

McLeod Cooperative Power NEWS

February 2017

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Basics of purchasing an EV 8

Official publication of



Do children live in your home or occasionally visit? Child-proof your electrical outlets



Each year, approximately 2,400 children suffer severe shock and burns when they stick items into the slots of electrical outlets or receptacles. It is estimated that there are six to 12 child fatalities a year related to this. Keys and coins are the top two favorite items for kiddos to stick into electrical outlets. As the human body is 70% water, it makes an unfortunately good conductor of electricity. That is why the National Electrical Code (NEC) requires new and renovated dwellings to have tamper-resistant (TR) receptacles.

What are tamper-resistant electrical receptacles?

TR receptacles have spring-loaded shutters that close off the contact openings, or slots, of the receptacles. When a plug is inserted into the receptacle, both springs are compressed and the shutters then open, allowing for the

metal prongs to make contact to create an electrical circuit. Because both springs must be compressed at the same time, the shutters will not open if a child attempts to insert an object into only one of the contact openings, thus there is no contact with electricity.

Even if homeowners do not have children, TR receptacles are required for all new and replacement installations. Owners or tenants of homes and apartments change frequently. In addition, exposure to electrical shock and burn accidents are not limited to a child's own home. Children visit homes of relatives and friends who don't have children of their own. This requirement ensures all new homes and apartments are safe for children, whether the home is their own or they are there on a temporary basis. Older private homes, which are not used as rental properties, are not required to upgrade existing outlets to TR receptacles until the old outlets fail or are replaced for some other reason.



TR receptacles require comparable force to other receptacles. The insertion force may vary depending on the newness of the device to the shape or style of the plug being inserted.

Are TR receptacles more costly than standard receptacles?

The projected cost of a TR receptacle adds about \$0.50 to the cost of an unprotected receptacle. Based on current statistics, the

average home has about 75 receptacles resulting in an overall added cost of under \$40 for construction of a new home. This amount may vary slightly based on the type and style of TR receptacle used. This minimal increase in cost buys a significant increase in electrical safety for children. Cost for replacement of existing outlets will be much greater.

Parents may try to teach children to stay away from outlets, but inquisitive children and toddlers are often drawn to checking out what they can stick into an electrical receptacle. Accidents involve people who look away for a moment, only to face undue tragedy and pain as the result of a child's curiosity. The NEC's mission is to provide electrical safety in the home. TR receptacles are a simple and easy way to protect children from serious injuries that continue to happen every year.

TR receptacles are preferred over products such as receptacles with caps or with sliding receptacle covers. Receptacle caps may be lost and also may be a choking hazard for some ages. Children can learn to defeat sliding receptacle covers when they watch their parents. TR receptacles provide security against the insertion of objects other than cord plugs into the energized parts.

If you have a newer home (built in 2008 or later), you may already have tamper-resistant receptacles.

If your home does not have TR receptacles, and children occupy your home each day or they visit on a regular basis, you should seriously consider replacing existing outlets with the TR receptacles. If your home

Electrical Outlet Safety continued on page 3



Operation Round Up donation applications are being accepted until March 1

This is a great year for new organizations to apply

Community and civic groups, emergency responders and other 501(c)3 non-profit organizations are welcome to apply to McLeod Cooperative Power's Operation Round Up Trust for donation assistance. The trust is able to donate funds to worthy local projects in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or Carver Counties. Funding is from

the generosity of electric cooperative members who round up their electric bills.

Application forms are available by calling the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272 or they are on the Co-op's website at www.mcleodcoop.com. Applications for funding must be completed and returned to the Cooperative by March 1, 2017.

Plan to attend the 2017 Annual Meeting

The Cooperative's Annual Meeting is planned for Tuesday, April 11 at the Hutchinson Event Center. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. Members from Districts 1, 2, & 3 who have not voted by mail can register and cast their ballot for director in their district. The business meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. There will be prize drawings and lunch following the business meeting.

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION
 GLENCOE, MINNESOTA
 NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
 OF THE MEMBERS

TO THE MEMBERS OF MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION:

You are hereby notified that the Regular Annual Meeting of the Members of the McLeod Cooperative Power Association will be held at Hutchinson Event Center at 1005 Hwy. 15 S., Plaza 15, in the city of Hutchinson, County of McLeod, State of Minnesota, on April 11, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. to take action upon the following matters:

1. The reports of officers, directors and committees.
2. The election of directors of this association for director districts numbers 1, 2 and 3. The polls for the election of directors will be opened at the meeting place at 8:30 a.m. and will be closed at 10:15 a.m. on the date of the meeting, for voting by members who have not returned their ballots by mail.
3. To transact any other business which may properly come before said annual meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Dated at Glencoe, Minnesota this 24th day of January, 2017.



Doug Kirtz, Secretary

Explanation of election process

This is the time of year that we focus on planning for the Annual Meeting as well as the director election process. I believe it is important for you, our members, to understand how this process works and how you can participate in electing a person to represent your district on the MCPA Board of Directors.

