

McLeod Cooperative Power NEWS

November 2015

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Official publication of



Put the sun to work for you with community solar

By signing up for the Co-op's community solar program, MCPA members Virgil and Mary Kay Vacek bought output from several solar panels in the array and put the sun to work for them, hassle-free.



Virgil & Mary Kay Vacek of Glencoe

Virgil Vacek recalled having looked into wind generation at one time, but as a retired farmer he knew that anything with so many moving parts will usually have to be repaired. They thought solar should have fewer issues.

The Vaceks liked the fact that you pay a one-time fee to buy into the project and then there are no future fees. Virgil Vacek said, "Once you purchase, you have no repairs to pay for or deal with, and we get the benefit of the monthly credit."

Community solar allows any member to do solar, even if they have a shaded yard or a roof that is not suited for solar panels or they just do not want the

hassles associated with owning an array. The beauty of the program is that the Cooperative will operate, maintain, and insure the project.

For a \$1,550 subscription per panel, a participating member receives a monthly credit equal to the kWh produced by their share of the array for 20 years. The amount of solar energy produced is metered and a credit is calculated using the same current rate as members are paying for energy. The credit is calculated monthly and applied to member's electric bill.

The McLeod Co-op Power Community Solar array is located just west of Glencoe at the Co-op's pole yard facility. It consists of 100 solar panels (410 watts each) with a combined capacity of 41 kW or 41,000 watts. Each panel is estimated to produce 511 kWh per year. If rates increase over time, so will the monthly bill credit and the value of the purchased solar energy.

Mary Kay Vacek shared the benefit of community solar that they see for future generations. She said, "In the future there may be better energy sources, but at this point in time, it (solar) is the best

option we have to help reduce dependence on fossil fuels." She added, "We want it to be as good as it can be for our children and grandchildren." Since the community solar credits are transferrable to other Co-op members, the Vacek's can choose to transfer the solar credits to their son, who lives down the road, if they are not McLeod Co-op Power members for the entire 20 years of the solar contract.

This point was echoed by Brad Koenig of Hector. "It was pointed out that if I had to move out of the area that the Co-op would buy the panel back at a pro-rated basis. I have no plans to leave but in an emergency that problem would be solved. That seemed fair to me."

Brad Koenig and two of his brothers all participated in the Community Solar Project. He cited one reason for participating: "This is the wave of the future and we should try to lower our dependence on other countries for energy."

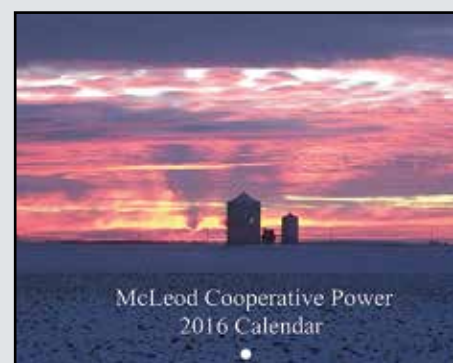
Continued on page 3



**Holiday Treats
Friday, Dec. 11**



Plan to visit the Co-op office at 1231 Ford Avenue in Glencoe on Friday, December 11th if you want to partake of holiday cookies, cider and coffee. Holiday treats will be available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the 11th. Members may also want to meet our general manager, pick up their 2016 scenic calendar, and register for a door prize. The Co-op will have employees available to answer any questions you have on subscribing to the Community Solar Program or joining a Load Management Program for heating or water heating.



**Scenic 2016
calendars
will be
available after
Thanksgiving**

This year's 2016 scenic Minnesota calendars will be available in the Co-op office by Thanksgiving. Please stop in and pick up a copy. First come, first serve, while supplies last.

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIALS

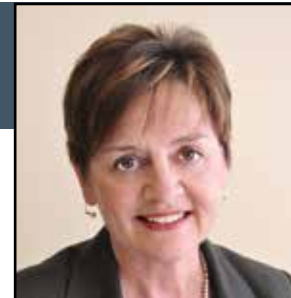
Through September	2015	2014
Operating Revenue	\$ 15,093,097	\$ 15,288,941
Cost of Purchased Power	\$ 9,822,416	\$ 9,834,821
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 5,061,401	\$ 4,788,011
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$ 14,883,817	\$ 14,622,832
Operating Margins	\$ 209,280	\$ 666,109
Non Operating Margins	\$ 267,441	\$ 205,520
Total Margins	\$ 476,721	\$ 871,629
kWh's Sold	135,674,024	133,619,444
Members Billed	6,625	6,599
Avg kWh Used, Residential/Month	1,386	1,494

MCPA teaches safety to kindergartners

Lineman Ryan Schuette explains the proper personal protection equipment he wears when working near or on an energized line to kindergarten students at Zion Lutheran School in Mayer. They were also able to watch Ryan as he showed them the procedures he uses to keep him safe while working with his truck and bucket, during a school safety presentation in October.



