and fuel-grade corn oil at the Spiritwood Energy Park near Jamestown, N.D.

“This ground breaking marks a significant milestone for the 65 million gallon-per-year biorefinery, and it represents a result achieved by the combined efforts of many stakeholders. Dakota Spirit AgEnergy creates value at the intersection between agriculture and energy,” said Greg Ridderbusch, president, Midwest AgEnergy Group.

The energy industry will benefit with a new supply of 65 million gallons of a renewable fuel. The ethanol product from Dakota Spirit AgEnergy is certified as renewable under the country’s Renewable Fuel Standard 2 administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Another 6,900 tons of fuel-grade corn oil will be marketed for use in making products like biodiesel.

Area farmers will also benefit. Dakota Spirit AgEnergy is located in a major corn production area, and will purchase 23 million bushels of corn annually. Local agriculture producers will also have access to 198,000 tons of distillers grains to feed the livestock industry. “Modern biorefineries like Dakota Spirit AgEnergy economically produce renewable fuel and high value feed products,” said Jeff Zueger, chief operating officer, Midwest AgEnergy Group.

The ethanol biorefinery will be co-located next to Great River Energy’s Spiritwood Station, a combined heat and power plant. Spiritwood

Station will provide process steam to the biorefinery. This eliminates the need for Dakota Spirit AgEnergy to build and operate a boiler, which creates a sustainable long-term advantage that is important in a commodity market.

The total cost of the project is \$155 million. Near term activities include engineering and site preparation, with full construction operations underway this fall. Commercial operation is scheduled for the first quarter of 2015.

The ethanol biorefinery will have a significant impact on the local economy through the creation of 36 direct jobs and 275 trade and construction jobs during the 18-month construction period. The team of Karges-Faulconbridge, Inc. and McGough Construction, respectively, will be the design and build contractors.

About Midwest AgEnergy Group

Midwest AgEnergy Group, an upper Midwest biofuels enterprise, is owned by Great River Energy and will invest growth equity and debt from other accredited investors including banks and international, agricultural and industrial businesses. Midwest AgEnergy Group owns Dakota Spirit AgEnergy and Blue Flint Ethanol, an existing 65 million gallon-per-year ethanol biorefinery near Underwood, N.D. Blue Flint Ethanol was the first co-located, directly integrated biorefinery in North America. The successful operating approaches that have been proven at Blue Flint Ethanol since it began commercial operation in February 2007 will be replicated at the new Dakota Spirit AgEnergy ethanol biorefinery near Jamestown, N.D. More information is available at www.dakotaspiritenergy.com

Co-ops testing pollutant controls

Generation and transmission cooperatives have launched a third round of tests as part of a multipollutant demonstration project designed to reduce emissions from coal-based power plants.

“We want to identify more options that are lower in costs for environmental compliance for power producers that maintain the viability of their coal-based fleets,” said Dale Bradshaw, technical liaison for generation and environmental control technologies for NRECA’s Cooperative Research Network and an NRECA consultant.

Bradshaw said successful multipollutant control technologies could save G&Ts millions of dollars a year in environmental compliance costs. “Most G&Ts are facing a combination of requirements ranging from the mercury and air toxics standard, regional haze rules and clean air interstate rules,” Bradshaw said. “We plan to look at options utilizing various methods to meet regulations at the lowest capital costs while keeping operating cost and overall total costs as low as possible while meeting the environmental standards,” he added.

Earlier this month, technicians injected micronized limestone slurry into the fuel stream of a 188-megawatt generator at the Stanton Station power plant in North Dakota. The five-day test was conducted in a unit not equipped with a scrubber. The plant is owned and operated by Maple Grove, Minn., based Great River Energy.

“The technology is producing promising results to enhance sulfur dioxide and acid gas removal from already-controlled units and it provides very cost effective reductions for units without scrubbing technology,” said Ted Cromwell, NRECA’s senior principal for environmental policy.