The members of McLeod Cooperative Power have, over the years, adopted a democratic and fair process for electing members to the Board of Directors. This procedure is detailed in the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. It provides for two names on the ballot, so a director never runs unopposed. It also affords members the opportunity to play a part in the process by volunteering to serve on the Nominating Committee, possibly running for a board seat, and voting to elect candidates from their district.

The Articles and By-Laws allow for each director to be elected by residents of his or her district. This means candidates are elected by their neighbors, usually members living in their township or surrounding townships. Directors are not elected at-large by all the voters from the whole Co-op. This process has served the Cooperative very well.

Members may volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee for their district. If three members do not volunteer for the Nominating Committee, then the director from that district must find district members to fill the remaining

seats on the committee. The Nominating Committee has the task of selecting two names to appear on the ballot. It is their job to find two qualified candidates even if no one expresses interest to serve. They may choose the incumbent director if running for re-election, any members who express an interest in serving as a director or other members from the district who agree to be a candidate.

Any person who desires to have their name on the ballot, but who has not been selected by the Nominating Committee, can obtain the signatures of 20 MCPA members in their district and submit it to the Cooperative Secretary at least 25 days prior to the Annual Meeting. This is how a member may apply by Nomination By Petition to be a candidate. So using this method, we sometimes have had three or more candidates competing for one seat in a district election.

Director candidates cannot be close relatives of current directors or employees. This protects anyone from having an unfair advantage. Each candidate must be a member in good standing and possess leadership qualities.

All active members in voting districts are mailed a ballot before the Annual Meeting. Members may cast their ballot by mail, return it to the Co-op in person or bring it to the Annual Meeting. Votes are counted by the Nominating Committee under the supervision of the Co-op's legal counsel.

Submit Nomination by petition for director candidacy by March 17

Cooperative members residing in Districts 1, 2, or 3 may petition to have their name added to the slate of candidates for the 2017 director election in their district. To have another name, in addition to the two candidate names selected by the nominating committee, on the ballot, you may file a nomination by petition.

The petition must be signed by 20 or more McLeod Cooperative Power Association electric members residing in your district and it must be submitted to the Cooperative secretary not less than 25 days prior to the Annual Meeting. The last day that a petition can be submitted is March 17, 2017.

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

District 1 includes:

Hollywood Township in Carver County, Winsted Township in McLeod County, and Victor, Woodland and Franklin Townships in Wright County.

District 2 includes:

Hassen Valley, Sumter, and Rich Valley Townships in McLeod County.

District 3 includes:

Bergen, Helen, and Glencoe Townships in McLeod County.

Board of Directors

District 1
Oria Brinkmeier, **Lester Prairie**

District 2
Joe Griebie, **Brownston**

District 3
Roger Karstens, Vice President
Hutchinson

District 4
Doug Kirtz, Secretary-Treasurer
Hector

District 5
Allan Duesterhoeft, **Hutchinson**

District 6
Gary Burdorf, **Arlington**

District 7
Randy Hlavka, GRE Representative
Silver Lake

District 8
Keith Peterson, President
Hector

District 9
Gerald Roepke, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
New Germany

McLeod Cooperative Power News

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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:

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

Phone: 320-864-3148
1-800-494-6272

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

Fax: 320-864-4850

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

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



Duplicative regulation drives up costs for cooperative members

Mcleod Cooperative Power Association (MCPA), along with other Minnesota electric cooperatives and through our statewide Minnesota Rural Electric Association, are supporting legislation which enhances local democratic control and eliminates duplicative regulation by the Public Utilities Commission.

Electric cooperatives are member-owned and operated. That means member-owners make decisions for their cooperative together through a democratic process. Member-owners elect a governing board from within the membership that is tasked with balancing the interests of the community in setting rates and policies. This local democratic process has worked well since the founding of electric cooperatives for nearly 100 years.

However, a regulatory process in place for investor-owned utilities is upsetting the tradition of local democratic control and costing member-owners money. Through Minnesota Statute, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the regulator for investor-owned

utilities, can impose additional regulation on locally governed and therefore locally regulated cooperatives and municipal utilities. This additional regulation is time-consuming (with reviews taking years) and costly (utilities are assessed for the administrative costs of the regulation). Last year an electric cooperative was assessed \$40,000 after the PUC re-regulated a local decision on an incremental charge (\$5 a month) to recover costs of interconnection. The cost of interconnection is required to be recovered according to Minnesota law. The review took months and the \$40,000 assessment for PUC administrative fees doesn't include the considerable cooperative staff time to respond to the docket.

For investor-owned utilities such as Xcel Energy, rates are set by an appointed public utilities commission. This is because investor-owned utilities are owned by investors and their focus is to maximize return for investors. They need an independent regulating body to balance the needs of the investors with the needs of the consumers.

Cooperative regulators (board members)

are elected by members in their district. Members of a small electric cooperative like MCPA also have access to talk personally with the staff or general manager at the Co-op. They can call their board member. They can request to have their issue reviewed by the board. And any member in good standing can run for a seat on the board when there is an election in their district. This access to regulators is only available at the local level with your electric cooperative.