Manager's Message — by Carrie L. Buckley, General Manager



Why I'm Thankful for My Co-op

At my family's Thanksgiving dinner each year, we all take turns saying something we're grateful for. My list almost always includes — good health, wonderful family and friends, living in a free country and, of course, a job serving our great members and customers of McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

I'm thankful to be a part of McLeod Co-op Power. Our employees are some of the hardest workers I know. Our mission is to provide affordable, reliable, safe electric power, but we also aim to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve. It's a mission we all take seriously.

I'm thankful for McLeod Co-op Power because it allows employees to live alongside those we serve. The beauty of a cooperative is that it's locally owned and operated; there are no distant shareholders pulling the strings behind the scenes. Members elect members to serve on the board of directors and govern the co-op. We are your neighbors, your friends, and your family.

I'm thankful for my co-op because it serves as a vibrant force in the local

economy — partly because we are local.

That means McLeod Co-op Power is invested in the future of its communities. Providing an economic development loan to the Health Nut Pantry in Glencoe helps provide jobs and opportunities to small business. Helping business come back from a storm in Buffalo Lake through another economic development loan is another important way for us to be part of the local economy.

I'm thankful for my Co-op because we care. From giving scholarships to young people, to reaching out to members with information that will help them save energy and money, we care about the people and the towns we serve.

Finally, I'm thankful for you, our members and faithful readers, because without you, there'd be no McLeod Cooperative Power Association.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us here at your electric Co-op.

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. 26 & 27. Please use the 24-hour outage number to reach the Cooperative for outages, emergencies or other messages: 1-800-927-5685.



Board of Directors

District 1
Oria Brinkmeier, **Lester Prairie**

District 2
Joe Griebie, **Brownton**

District 3
Roger Karstens, Vice President
Hutchinson

District 4
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Silver Lake

District 8
Keith Peterson, President
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District 9
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New Germany

McLeod Cooperative Power News

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1231 Ford Ave. North, Glencoe, MN 55336-0070

Editor: Sue Pawelk
General Manager: Carrie L. Buckley

The McLeod Cooperative Power News is the official member publication of McLeod Coop Power Association and focuses on our members, programs and events.

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

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

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1-800-494-6272
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Fax: 320-864-4850
Web site: www.mcleodcoop.com

Gopher State One Call 811 or 1-800-252-1166

McLeod Cooperative Power Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Put the sun to work with community solar

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Al and Brad Koenig of Hector at the solar array ribbon cutting ceremony in June.

When we asked Brad what he likes best about community solar, he said, "I like looking at my monthly bill and seeing the savings from an investment in my solar panel. It is paying off already and if electric rates go up, so will the savings. Renewable energy is better for the environment AND my pocketbook!"

His brother, Mark Koenig, shared similar reasons for joining the community solar project. He said, "I like the monthly reductions in my electric bill as a consequence of my investment in two solar panels; and also that the Cooperative takes care of maintenance of the panels."

Mark Koenig summed it up like this, "The best aspect of solar, in my opinion, is that it is a renewable source of energy, and a positive step toward



Mark Koenig of Buffalo Lake

preserving our environment. I decided to participate because of my interest in renewable energy sources. I was pleased that the Cooperative was taking a proactive strategy in the possibilities of solar energy."

McLeod Co-op Power has ten solar panels still available for subscription (as of the date this newsletter goes to print). The members who have already

subscribed believe it was a good investment. The Co-op would like any other members who may be interested in participating to give us a call. It would be wonderful to get all of the panels assigned to members in 2015, so the project participants are on the same 20 year contract. The Co-op does have space for an additional 50 panel array if there is sufficient member interest in the future.

How do I sign up?

It is very simple. McLeod Co-op Power members must complete the Community Solar License Agreement, and return it to the Co-op with your payment. Cash, check, or credit card payments are accepted. The agreements are available on the Co-op website at www.mcleodcoop.com or by calling the office. Just call us if you have any questions at 1-800-494-6272.