In the ongoing program, ClearChem Development LLC is partnering with CRN and nine of NRECA’s member G&Ts to identify innovative and emerging technologies that can meet environmental control requirements at far less costs than conventional ones.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Notice to Members who are behind in your bill payments

The Cold Weather Rule may not protect you!

Make plans now to pay your bill to avoid being without electricity this winter.

McLeod Cooperative Power regularly disconnects the electrical supply of members who do not pay for the electricity they use. While we dislike to have to disconnect members, it would not be fair to our other members if we allow certain members to use electricity for free while our other members pay.

The Cold Weather Rule was adopted to protect some people from having their primary source of electric heat disconnected between October 15 and April 15. However, this law doesn't mean there won't be disconnections. The law says that a person must be making regular payments or have set up a payment plan and be honoring those arrangements to avoid being disconnected. If you are behind in your payments and are counting on the Cold Weather Rule to protect

you from making any payments during the winter, think again. McLeod Cooperative Power will be doing disconnections this winter in accordance with the law.

Please read the full Cold Weather Rule summary below. The list of agencies who can provide assistance to qualifying residents having trouble paying their bill is on this page and is also listed on the back of any electric bill with a delinquent balance.

It is up to the member to make payment arrangements or seek assistance to avoid disconnection. Please do not wait. The sooner you contact us, the greater the chance you will have electricity all winter long. Call today at 320-864-3148 or 1-800-494-6272 for details about applying for shut-off protection or to make a reasonable payment arrangement.

Cold Weather Rule Summary

The Cold Weather Rule, which is part of the Public Utilities Act, prohibits utilities from disconnecting a residential customer for nonpayment during the coldest months of the year if the customer has met the requirements under item 1 below. Your Cooperative strictly adheres to that law and offers sources of help for those unable to pay their bill. The law reads as follows:

1 An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

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

If all of these items are not satisfied the electricity may be shut off due to non-payment.

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

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

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

- The outstanding balance is paid.
- A mutually acceptable payment schedule is arranged.
- Our members are important to McLeod Cooperative Power. We would rather work with you to set up a plan to pay your bill than disconnect your service.

4 The Cooperative will not disconnect service to a residential customer who has not responded to a disconnection notice without first investigating whether the dwelling is actually unoccupied. This investigation shall include a

personal visit to the dwelling. If the unit is found to be occupied, the Cooperative will immediately inform the occupant of his or her rights under this policy.

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

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

7 The Cooperative will notify all members, prior to Oct. 15, of its Cold Weather Rule. Names and contact numbers for energy assistance providers are listed on this page.

Energy Assistance Providers

Kandiyohi, McLeod & Meeker Counties

Heartland Community Action Agency

PO Box 1359, 200 4th St. SW
Willmar, MN 56201

218 Main St. S., Suite 108,
Hutchinson MN 55350

Toll free: 800-992-1710

McLeod: 800-829-2132

McLeod County area

McLeod County Social Service Center

1805 Ford Avenue North
Glencoe, MN 55336

(320) 864-3144

(320) 484-4330 (Hutchinson

Toll-Free)

1-800-247-1756 (Toll Free)

Renville County area

Renville County Energy Assistance Program

105 S. 5th Street, Suite 203H,
Olivia, MN 56277

320-523-2202

1-800-363-2533

Sibley County area

Sibley County Public

Health & Human Services

111 8th Street

Gaylord, MN 55334

(507) 237-4000

MN Valley Action Council

110 6th Street, P.O. Box 87
Gaylord, MN 55334

(507) 237-2981

706 N. Victory Dr.

Mankato, MN 56001

(507) 345-6822

1-800-767-7139 (Toll Free)

Carver County area

Scott-Carver-Dakota

Community Action Agency

712 Canterbury Road South
Shakopee, MN 55379

(952) 960-9700

Wright County area

Wright County

Community Action





130 West Division Street

Maple Lake, MN 55358

(320) 963-6500

What Do Different Air Filters Block?

Air filters are rated by Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). Filters with a higher MERV block more dirt, but also reduce airflow and system efficiency. Use this guide to find the right filter for your home or business.