The duplicative regulation by the PUC only costs members money. The local regulatory body provides the same service as the PUC, applying the laws of Minnesota while balancing the interest of the ratepayers. However, with local regulators, if a member-owner disagrees with the balancing of member interests they have a direct remedy, the local democratic process.

Please join us in asking the Minnesota Legislature to eliminate duplicative regulation of consumer-owned utilities. Please support House File 234 and Senate File 141, currently before the Legislature.

Put your old fridge or freezer on ice

A new refrigerator or freezer might be something you want to consider to help save money on your utility bill.

Refrigerators

Thanks to recent improvements in insulation and compressors, today's refrigerators use much less energy than older models. With an Energy Star-certified refrigerator you can maximize your energy and dollar savings without sacrificing the features you want. Energy Star refrigerators are about nine percent more efficient than models that meet the federal minimum energy-efficiency standard.

By properly recycling your old refrigerator and replacing it with a new Energy Star refrigerator, you can save approximately \$250 over the next five years. If your refrigerator is around 20 years old, that number could be near \$500.

For example, a twenty-year-old 18-cubic foot refrigerator uses about \$140 worth of electricity a year. A new model would use around \$40 worth of electricity. To figure out your savings visit www.energystar.gov; search for the refrigerator cost calculator.

Your electric Cooperative offers rebates when you recycle your old refrigerator or freezer. Submit a rebate form with a receipt that the unit was recycled to get \$75 credited to your electric bill.

What about freezers?

The same principle applies. Try to find an Energy Star model. Use the yellow energy label to determine the model's energy use, compare the energy use of similar models and estimate annual operating costs.

Generally, the larger the freezer, the greater the energy consumption. Plus, consider whether an upright or chest freezer better meets your needs. A chest freezer is usually more energy efficient since the door opens from the top and allows less cold air to escape. Manual defrost freezers use half the energy of frost-free models, but they must be defrosted periodically to achieve energy savings. Don't allow frost to build up more than one-quarter of an inch.

Follow these guidelines to reduce the amount of energy your freezer uses:

- Keep the temperature at 0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep your freezer indoors, such as in the basement. Extreme temperatures are hard on the compressor and can reduce the life of your freezer.
- Allow air circulation behind the freezer. Leave a few inches between the wall or cabinets and the freezer.
- Check the door seals. If they are not air tight, replace them.
- Keep the door closed. Minimize the amount of time the freezer door is open.
- If you buy a new freezer, be sure to recycle the old one. You may qualify for a \$75 rebate. Many appliance retailers will pick up and recycle your old freezer when you purchase a new one for a small fee. Make sure to get a printed receipt stating that it is being recycled.



Electrical Outlet Safety

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rarely gets young visitors, there are several cheaper, temporary protection devices available that you can install to keep children out of electrical outlets.

Some of these are plastic outlet plugs, press fit outlet covers, sliding plate covers, and power strip covers. Outlet plugs and covers will also help reduce air infiltration into the home, so they have an energy conservation benefit during especially cold or hot outdoor temperatures.

A good compromise (cost-wise) is to use the cheap plastic outlet covers for the outlets you seldom use and the sliding plate covers for the outlets you use more often in a home without children. For example, use the sliding covers on the outlets frequently used (for vacuum cleaning and such) and the cheapies on the others.

If your home rarely gets young visitors, these cheaper, temporary protection devices can keep children out of electrical outlets.



Plastic outlet covers



Sliding plate covers

Outlet cover



Queen of sweet at sweet 16



There's a lot of buzz about Queen Bee Bakery these days. Cupcakes, cookies and cakes are flying out of the rural Darwin kitchen, with people scheduling out to August of 2018. One lady has scheduled cakes for every event for the next two years to make sure she doesn't miss out.

The sweet treats are delicious. And the flavors and decorating are on a creative par with such reality shows as Cupcake Wars. But what makes this bakery even more unique is the baker herself. Liz Lhotka (Lizzy) is only 16 years old; pretty young to be a local baking celebrity. However, Steve and Pam Lhotka are intentional about recognizing natural talent and inclination in their children and giving them free reign to develop those talents, supporting — and making necessary sacrifices — every step of the way.



Homeschooled along with her six sisters and two brothers, Lizzy began school (and reading) at age three. She used her baking as both home economics and art classes. She learned at her own rate and was able to graduate early. Now she runs her bakery full time out of her family's kitchen as a cottage industry. Her assistant is her older sister, Jessica, age 20.

"The tables have turned and now I tell her what to do," Lizzy says with a laugh. Jessica gets to do the things Lizzy doesn't want to do. Lizzy wears

a T-shirt that says "Not Bossy, Just Better," a testimony to the easy give and take relationship between the sisters and sense of humor the girls share.

"I'm the one that keeps it light in the kitchen," Jessica said. This is an important skill, because sometimes the baking can get very intense, such as the time they had to make 300 mini cheesecakes for a wedding. Or the time they baked 2,000 cupcakes for a bake sale.