How to read your new meter

Members are not required to read their electric meters, however, if a member desires to view their kWh meter reading, kW demand, or voltage information, it is available on the display on the front of the meter. Each display will hold on the screen for about six seconds and then roll to the next display. The order of the displays and their meaning is shown below for any SINGLE PHASE meter. Members with three-phase service can call the Co-op and we will send them the instructions for their meter's display.

SINGLE PHASE METER DISPLAY

888 = SEGMENT CHECK
 TKH = TOTAL KWH (METER READING)
 MXD = MAXIMUM KW DEMAND SINCE MIDNIGHT
 IKW = INSTANTANEOUS KW DEMAND
 VLT = VOLTS
 RKH = RECEIVED KWH = ANY REVERSE POWER FLOW
 GSS = GRIDSTREAM SOFTWARE INFO FOR METER TECHNICIANS

Rebate program for 2015

Ground Source Heat Pumps (controlled or uncontrolled)

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

Air Source Heat Pump**

14.5 SEER \$480
 15 SEER \$580
 16 SEER or higher \$630

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump \$300

Storage Space Heating \$40/kW

ECM Motor \$100

ENERGY STAR Dehumidifier \$25

Storage Water Heating* \$300

ENERGY STAR Refrigerator with recycling of old unit \$75

ENERGY STAR Freezer with recycling of old unit \$75

Recycling of old refrigerator or freezer with documented proof of recycling \$75

LED Yard Light \$60

ENERGY STAR Swimming Pool

Variable speed pump \$200
 Air source heat pump \$400

*\$300 Marathon or equivalent energy rated heater that is being installed on the Storage Program.

There is a \$2,000 maximum rebate per member. Rebates are always on a first come, first serve basis so please turn your paperwork in promptly. Rebate forms are available for download from the Co-op's web site. Air source heat pump rebate form should be completed by the installing contractor.

**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. There will be no rebates on central air conditioners in 2015. The Cooperative encourages any member replacing their air conditioner to upgrade to an ENERGY STAR



rated air source heat pump.
 * Rebate forms must be received by Dec. 21, 2015 to be eligible for 2015 rebates.

Hobby of raising goats grew into skin care product business for 15-year old entrepreneur

Eddie Becker is the young man responsible for Eddie's Goat Milk Lotion, a hand lotion that soothes chapped, dry hands. The product is made from goat's milk and a variety of other natural ingredients. Eddie milks his small herd of Nigerian Dwarf goats by hand twice a day to get the milk needed for his lotion products. The highest milk producer gives a little over half a gallon per day. It takes about 15 minutes per goat for each milking.

"The lotion business has snowballed into a bigger business than we ever thought it would," said Tracy Becker, Eddie's mom. What started as a lotion recipe that they shared with friends and family grew to be a popular product at local farmer's markets and is now sold in several natural and health food stores in the region. He is currently expanding the product line to include liquid soap and bars of soap, and possibly bubble bath and lip balm in the future.



Eddie has been raising goats since he was five years old. He is shown with one of the baby goats that was born this fall.

This may sound like a big undertaking for a 15-year-old from rural Glencoe. However, Eddie calmly seems to see it as the next step in his goat milking enterprise. It is not too surprising for a young man that has been milking goats most days since he was six years old.

Eddie met his first goat at 18 months of age at the Minnesota Zoo and decided he really liked them. His

parents finally gave in and bought him his first goat at age five. She was an Alpine goat (which is a larger size goat with a crabby disposition compared to the friendly Nigerian Dwarf goats that Eddie raises today).

Until this time, Eddie and his parents and siblings had lived on a dairy farm near Alexandria. In 2009, they sold their cows and moved to the Glencoe area. Eddie was able to keep his three big goats when they moved and in 2011 his parents gave him his first Nigerian Dwarf goat. From then on Eddie was hooked on the breed and slowly switched his herd over to Nigerians. Besides being an easy-going breed, Eddie also likes them because their milk does not taste "goaty." Dwarf goats give milk that is high in butterfat and protein. It is a rich milk that makes excellent ice cream and butter.

The lotion-making began because Eddie would get chapped hands in the winter. None of the lotions he tried worked, so he and his mom researched how to make goat milk lotion. They found some recipes and tweaked them until they found one to their liking. They asked friends and family to try it out and give them feedback.

Soon the Beckers were buying bottles, pasteurizing the goat's milk, mixing it with the other ingredients, bottling it, labeling it, and selling it. They started selling at the farmer's markets in Glencoe and Hutchinson, then at a friend's natural food store in Glenwood, then at Dan & Becky's Market in Cokato, and now at the Health Nut Pantry in Glencoe.