	1-4 MERV \$2-\$10	5-8 MERV \$10-\$20	9-12 MERV \$18-\$25	13-20 MERV \$\$\$
Blocked Items	Pollen, sanding dust, large insect bodies 	Pet dander, mold, spores, dust mites, hair spray 	Lead dust, milled flour, car emission particles 	Bacteria, virus, face powder, smoke, sneezes, paint pigments, oil, carbon dust 
Filter Types	Disposable, washable	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	High efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA), box 6-12 inches thick, flexible 12-36 inches thick
Common Uses	Homes, window air conditioning units	Better homes, general office buildings	Superior homes, better office buildings, businesses	Hospitals, drug and electronic labs

Source: epa.gov/iaq



A large machine shed was moved from one farm to another in Renville County recently. MCPA line crews took down lines and put them back up along the route on August 20 as the shed moved from Palmyra Township to its new home in Melville Township.

Focus on Operation Round Up recipient

Green Isle Lions Coat Drive

The Green Isle Lions were awarded a \$400 donation by McLeod Cooperative Power's Operation RoundUp Program. These funds were used to purchase new jackets at end-of-the-season clearance prices and especially jackets in hard-to-get sizes. Other winter wear like snow pants, hats, gloves, mittens or possibly boots are often donated and available for distribution also. The jackets will be donated to individuals from the Green Isle and the Sibley County surrounding area who arrive on distribution day in need of a coat.

This year's coat collection is going on now. Anyone able to donate new or gently used coats for children, teens or adults, may drop them off at any of the following collection sites: Arlington Library, Cornerstone Bank in Green Isle, Gaylord Library, Sibley County Human Services in Gaylord, or Security Bank in New Auburn. Please drop off your coat, snow pants, hats or mittens before September 30. Distribution of the coats and winter items will be Saturday, October 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Green Isle Fire Hall. Just show up that day if you need a coat. There is no need to pre-request what you need.

Last year was the first coat drive in Sibley County and it served nearly 300 people. This year they hope to help even more families in need of warm winter coats.

The mission of the Green Isle Lions is to serve the community. For this coat drive they partner with many other organizations, and they utilize many local volunteers to help with collection and distribution. The



Kim Schwich and Rita Edmonds of the Green Isle Lions show a few of the new coats they were able to purchase with Operation RoundUp funds for the October 19 coat drive distribution.

Operation RoundUp Program at McLeod Cooperative Power is pleased to see so many local volunteers and organizations working together to make this coat drive a success, and it is glad to be able to use Operation Round Up funds to help make this project more successful.

As a member of the Co-op, you may choose to round up your electric bill each month to the nearest dollar and have that change donated to Operation RoundUp. If you do not already participate, just fill out the coupon on this page and mail it to the Co-op or include it with your next electric payment.

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

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: _____

Energy efficiency yields big returns for farmers

By Megan McKoy-Noe, CCC

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy estimates farmers could save \$88 million annually by investing in efficient motors and lighting. How can Minnesota farmers reap efficiency benefits?

Your Cooperative has a number of rebate programs that help offset the cost of installing energy efficient motors, lighting and other equipment. Some of these options include variable speed drives and energy-efficient lighting grants.

In addition, EnSave, a national agricultural energy efficiency firm, provides a pyramid of steps farmers can take to cut down energy use. The greatest savings come from deploying more efficient equipment, although behavioral changes and a simple analysis of how energy is consumed can result in significant savings, too.

Equipped to save

Each farm—dairy, poultry, beef, hog, or crop—offers opportunities for efficiency improvements. For example:

- Clean equipment: Removing dust, soot, and debris from equipment will allow it to do more work with less effort, extending its life and reducing energy use.
- Inspect regularly: Equipment should be checked regularly. Replace parts that are showing excessive wear before they break and cause irreparable damage.
- Use National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) Premium Efficient electric motors. These highly efficient products meet the needs and applications of the farmer and manufacturers based on a consensus definition of “premium efficiency.” Learn more at www.motorsmatter.org.
- Plug leaks: Be it a pinprick hole in a hose or a drafty barn, leaks waste money, fuel, and electricity.
- Remove clutter: Hoses should be regularly flushed to clear debris. Ensure fan and motor intakes and exhausts remain clutter-free for maximum circulation and efficiency.