"We've already gone through one double oven," Lizzy said. She's hoping they can repair the oven, since she is now forced to use only one oven, which takes twice as long.

From the Bee-ginning

While other young girls Lizzy's age were playing with their Easy Bake Oven, Lizzy was already baking layer cakes. She credits her grandmother for teaching her to bake at about nine years old, sharing her tips and gadgets to measure correctly.

"She even told me her secret molasses cookie recipe and made me swear never to tell anyone," Lizzy said.

"She's definitely the favorite child, because I haven't gotten that recipe yet," said Pam, laughing.

Lizzy's first sales occurred in the family's General Store they ran in Fairfax, where she sold her cookies. When the Lhotkas moved to the Darwin area two years ago, Lizzy did a cake for Sue Johnson, who operated Very Vintage, a retail store in downtown Litchfield, as well as a wedding cake for another local woman. Word of mouth led to referrals from a local flower shop, Essence of Flowers. Once word got out, the requests followed.

"I thought this was just going to be a weekend project or two," Lizzy said. "I can't believe it's grown so much."

That led to the need for a business name. The name actually came from Jessica, who noticed an old embroidered dish towel of their grandmother's that featured a bee and the name "Queen Bee." And Queen Bee Bakery was born.



Liz (left) and Jessica Lhotka of rural Darwin are the team that makes Queen Bee Bakery hum. With Jessica's support, Liz has developed a name for herself and Queen Bee Bakery, with a growing number of committed fans.

Queen Bee or Night Owl?

Lizzy does a lot of baking during the night, when the family is asleep and siblings aren't coming to the kitchen for a taste.

"As a baby, she always had her days and nights mixed up," Pam said. "When she's busy working on an order, it's not unusual for her to stay up to 5:00 a.m.," Pam said.



While the entire family is very supportive of the bakery and are always willing to do a taste test, perhaps her most outspoken fan is Jessica.

"She's just so good at what she does," Jessica said. "She knows by looking at a batter if it needs more flour and she's very precise with her measurements. You won't find any cakes that taste better at another professional bakery."

On a typical month, Lizzy uses about 150 pounds of flour, 100 pounds of white sugar, 150 pounds of powdered sugar, 20 pounds of butter and five gallons of coconut oil (some months more), two to three quarts of homemade vanilla, and

about 50 dozen brown organic eggs. "I won't budge on eggs; they have a much richer flavor. Some of my icing I buy in, due to volume, but most I make on my own. My favorite is whipped brown sugar icing.

Lizzy prefers that all these products be organic and non-GMO if possible purchased from Cherry Grove Market — an Amish store in Browerville MN, but she admits she'll head to Walmart in a pinch.

Besides using the best ingredients, Lizzy says it's her flavor combinations and her meticulous decorating that sets her apart.

"I've made lavender and lime cupcakes and even orange sherbet, which was the oddest flavor I've done," Lizzy said. Peach Bellini is very good and has peach and Champagne. My most requested flavors are Caramel Sea Salt and So Berry."

Pam said Lizzy always had the talent of knowing what flavors would work well together.

"When she was young I'd ask her to taste something I was cooking and she'd say, 'I think it would taste great with rosemary.' I don't know how she knows."

"Most of the flavor combinations I come up with when I'm hungry," Lizzy said. Some of those flavor combinations include: Chocolate Explosion, Candy Overload, Coconut Cream, Peanut Butter Chocolate Dream, Lemon-Lime Teasers, just to name a few.

When it's time to celebrate her birthday, of course Lizzy makes her own birthday cake.

"I make Triple Chocolate Strawberry Delight, which is my favorite!"



The future looks sweet

While Lizzy said that she really has baked everything she has wanted to try, there are a few things for the future that she's excited about.

"I'd really like to open a retail store in Litchfield and perhaps even in Hutchinson, so that we have a place to actually show the cakes and cupcakes." And she just may have some teaching to do. Her 7-year-old sister Rosie has a vision of becoming the next Queen Bee.



These pretty "Mint to Bee" cupcakes are often chosen by brides. Liz does anything from cookies to cupcakes, to wedding cakes.

There is more in the future that Lizzy is keeping under wraps at the moment. One thing is for sure. No one has yet seen all that this young baker has to offer.

To see photos, menu options or to order online, go to: <http://queenbeebakery1.wixsite.com/cake> or visit her Facebook page at www.facebook.com/1queenbeebakery. Lizzy can also be reached at 320-221-5132 or by email at queenbeebakery1@gmail.com.



Building a new structure on your property in 2017?

Do you have plans to add a new home, barn, grain bin, shop or other type of structure on property you own? If so, use the following checklist before you take one shovel-full of dirt from the ground:

- Call 811 at least 48 hours before digging (excluding weekends and holidays) to locate underground services that could be cut and cause injury and/or a lot of extra cost.
- Call the Cooperative. This is extremely important to prevent any problems in the future by not accounting for additional load that would be put on existing electrical infrastructure. This will also help ensure the Co-op plans for any necessary line construction into its schedule to meet our building timeline.