Today, Eddie has 19 goats total. He has five milking goats and lots of baby goats. Eddie and his siblings, Jack, Emma, and Sam, each have chores as their parents



Eddie, Jack, Emma, and Sam Becker all help with the chores and taking care of the goats and poultry.

Eddie's Goat Milk Lotion and bars of soap are two of the products he is currently producing and selling in area natural food stores.

wanted to make sure they learned responsibility. The youth care for the family's pigs, ducks, geese, chickens, and guinea hens.

Jack helps with the mechanical repair projects. Emma helps label the bottles of lotion. Sam supervises the rest. Eddie gives credit to all of his siblings for helping feed, milk, and do goat chores occasionally. All the kids are involved in 4-H and exhibited a variety of projects at the county fair. They are members of the Lake Marion Lakers 4-H Club.



Eddie shows the milking stanchion for a goat. He currently has 19 Nigerian Dwarf goats in his herd and is milking five of the adult goats twice each day.

Eddie has shown his goats at the county fair and the state fair. This year, he received the Reserve Champion award at the Minnesota

State Fair. Eddie had to be at the fair each day with his goat, but he also needed to be home twice a day to milk his other goats. So his parents had to drive him to the state fair each day. His goat would not drink the city water from St. Paul and he brought her fresh water from the farm in McLeod County each day, to keep her healthy and content while she was away from home.

This is the seventh year Tracy has been homeschooling the Becker children. She tried homeschooling one year when the kids were young, but it was just too much along with the 90 cows that she and her husband Ed were milking each day. The children who were old enough went to public school. After moving down to the Glencoe area, she was able to resume home schooling. Their dad, Ed, still works in the dairy industry. The whole group enjoys working together as a family. Eddie's goal is to keep his goat milk products as a family business and use it to help support their family. He is a nice young man who is thankful to God for the opportunities He has provided.

Eddie shared that he wanted to continue with his goat enterprise into the future and he is really looking forward to turning 16. Like most every teenager, he is frustrated with "still being 15."

The Co-op is honored to have a young entrepreneur like Eddie, and his family, as members. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

Safety Tips for Portable, Standby Generators

Generators can be a lifesaver for some after a major storm, and can improve the quality of life during restoration of an outage.

“However, it’s critical that proper safety precautions be taken to prevent accidents that could affect you, a family member, neighbor, or utility lineworker,” says Molly Hall, Director of SafeElectricity.org.

Generators can be temporarily or permanently installed. A permanent generator is wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch. This protects you, your neighbors, and repair crews from electricity backfeeding onto power lines. This can seriously injure anyone near those lines, especially co-op crews working to restore power. A temporary generator fired by gasoline or diesel fuel should not be attached to a circuit breaker, fuse, or outlet.

Because the improper use of a standby generator can lead to injury or death, SafeElectricity.org urges you to follow these tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before starting it up.
- Standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Portable generators should never be plugged directly into a home outlet or electrical system—use an extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator.
- Never operate a generator in a confined area, such as a garage or basement. Generators produce gases, including deadly carbon monoxide. They require proper ventilation.



Portable generators are helpful during an extended power outage, but they can be extremely dangerous if not used properly.

- Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow.
- There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.
- Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.

For more safety information on the use of portable and standby generators and safety after a storm, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Industry News

State cold weather rule kicked in October 15

Minnesota law has kicked in to provide warmth for residents who cannot pay their heating bills. Starting Oct. 15 and running through April 15, Minnesota’s six coldest months, utility companies must provide residential customers payment plans to avoid having their heat turned off. Low-income Minnesotans may also be eligible for energy assistance programs from the state, utilities or charities that offer discounted heat or other help during colder months.

According to the state’s Public Utilities Commission, the state’s laws do not keep utility companies from shutting off heat during colder months. “You must make and keep a Cold Weather Rule payment plan with your natural gas or electric utility company to receive Cold Weather Rule (CWR) protection between October 15 and April 15,” the PUC says. “If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.”

With a date of Oct. 15, Minnesota has the earliest Cold Weather Rule start date of any of the states tracked by the national LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

-Forum News Service

Take Control in a Connected Bed

According to crowd-funding website, a company called Luna has developed an IP-connected mattress cover that interfaces with other smart appliances in the home. For example, if you fall asleep while reading the bed will communicate with the smart thermostat to adjust the room temperature and the security system to turn off the lights and lock the doors. A computer interface keeps track of your heart rate and breathing to determine whether you are sleeping well. A smart phone app allows you to warm up the bed before you get in. No word [yet] on an interface with a robotic “tuck-you-in” device.

