McLeod Cooperative Power
NEWS
February 2018

Plan to attend the 2018 Annual Meeting

The Cooperative's Annual Meeting is planned for Tuesday, April 10 at the Hutchinson Event Center.

Doors will open at 8:30 a.m.
Business meeting begins at 10:00 a.m.

Board testing alternate meeting time

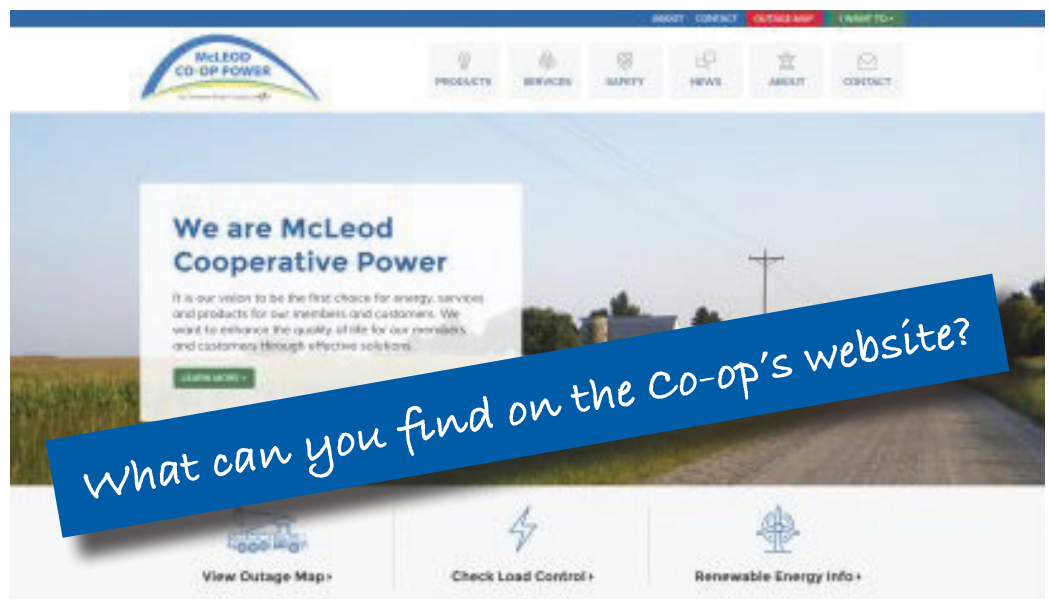
The MCPA Board of Directors has scheduled its March and April board meetings to begin at 4 p.m. This is a change from the standard daytime board meetings which begin about 9 a.m. The board is doing a pilot project to test alternate meeting times and get feedback from directors and staff on how well the different meeting time works.

The MCPA Board of Directors has been supportive of getting younger board members and people from diverse backgrounds to participate as board candidates and possible directors. The board realizes that all daytime meetings may be a conflict for some members. Board President Keith Peterson shared, "The board is open to considering alternate meeting times during the year if it will make it easier for working members to fill future seats on the MCPA Board of Directors."

Why is my bill higher in the winter?

In our region, November through March is typically when members use more electricity due to cold weather. Here are factors that cause energy use to increase:

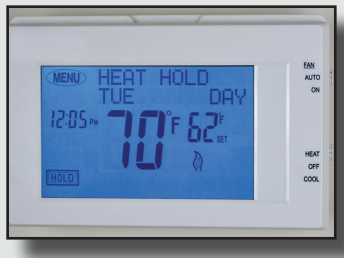
- Shorter days and longer nights mean more time indoors. That typically means more lights, TVs, appliances, and video games in use.
- Heating systems run more. Even if you have a propane furnace, your electric use increases because electricity powers the blower motor in the furnace.
- Holidays mean more guests, more hot showers, more cooking; all using electricity.
- Block heaters use between 500-1,500 watts depending on the vehicle. A car using a 500-watt heater would use 150 kWh a month if plugged in ten hours a day.
- Portable plug-in space heaters can dramatically increase your monthly bill as well. A 1,500-watt space heater used for ten hours a day will use 450 kWh a month.