By planning ahead, you will not overload electrical systems that could cause outages for yourself and others. A representative from the Co-op will review the site and plans and determine if the electrical grid can support the new structure that you plan to build.

If you are planning to install a solar array or wind turbine, contact the Co-op while you are still in the formative planning stages. Our staff can provide you with the necessary information on the state's interconnection rules and help you through the process.

The State of Minnesota requires completion of an application and contract to the inter-connecting utility, an application fee and approval of your project. The project must comply with all the state contract requirements, including approval by the utility's electrical engineer, paying for all electrical and metering upgrades required for net metering, hiring a State licensed electrical contractor to wire the system and have it inspected by a Minnesota State electrical inspector to make sure it meets code. Also required is carrying a \$300,000 liability insurance policy.

Before you begin your project, let your Co-op know to be able to provide assistance in the planning process to keep the entire process and result safe for everyone.

Industry News

Energy Forum highlights cooperative innovation

"Minnesota is home to some of the most well-run and innovative utilities in the nation," said Center for Energy and Environment's Mike Bull in his introduction of Great River Energy CEO David Saggau during last week's CEE Energy Policy Forum. Saggau delivered the keynote address at the event whose theme, "Electric Cooperatives Lead Minnesota Innovation," focused on the accomplishments of Great River Energy and its member cooperatives.

"Electricity is a good choice," Saggau told the nearly 200 attendees. "We are on track to meet our renewable energy targets. Our portfolio is getting cleaner. We want our members to use our product, but we want them to use it efficiently."

Saggau spoke of the origins of electric cooperatives in the 1930s and 1940s, and articulated the differences between cooperatives and other utility types, such as cooperatives' average of seven members per mile of line, compared to 34 and 48 for investor-owned and municipal utilities, respectively. He also shared the new and innovative ways Great River Energy is serving its members, both on the electric system and through member-focused programs.

Attendees learned about the environmental and efficiency benefits of the DryFining™ fuel enhancement system, the value of adding flexibility to baseload power plants, and the combined heat and power attributes of Coal Creek Station and Spiritwood Station.

~Great River News

Utility sees declining returns in coal power generation

Minnesota's second biggest utility, Great River Energy, has begun to significantly ramp down the output of its largest coal plant as the market has shifted to wind power and natural gas production. The transmission utility's Coal Creek Station can produce 1,100 megawatts (MWs) of electricity. That makes it the largest power plant in North Dakota and by far the biggest in Great River Energy's system.

Currently, the plant operates at less than a third of its full output in times of high wind production – spring and fall – as the cost of having it operate at full capacity costs the company money. Some days the plant produces less than 300 MW.

"In the old days we used to want to turn on our coal plants and leave them at full output and fill in with other resources," according to Great River Energy transmission vice president and chief generation officer Rick Lancaster. "Things have reversed now. Wind power and natural gas are running at the top and coal is filling in when the wind is not blowing and demand is high – that's when we have to ramp up our coal plant."

Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) has seen wind power increase from 1,000 MW in 2006 to 15,000 MW by the end of 2015, Lancaster said, and 2016's additions will just add to the total.

~Midwest Energy News

December Outage Summary & 2016 Recap

December 2016 had 40 outages, affecting 565 consumers. Seventeen of those outages were due to material or equipment failures. The outage that affected the most members was a power supply/transmission outage on December 18 about 6:23 a.m. north of Glencoe. It caused 449 members to be out of power for one hour and 48 minutes.

MCPA finished the year with an average outage time of 179.53 minutes per consumer. Out of these minutes about 52 minutes were due to transmission outages by GRE or Xcel Energy and the other 127 minutes per consumer were due to causes on MCPA's distribution system (equipment failures, squirrels, machinery accidents, trees, etc.). The 179.53

minutes per consumer is higher than 2015, which had 74.40 minutes per consumer. Much of this was due to storms during the year.

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.



MCPA line superintendent Dan Schade uses the new trunked-mobile radio (TMR). Great River Energy (GRE) provided the infrastructure support for the new technology. Fifteen of GRE's 28 member cooperatives chose to take advantage by upgrading software or purchasing new radios.

Now we're talking — Two-way radio update done

Spotty cell coverage when you need it most is frustrating and for electric cooperatives, it's unacceptable. When line crews are dispatched to remote locations or outage areas, they need to be able to talk to each other so they can identify where problems are located and fix them.

To do that, they rely on their two-way radio system, which is shared by Great River Energy (GRE) and its member cooperatives. Crews use the radios for day-to-day operations, and they are particularly important in times of crisis or when cell service is out.

Line crews work on the same critical mission as fire and police departments. It is a standard that they need to maintain to restore power quickly and safely.

The radios allow crews to talk to each other, to local system dispatchers, to Great River Energy system operators, and to crews from other GRE cooperatives when working storm restoration jobs.

This year GRE worked with 15 of its member cooperatives to update the radio system from analog to digital technology. The old system, installed in 1999, is near the end of its useful life and spare equipment is hard to find. Think of it like going from a cassette player to an iPod.