Light lessons

After tuning up equipment, check lights. Light work areas, not entire buildings. Use daylight when possible. Install dimmable ballasts to control light levels.

The type of light used makes a difference. Although useful as a heat source in limited situations (to keep water pumps from freezing in winter, for example), incandescent lightbulbs only convert 10 percent of the energy used into light. The rest

of the energy is given off as heat. Consider these energy-saving lighting options, as compared to incandescents:

- Halogen incandescents use 25 percent less energy and last three times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs
- Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer
- LEDs use between 75 percent and 80 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer
- Cold cathode fluorescent lamps (CCFLs) last up to 25 times longer and offer the same efficiency as CFLs.
- T-8 and T-5 fluorescent lights with electronic ballasts generate less noise and produce more light per watt. These bulbs also offer better color rendering, minimal flickering, cooler operation, and energy savings.

Harsh surroundings

Farm equipment must survive in a rough environment. Before buying new equipment or lighting, make sure the gear can survive fluctuating temperatures, wet locations, long hours of operation, and large loads.



Radiant heaters keep chickens warm during winter. On warm days, ceiling vents pass heat out of the building. When temperatures pass 90 degrees, fans turn on, pulling air through the water evaporator elements. This lowers the air temperature by 10 degrees to 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Source: USDA

Trim Energy Waste from Crop Farms

Growing grains feeds the nation, but farmers have to keep a careful eye on energy use. Delivering water to crops costs \$2.6 billion energy dollars every year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service reports 25 percent of that energy was wasted due to poor irrigation pump and motor efficiency.

1. Maintain equipment and facilities following manufacturers' recommendations for proper use and maintenance.
2. Turn off equipment when not in use or needed. Educate employees on the importance of not running all equipment at the same time.
3. Always consider energy consumption ratings when replacing or installing new equipment, typically the lowest cost equipment is the least energy efficient



HayRows_Source NRCS.jpg

Source: Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Confirm the manufacturer's specifications that the unit is intended for the environment, and review the warranty and conditions. Make sure the way you plan to use it will not void the warranty.

Seeds of change

For regional or crop-specific efficiency methods, use the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service energy calculators, energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov. Assess how much energy a farm needs for animal housing, irrigation, and tillage and discover ways to cut costs.

Dairy farmers may also visit www.usdairy.com/saveenergy. Funding for efficiency upgrades is available through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Since 2008, REAP has funded more than 6,800 renewable energy and energy efficiency grants and loan guarantees as well as 600 farm energy audits. Get details at www.rurdev.usda.gov > Energy > Rural Energy for America Program.

Farmers can also apply for financial and technical help through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a program from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. EQIP supports energy initiatives to manage and reduce agricultural energy needs. Learn more at www.nrcs.usda.gov > Programs > Financial Assistance > Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Skim Energy Savings from Dairy Farms

Milking parlors for friendly bovines make it easier to deliver a fresh glass of milk, but every cow has an energy price tag. Here are five ways to start saving today:

1. Install a variable-speed drive (VSD) for your vacuum pumps to maintain a constant vacuum level and provide a quieter work environment.
2. Select efficient scroll or digitally controlled compressors for refrigeration. They last longer than other compressors and provide consistent cooling.
3. Use a well water plate cooler with a VSD on milk transfer pumps. This produces a steady flow of milk through the plate cooler, cuts costs associated with bulk tank compressors and maintains milk quality. This requires a lot of water; adequate supply and use after cooling must be considered.
4. Install compressor heat recovery to reduce water heating energy requirements. Heat removed from milk that is usually released back into the air by condenser fans can be reused to heat water. This is one of the most cost-effective purchases a dairy farmer can make.

Want more ways to save on the farm? Use the animal housing, irrigation, nitrogen, tillage, and grain drying energy calculators at EnergyTools.sc.egov.usda.gov.

Sources: American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, EnSave, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, USDA