~ NRTC’s Rural Connect

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

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

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

Know what's below. Avoid call-in before you dig. National 811 Day is on October 16th.

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September Outage Summary

During the month of September the Cooperative had a total of 29 outages, affecting 199 consumers. Nine outages were caused by lightning, four were related to trees in the lines, four were caused by squirrels, and only two were caused by farm machinery and vehicles hitting poles and power lines. In October, with harvest in full-swing, the number of accidents with farm machinery damaging Co-op equipment or causing outages is likely to exceed a dozen.

The largest outage for September was Wednesday, September 16 at 8:17 p.m. A tree growing into a line caused an outage north of Hutchinson, putting 51 members in the dark for just over two hours. On Saturday, September 19 about 8:17 p.m. an outage was caused by a motor vehicle or machinery east of Hutchinson. It interrupted power to 40 members for just under two hours. The third largest outage was on Wednesday, September 9 about 10 p.m. A tree in the line caused an outage north of Hutchinson for 33 members for one hour and 25 minutes.

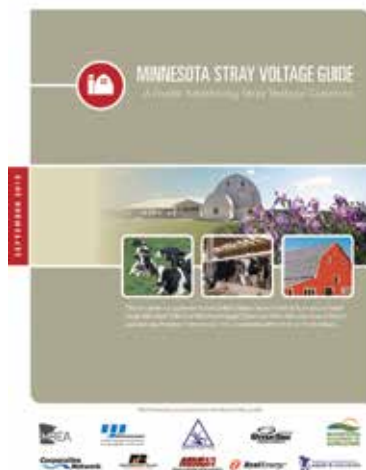
Most outages affect only one or two members. They are frequently caused by small animals, trees in the line, equipment failure, or motor vehicle/machinery accidents. Larger outages affecting hundreds of members at a time are usually caused by transmission outages, storms, equipment failure to substation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

Concerns about stray voltage? Call your local cooperative.

By: Carrie Buckley, General Manager

As a member-owner of McLeod Cooperative Power, you should feel

free to call us anytime with concerns related to your electrical service. One area that can be a concern, particularly for livestock farmers, is stray voltage. Your Cooperative's electrical distribution system must be grounded to earth to ensure continuous safety and reliability, as required in applicable electrical codes. The presence of some level of stray voltage is a normal, inherent and unavoidable result of electricity traveling through grounded utilities' distribution system. A livestock farmer may, however, become concerned their animals are experiencing a level of stray voltage exceeding acceptable levels and impacting animal behavior.



If you have this concern, please call us at 320-864-3148 or 1-800-494-6272.

While we have long worked with our members to address this issue, we recently worked with a broad group of stakeholders across Minnesota to agree on a common approach to analyzing and reacting to stray voltage concerns. Minnesota's rural electric cooperatives led the effort over the last year by working with all of the utilities in the state, agriculture groups, and representatives from the state of Minnesota on this topic. This collaborative effort resulted in the development of the Minnesota Stray Voltage Guide. Stray voltage challenges can originate from both

on-farm and off-farm sources; the guide contains information about both. Darrick Moe, CEO of Minnesota Rural Electric Association shared, "These stakeholders came together to develop a consistent approach for dealing with stray voltage, with the belief that all parties working together best ensures that concerns are dealt with in a productive manner. The final result, the Minnesota Stray Voltage Guide, will be an effective tool for achieving that when addressing stray voltage in the state of Minnesota." The guide, newly published in September of 2015, can be downloaded for free by visiting www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com. The recommendations it contains are based on extensive research on this topic. Other states have developed such standards, and adopted similar approaches. In particular, the methodology in Minnesota's guide is modeled closely after recent work in the states of Wisconsin and Iowa.

When is Dual Fuel controlled and why?

Members with Dual Fuel systems will periodically have their electric heat controlled as weather conditions, prices in the wholesale energy market, and regional power supplies dictate. Electric heat on Dual Fuel can be controlled for up to 400 hours per year and up to 12 hours in one stretch without recharge, so you want to make sure your back-up heating system is automatic and able to heat your home on the coldest winter nights for extended periods. Although control most usually will occur between 4 and 10 p.m. on a week night, it can happen in the morning and it can happen on a weekend.