The new radio system will provide better sound quality and expand the area where service is available, helping ensure reliable service.

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 February 27 to be included in the March issue. Thank you!

Please run this ad in the next MCPA News

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Please check ad category

- Giveaway
 For Rent
 For Sale
 Wanted

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

For Sale

- Two Maytag washing machine square tub, ringer type motors. 320-587-4681
- Arctic Cat Purple Powerlube racing formula snowmobile oil. 952-467-2103
- JD snowblower 1032D 32" cut, 10hp/6 for/2 rev/light posi. Exc cond. 320-583-4546

For Sale Farm

- RAM 350MS hyd push 4 wheels. \$2,200/b.o. 320-522-2814 or 320-522-2167
- 2016 corn silage. 952-449-1008
- JD RM four row 36" crop cultivator. 952-449-1008

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.

Wanted

- Steel doors for a Rockite silo. 320-562-2237
- Farm land to rent 2017 season and beyond. 320-583-9343
- 500 card players above library in Howard Lake. Fridays 1:00-3:00.

For Rent

- Branson vacation rental. 1 or 2 bedroom condo. Weekly. 320-779-0015

Energy grants for farm, business or industrial projects



Upgrading to new LED fixtures can provide high lumens, even in shops with high ceilings, and LEDs do not have problems starting in cold temperature shops like the older ballast-style fluorescent fixtures.

Any McLeod Co-op Power member operating a farm, business or industrial plant, who is considering a lighting upgrade should call the Co-op to determine if an energy grant would help pay for part of the project. A lot of businesses are installing new LED fixtures to increase efficiency and reduce cost. Most of the time, projects will qualify for some type of rebate or energy grant. The grants are also available for new construction projects.

You will need to contact the Co-op before you start installing your new lights to provide the number, type and wattage of your current fixtures and that same information for the new fixtures you are upgrading to, along with normal hours of operation. The Co-op's Energy Management Specialists will calculate your savings and the amount of an energy grant you could receive. Give the Co-op a call at 1-800-494-6272 for assistance.

DG Energy was at the Co-op in January testing equipment used by line crews to prevent contact with energized power lines. Rubber guards, insulated blankets, and other equipment, which are placed over power lines when doing work near energized lines, were tested in the Co-op warehouse by DG Energy's mobile service.



Putting the Thaw on Ice Dams

Icicles can be beautiful, but when they're hanging from your gutters, they could be a sign of costly heat loss and damage to your home. Those icicles are created from ice dams; a thick ridge of ice that forms around the edge of your roof, building up along the eaves. This ice buildup prevents melting snow from draining off the roof. When this happens, water can leak into your home, causing everything from warped ceilings to soggy attic insulation — the perfect environment for mold and mildew.

Running hot and cold

Ice dams form when parts of the roof warm up, but not the edges (or eaves). Snow melts on the warm roof and then freezes when it reaches the cold eaves.

Why does the roof warm up in certain areas and stay cold in others? It's caused by heat leaking from your house into the attic and onto the roof. The heat travels by conduction, convection or radiation. What are those? Let's take a closer look:

- **Conduction.** Heat moves through parts of the ceiling where there may not be adequate space for insulation.
- **Convection.** Warm air rises. The attic surface is warmer than the surrounding space. The air near the surface is heated and rises to the roof.
- **Radiation.** The temperature along the top of the insulation is higher than the temperature of the roof sheathing. Heat transfers outward through electromagnetic waves.

Heat is transferred through leaks in the attic, exhaust fans in the kitchen or bathroom and fireplace chimneys, to name a few.



When an ice dam appears, water backs up behind it, and then it flows under the shingles and into the house. If you see icicles along the edges of your roof, it's often a sign that you have an ice dam problem.

Taking Control

Stopping ice dams begins with eliminating heat loss and keeping your entire roof the same temperature. Here's how:

- Increase ventilation in the space between the insulation and the roof sheathing to carry away any heat that leaks through.
- Add insulation to your attic to prevent the conduction and convection of heat through the ceiling.
- Seal any area where warm air may leak from your living space into the attic, such as a poorly fitting hatchway or pull-down staircase.

If ice dams form before you've had a chance to take preventive measures, carefully remove the snow from your roof using a rake designed for the purpose. Roof rakes should be available at your local hardware store or DIY retailer. If water is leaking into your house, create channels in the ice dam that make it possible for water to drain off the roof.