Visit www.mcleodcoop.com to view:

- List of efficiency rebates with printable rebate forms
- Outage map
- Current rates and fees
- Payment options
- Distributed generation rules for interconnecting solar or wind to your account
- Products for heating, water heating, generators, etc.
- Services and programs available

In this issue...



Official publication of
McLEOD CO-OP POWER
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Manager's Message —
by Carrie L. Buckley, General Manager

Looking Ahead- A Quick Glance at What to Expect in 2018

Your Cooperative is coming off another productive year in 2017. Our financial results, although not the best ever, were strong enough to maintain a healthy equity ratio and to amply meet our lenders debt covenant requirements. As you may have noticed from our 2017 quarterly financial snapshots, our margins did not reach reasonable levels until November 2017 when the weather took a turn for the cold and grain drying season was extended due to the late harvest.

Once the books for 2017 are closed I will expand a bit more on the Co-op's financial results. First though, I'd like to give you a glimpse of what's coming in 2018. The Board approved the 2018 Operating Budget and Construction Work Plan back in December. Our goal is to serve the long term best interests of the members. Financial stability through adequate revenue and cost containment are essential to reliability, safety, affordability, and peace of mind. I thought I would share with you some of the numbers and activities we are planning for this year.

The Board of Directors adopted a 2018 budget with total operating revenue of $20.3 million and total cost of electric services of $19.9 million. Our operating margin is projected at about $400,000 or two percent of revenue. Our non-operating income will add approximately $700,000 for a total margin anticipated of $1.1 million. Non-operating items include capital credits allocated from cooperatives such as our power supplier, Great River Energy, and interest earned on investments. It also includes modest margins from our new generator sales business, contract services for the City of Arlington, and our emergency medical pendant service.

The revenue and operating margin include the increase to the System Delivery Charge which went into effect February 1. The increase will be reflected on the bill you will receive in March. The increase was necessary to provide sufficient revenue to obtain our minimal operating margin of two percent of revenue. We know that even modest rate adjustments are felt by all McLeod Power members. Please know that your MCPA board of directors, management, and staff are working to maintain a financially healthy organization that reflects fair pricing to all members.

We project 2018 residential and farm energy sales to remain flat with little to no increase over 2017. Our kilowatt hour sales are very dependent on the weather. We base our projected sales on the prior year's weather which was abnormally mild through the end of October 2017. Our commercial & industrial class energy sales are expected to remain stable in 2018. We anticipate overall sales of 164 million kilowatt hours in 2018 which is about the same as the kilowatt hours projected to be sold in 2017.

The cost of the wholesale power we purchase is by far our largest expense at $12.2 million. This comprises 61% of our total cost of electric service. Power cost in 2018 was projected to increase less than one percent, or.7% over 2017. Changes to power costs are passed onto you through the monthly power cost adjustment on your bill. The average monthly power cost adjustment in 2017 was one-tenth of a penny per kilowatt hour. We expect the average in 2018 to be slightly higher or around the same amount.

With 61 cents of every dollar going toward wholesale power cost, the balance of the revenue we receive provides the cash to pay all our operating expenses, depreciation expense, interest expense, and provide a margin. Nearly $2.7 million goes to operations and maintenance of the 1,895 miles of line and seven substations that comprise our distribution system. Included in this amount is payment to vendors of $500,000 for tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance. The 2018 plan continues to clear trees from our line at an aggressive rate since they are a significant cause of outages.

Our Operations department will be quite busy upgrading lines, building new services and maintaining the system. We plan to build 42 new services, complete the conversion of 29 miles of overhead to underground line, and replace 220 poles. Speaking of utility plant, our total plant is valued at $56 million!

In the Member Service Department, we have budgeted $104,000 for member rebates. Our rebates help to make your home, farm or business more energy efficient and reduce your bills with conservation measures. These state-mandated conservation incentives and programs are funded through our rates. So, please take advantage of them.

We are excited for another productive year to come. My thanks to our employees who bring a can-do attitude to work to contain the costs of the Co-op. All of us at McLeod Co-op Power strive to bring value to our member-owners every day. We appreciate your patronage.

Proud to keep your lights on,
Carrie

Nominations by petition for director candidacy to be submitted by March 16

Cooperative members residing in Districts 4, 5, or 6 may petition to have their name added to the slate of candidates for the 2018 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 16, 2018.