For members with peak shave water heaters or Dual Fuel, control times are available daily by going to the Cooperative's web site. Click on "Is it a Peak Control Day?" on our home page for more detailed information and historical control times.

Make sure your backup fuel supply is adequate!

MCPA News Ads — Free want ad service for members.

Please limit your ad to nine words. Use the coupon printed here or available at McLeod Cooperative's front desk to submit your ad. Ads will be printed for one month only. Please submit a new ad if you want it published more than one month. Include your name and address, which will be used for identification purposes only. Ads must be received by November 28 to be included in the December issue. Thank you!

Please run this ad in the next MCPA News

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Remember to limit your ad to nine words!

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____

Clip and Send to: McLeod Cooperative Power, ATTN: Classified Ads
P.O. Box 70, Glencoe, MN 55336

Please check ad category

- Giveaway
- For Rent
- For Sale
- Wanted

For Sale - Miscellaneous

- 2014 Keystone Cougar Xlite 27RKS 5th wheel camper. \$25,900. 320-587-7587
- 93 Kentsworth 60 Detroit 10 spd. \$6,000. 320-587-6301
- Log furniture hand crafted queen beds. \$450. Request pictures. 612-618-0066
- 2000 lbs axle with electric brakes. \$100/obo. 320-310-1987
- Jenn-Air double wall oven. Very good condition. \$300. 952-955-2590
- Red Potatoes. 50¢/lb. 320-864-4158
- 2-55 gallon steel barrels. Fit for water. 320-327-2472
- Black snowmobile suit. Adult large. Good for ice fishing. 320-327-2472
- 12 X 14 overhead doors remote. All hardware included. \$1,500/obo. 612-308-7202

- Northern Hydraulics 15 ton wood splitter. \$425. 320-864-4376
- Farm fresh eggs. \$2.25/dozen. 320-864-3358

For Sale - Farm

- Farmall H. Recent repairs. 320-238-2493
- 2 used tractor tires 18.4-28-6 ply. Good Year. 320-864-4496
- Rollo tube cattle oiler. 320-587-9320

Wanted

- Riding lawn mower for parts. Prefer Craftsman 42". 320-587-9207
- Golf cart. Gas or Electric. 320-583-5388

Giveaway

- Firewood. You cut and haul at your own risk. 320-864-6511

Cleaning out your garage, attic or spare room? Try listing it for free in the MCPA classifieds.

These want ads are designed to help members buy items from or sell items to other members, or rent their property to members. They are not designed to advertise services or for-profit business pursuits. That is why we do not offer a services column and do not accept advertisements for commercial businesses.

Disclaimer — McLeod Cooperative Power Association (MCPA) assumes no liability for the content of, or reply to, any item posted. The party posting any advertisement assumes complete liability for the content of, and all replies to, any advertisement and for any claims against MCPA as a result thereof, and agrees to indemnify and hold MCPA harmless from all costs, expenses, liabilities and damages resulting from, or caused by, any advertisement or reply thereto.

Volunteers needed for Nominating Committee

To elect directors in Districts 7, 8, and 9 at the 2016 Annual meeting, we need members from those districts to serve on the Nominating Committee. Nominating Committee members participate in the election process by selecting director candidates and submitting their names to the Board for approval. They also assist with collecting and counting ballots at the Annual meeting. Volunteers are needed from the following townships:

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.

Call McLeod Cooperative Power if you are willing to volunteer for the 2016 Nominating Committee no later than January 4, 2016. Committee meetings are scheduled for January 27 and February 10, 2016. The Annual Meeting is planned for April 12, 2016.

				Ellsworth	Collinwood		Victor	Woodland	Franklin
	East Lake Lillian			Acoma	Hutchinson	Hale	Winsted	Hollywood	Watertown
Kingman	Osceola	Brookfield	Boon Lake	Lynn	Hassan Valley	Rich Valley	Bergen	Camden	
Bird Island	Melville	Hector	Preston Lake	Collins	Sumter	Glencoe	Helen	Young America	
Norfolk	Palmyra	Martinsburg	Grafton	Round Grove	Penn	New Auburn	Green Isle		
	Bandon	Wellington	Moltke	Bismarck	Transit	Dryden	Arlington		

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 \$57 million, employs 30 full-time people and is responsible for providing quality electric service to more than 6,600 accounts, 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 computer 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 qualifications per the Co-op Articles of Incorporation

Article 3, Section 2 of the McLeod Cooperative Power Association Articles of Incorporation states the following about director qualifications. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative who:

A. is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative receiving service at the member's primary residence or principal place of business in the district from which the Director is elected;