2017 RESIDENTIAL REBATES

A summary of rebates available from your co-op this year*

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES

Dehumidifier.....	\$25
Electric Clothes Dryer	\$75

RECYCLING

Old Freezer or Refrigerator	\$75
(proof of recycling required)	

CONSERVATION

Electric Vehicle Charging Station	Up to \$500
towards installation & equipment	

ENERGY STAR SWIMMING POOL

Air Source Heat Pump Pool Heater	\$400
Variable Speed Pump	\$200

ENERGY STAR LIGHTING

LED Yard Light	\$60
LED Holiday Light Strings.....	\$2
LED Light Bulbs, (limit 10)	\$3

HVAC

Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Space Heating	\$50/kW
14.5 SEER Air Source Heat Pump	\$480
15 SEER Air Source Heat Pump	\$580
16 SEER or higher Air Source Heat Pump	\$630
Ductless Air Source Heat Pump (delivered fuels)	\$300
Ductless Air Source Heat Pump (primary electric heat)	\$500
Ground Source Heat Pump.....	\$400/ton
ECM (fan motor)	\$100

WATER HEATERS

Electric Storage Water Heating Installation.....	\$400
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*This is a residential summary only. The Co-op also offers agricultural, commercial and industrial custom rebates. There is a \$2,000 maximum rebate per member per year. Only ETS space heating does not have a \$2,000 maximum cap. All rebates are on a first come, first serve basis, so please turn in your paperwork promptly.

Most downloadable rebate forms are available on the Co-op website at www.mcleodcoop.com (click on Customer Service tab). Please read the details on specific rebate forms, as some products have limits, require ENERGY STAR certification, or other requirements.

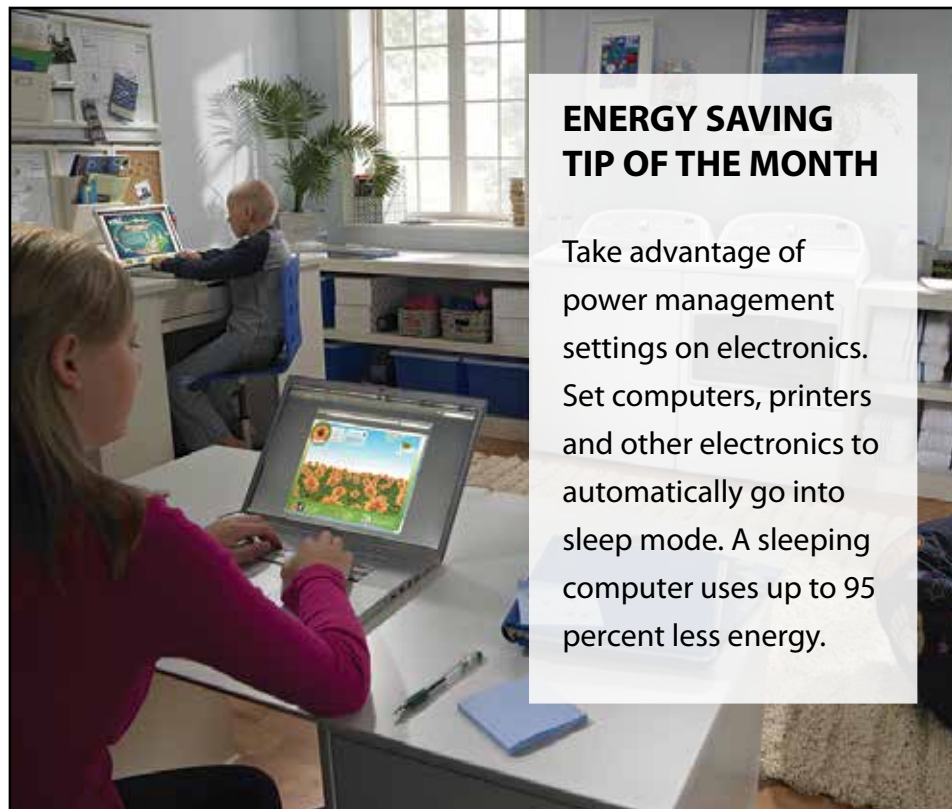
Air Source Heat Pump rebate forms must be completed by the installing contractor. Rebates for high efficiency air source heat pumps require installation by a "registered contractor" which has been designated as a quality installer and is listed on the hvacaducation.net web site. A list of all "registered contractors" in Minnesota is on our cooperative website at www.mcleodcoop.com (click on Partners tab). There are no rebates on central air conditioners. The Cooperative encourages any member replacing their central air conditioner to upgrade to an ENERGY STAR rated air source heat pump. LED yard lights must be installed on consumer-owned building or facilities. Lights cannot be installed on Co-op power poles.

Experience Washington D.C.

Time for high school juniors and seniors to apply

High school juniors and seniors have until March 3, 2017 to apply for the Cooperative's Washington Youth Tour competition. One local youth will win an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. June 10-15, 2017 from the Cooperative.