B. within five (5) years preceding a Director candidate's nomination was or during service on the Board of Directors is finally adjudged to be guilty of a felony;

C. within five (5) years preceding a Director candidate's nomination was an employee of the Cooperative;

D. is or becomes, or at any time during the five (5) years preceding a Director candidate's nomination shall have been, employed by a labor union which represents, or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employees of the Cooperative;

E. is a child, grandchild, great-grandchild, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece, whether by blood, or in law, of an employee of the Cooperative;

F. is a person that is child, grandchild, great-grandchild, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece, by blood, or in law, of an incumbent Director that is not up for re-election at that time;

G. is in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative-affiliated business;

H. is or becomes the full-time employee or agent of, or who is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of, another Director; or

I. is absent without cause from three (3) or more regular meetings of the Board of Directors during any twelve (12) month period.

A member that is an authorized farm corporation, family farm corporation, regular corporation, partnership, limited liability partnership or other business entity may select an individual member residing on or actively operating such business entity to be eligible for election to the Board. A member that is not a natural person may select one of its officers to be eligible for election to the Board, provided that not more than two (2) such officers may serve on the Board at the same time.

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 12, 2016.

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: _____

Return to the MCPA by January 18, 2016



Metering Questions & Answers

By the time you receive this newsletter, McLeod Co-op Power should have more than 70% of its metering upgrade completed (see map). Chapman Metering, Inc. has made excellent progress this year in completing meter change-outs.

The old meters are being replaced because the Turtle meter reading devices are no longer being manufactured or supported. The Co-op studied several options for replacement meters. The Co-op management and board selected the metering system that would work best for our Co-op. They selected the Gridstream RF system, made by Landis & Gyr, which has a proven track record for reliable and safe meters. The board of directors unanimously voted to support a 100% deployment in order to replace and upgrade the previous AMR system.

The Co-op has already seen many efficiency improvements as a result of the system and every day we are finding new ways it will be able to help us reduce future costs. The meters that were installed in Sibley and Renville Counties earlier this year have been working very well and the meter readings have been coming into the billing system smoothly.

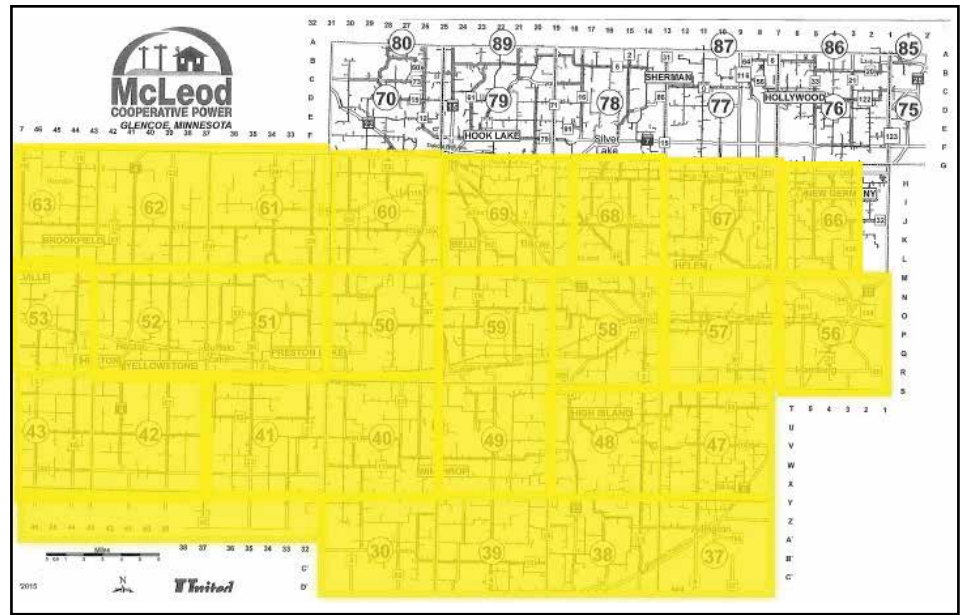
A great benefit of a two-way meter will be outage reporting. The new meters should send the Co-op a message when they lose power. We are working to integrate this notification into the Outage Reporting System. We do not have this perfected yet, so we still want members to call in their outage every time power goes out. Although the automatic outage reporting will be a big improvement over having to wait for a call from a member, the Co-op does not want members to rely on it 100%. A phone call from a member reporting that they heard a loud bang or know where a power line is down speeds up repair time for line crews. Details from you are very helpful.

Some of the other benefits from our new metering system:

1. The electronic meters are more accurate than mechanical meters.
2. The standard model meter can be used for most of our residential, commercial, net-metering, and load management needs, thereby reducing inventory costs.
3. Every member's meter data is automatically entered into the billing system with no manual entry, giving us increased accuracy and decreased labor expense.
4. In the near future, we should be able to run reports to get a better look at the distribution system's overall performance, and showing places we can make changes to improve efficiency.
5. The new metering system will help the Co-op determine when transformers are overloaded before a transformer causes an outage.
6. Provides valuable information to crews when tracking down a problem with blinking lights.
7. Is a useful troubleshooting tool to assist any member who has concerns over an increase in their energy use.
8. Provides kW demand readings in the office to assist with verifying that large accounts are on the proper rate.
9. Provides kW demand readings on the face of the meter. This is helpful for electricians working on member's wiring and determining total demand on a farm or dryer service. It has already benefited some of our farmer members with monitoring their dryer demand during harvest.
10. Automated outage reporting (Please still call in your outage by phone!)
11. Future Outage Notification and Restoral Verification
12. Possible future online access that allows for members to monitor their personal usage history
13. Future load management load verification.
14. Provides detection of power theft
15. Meter sockets and lugs are checked for safety issues when new meters are installed, and if unsafe conditions exist the Co-op and member have worked to get equipment repaired to acceptable condition.
16. The smart grid will enable grid operators to better balance electricity supply and demand in real time in the future, which becomes increasingly important as more intermittent wind and solar generation resources are added to the grid.

What if I read somewhere on the internet that all smart meters are bad?

First, please do not believe everything you read on the internet. Our staff has sorted through



The Co-op is very tuned-in to safety and we look out for our members. We would not put any product on your home or yard pole if we thought it could pose health or safety issues.

volumes of propaganda, as well as information and test data from credible research sources on this issue. We recognize that people may have fears based on what they have heard or read, but we have done our homework and are confident that the deployment of our new meter system will be a beneficial addition to the Co-op and will improve the service to our members, without subjecting our members to any increased health or privacy risks. We will provide to members that have concerns, sources of credible documentation, upon request. The Co-op is very tuned-in to safety and we look out for our members. We would not put any product on your home or yard pole if we thought it could pose health or safety issues.

What do the experts say?

Numerous health and industry group findings show that RF meter technology is very safe. Current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards provide an acceptable factor of safety against the health impacts of existing common household electronic devices and smart meters. The Landis & Gyr meters that MCPA is using, fully comply with the FCC standards and guidelines for environmental exposure to RF.

RF energy produced by smart meters is not harmful and is comparable to cellular phone devices, wireless baby monitors, television broadcasts, garage door openers, microwave ovens, cordless home phones, and Wi-Fi networks. Smart meters actually have exposure levels that are hundreds or thousands of times lower than many of these common appliances because they transmit for just over one minute per day, on average, and they are always located outside of the home or far away on the meter pole.

This is the agreed upon consensus in written publications from the American Cancer Society, the World Health Organization, the Environmental Defense Fund, the California Council of Science and Technology, and the Electrical Power Research Institute, just to name a few.

Can hackers intercept my meter data?

The communication between the meter and Co-op is secure. The meter will only talk to the Co-op after it becomes a part of our radio network and receives our pass code. Data packets transmitted between the Co-op and the meter are encrypted, so unauthorized parties cannot intercept your meter readings. There is no communication of personal or financial data using Gridstream RF.

Will the Co-op know what I am doing at every minute?

Certainly not. The Co-op can find out if you used more kWh today than yesterday, but we have had that technology for ten years. However, MCPA cannot tell what you are doing at any specific time or if you are home or away. We don't know when you turn on a TV. We don't have the staff or desire to know what you do and when. We get your meter readings for electric billing use.

Will you be able to talk to my new grid-enabled refrigerator?

No. We will not be communicating with any of your appliances. In future years, if technology is available for members to remotely have the Co-op control specific appliances (like water heaters) via Wi-Fi or radio signals, it would have to be with the specific permission of the member. We have no plans to use a home access network (HAN) at this time.

Will the police or government know what I am doing?

The Co-op closely guards member data. MCPA does not sell data or any member information to any third parties. The new wireless meter reading data is no different than a member's usage today. It is not shared with others. Even police need a warrant or subpoena from a judge to request member usage.

“How to Read Your New Meter”

See page 3