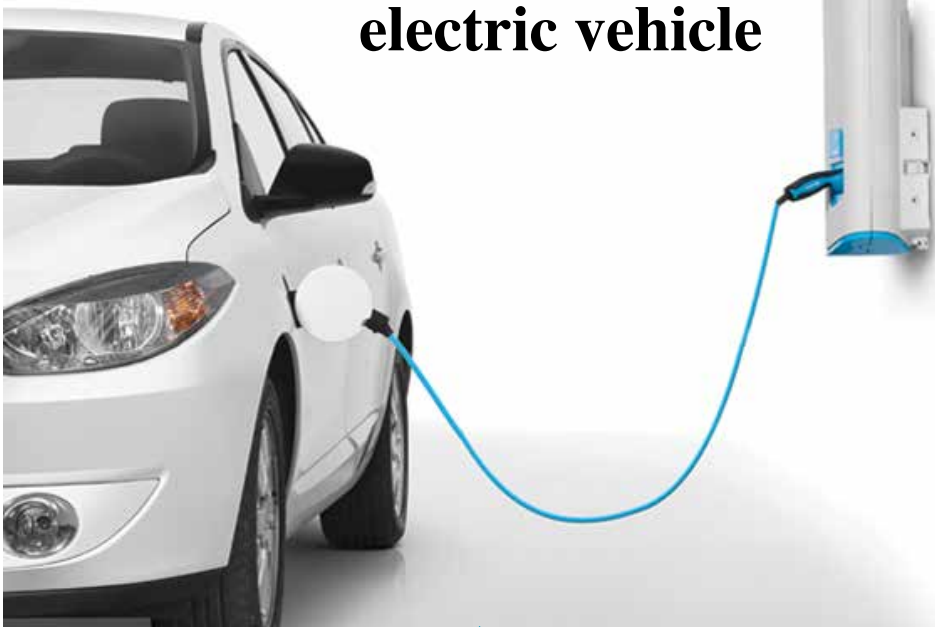
For over 40 years, electric cooperatives have sponsored the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour by sending their high school students to experience first hand, the essence that is our republic. An information packet is available on the Co-op website or call the Co-op at 1-800-494-6272. You will have until March 3, 2017 to submit your application. Students complete a questionnaire and application to qualify. Please encourage your child or grandchild to apply. They need only attend a high school in or reside in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or western Carver County.



ENERGY SAVING TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of power management settings on electronics. Set computers, printers and other electronics to automatically go into sleep mode. A sleeping computer uses up to 95 percent less energy.

The basics of purchasing an electric vehicle



As electric vehicles (EVs) continue gaining popularity even among conventional car drivers, most everyone leasing or purchasing one is doing so for the first time. So, how do you know if an EV will suit your lifestyle? And what information do you need to know when heading to the dealership to find out which kind is best for you?

One of the biggest roadblocks for people to overcome when considering a transition from gasoline to all-electric is "range anxiety," or the belief that the car's charge won't be able to get them to where they need to go for an entire day. But according to a 2013 study conducted by Consumer Reports and the Union of Concerned Scientists, 69 percent of U.S. drivers travel less than 60 miles on weekdays

— well within the range of many EVs available today and newer models to be released in the next year or two.

There are two main types of EVs that use electric energy stored in batteries to power its motor: all-electric and plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV). Examples of all-electric include the Nissan Leaf and all Tesla models, while PHEVs such as the Chevy Volt work like an all-electric EV for the first 50 miles then switch over to gasoline.

Instead of stopping at a gas station every time you need to fill up, the main fueling station could actually be in your own home and cost less than you'd pay at the pump. McLeod Co-op Power offers EV owners a less expensive, off-peak rate to help them

take advantage of electricity during specific times of the day, generally overnight while you're asleep, so it's charged and ready to go when you leave in the morning.

EV owners can charge their vehicle's battery at home by plugging it into a standard 120-volt outlet that requires no extra equipment or installation. On average, a full charge this way takes about eight hours, though it varies by models. Homeowners can also choose to have a Level 2 charger installed professionally in their home and would see the full charging time cut in half. These types of chargers are often found across the country for public charging as well.

Lastly, fast chargers can charge an EV about 50 percent in 20 minutes. There are more than 200 public charging stations across Minnesota. They are available mainly along transportation corridors, and can be located with easy-to-use online tools such as plugshare.com.

There are approximately 15 EV models available for purchase in Minnesota and, while they vary in price range, consumers should keep the federal tax credit of up to \$7,500 — depending on the size of the vehicle's battery — in mind. A consumer could purchase a 2017 Chevy Volt, whose electric range is 53 miles, for \$25,670 with the full federal tax credit applied, while the price of a Ford Focus Electric — an all-electric EV with a range of 76 miles — gets knocked down from

\$29,170 to \$21,670 with it applied.

The savings don't end at the dealership either. EVs require much less upkeep than their gas-powered counterparts because the battery, motor and associated electronics require little-to-no regular maintenance; there are fewer fluids to change; and there are fewer moving parts, relative to a conventional gas engine. The differences between EVs and conventional vehicles are many, but both kinds must meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and undergo the same rigorous safety testing.

Besides helping your own pocketbook, the impact that owning and driving an EV has on the environment is profound. EVs produce zero tailpipe emissions and PHEVs produce no tailpipe emissions when in all-electric mode.

While you may be considering an EV purchase for the first time along with many other consumers, as with any vehicle shopping you should assess your driving requirements and price range, then compare those requirements with the available models.

To learn more about EVs, visit the U.S. Department of Energy's Plug-In Electric Vehicle Handbook for Consumers at http://www.afdc.energy.gov/uploads/publication/pev_consumer_handbook.pdf and for more information on how to enroll in Revolt, visit mnrevolt.com.