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

District 4 includes: Boon Lake, Preston Lake, Brookfield, Hector, Osceola, Melville, Palmyra, Norfolk, Bird Island, and Kingman Townships in Renville County, and East Lake Lillian Township in Kandiyohi County.

District 5 includes: Lynn and Acoma Townships in McLeod County, and Ellsworth Township in Meeker County.

District 6 includes: New Auburn, Green Isle, Arlington, and Dryden Townships in Sibley County, and Penn Township in McLeod County.

Board of Directors

District 1 - Oria Brinkmeier, 320-485-2554
Hollywood Twp. in Carver Co., Winsted Twp. in McLeod Co., Victor, Woodland, & Franklin Twps. in Wright Co.

District 2 - Joe Griebie, Vice President, 320-779-1101
Hassan Valley, Sumter & Rich Valley Twps. in McLeod Co.

District 3 -David Resch, 952-449-1793
Bergen, Helen, & Glencoe Twps. in McLeod Co.

District 4 - Doug Kirtz, Secretary-Treasurer
dkirtz@mcleodcoop.com
Boon Lake, Brookfield, Osceola, Kingman, Preston Lake, Hector, Melville, Bird Island, Palmyra, & Norfolk Twps. in Renville Co. & East Lake Lillian Twp. in Kandiyohi Co.

District 5 - Allan Duesterhoeft, 320-587-9134
Lynn & Acoma Twps. in McLeod Co. & Ellsworth Twp. in Meeker Co.

District 6 - Gary Burdorf, 507-964-5815
Penn Twp. in McLeod Co, New Auburn, Green Isle, Dryden & Arlington Twps. in Sibley Co.

District 7- Randy Hlavka, GRE Representative
rhlavka@mcleodcoop.com
Hutchinson & Hale Twps. in McLeod Co., Collinwood Twp. in Meeker Co.

District 8 - Keith Peterson, President
kpeterson@mcLeodcoop.com
Collins & Round Grove Twps. in McLeod Co,Martinsburg, Bandon, & Wellington Twps. in Renville Co., Grafton, Moltke, Bismarck, Transit, & Alfsborg Twps. in Sibley Co.

District 9 - Gerald Roepke, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
952-353-2153
Watertown, Camden, & Young America Twps. in Carver County

McLeod Cooperative Power News

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General Manager: Carrie L. Buckley
cbuckley@mcleodcoop.com

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.

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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 McLeod Cooperative Power Association will be held at the Hutchinson Event Center at 1005 Hwy. 15 S. Plaza 15, in the city of Hutchinson, County of McLeod, State of Minnesota, on April 10, 2018 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 4, 5 and 6. 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 23rd day of January 2018.

Doug Kirtz, Secretary

Schedule of Charges for 2018 approved

The MCPA Board of Directors approved the revised Schedule of Charges for 2018. These new charges became effective February 1, 2018. The list includes most standard fees assessed to members when they utilize select services such as record research and retrieval, disconnection/reconnection of an account, late charges or collection fees, line crew or electrician service calls, distributed generation application fees, meter testing, and so on.

The Schedule of Charges is available on the Co-op's website at www.mcleodcoop.com. The schedule is updated annually to adjust fees based on changing labor or transportation rates.

One new item added this year was a charge for record research and retrieval. This fee will be applied when Co-op employees spend time (over one hour) researching records, producing historical copies of documents or financial records. The Co-op does not charge its members for that first hour of document research, however, each additional hour will be billed at $35 to help cover the cost of labor and sometimes digging out records not available on the computer system.

Sometimes a fee may seem excessive to a member that gets billed for a special service. It is important for members to understand that the Co-op keeps these fees as low as possible. The board and management of the Co-op are trying to make sure that the services which benefit only one member are paid for by that member and not by the rest of the membership. In a Co-op some costs are shared but specific individual costs must be billed to that individual member.

An example would be a member calling in on a weekend that they have a power outage. Their neighbors are not out of power. They are asked to check their fuses and breakers to make sure the problem is not on the consumer's side of the meter. The member believes their equipment is okay. A line crew gets dispatched. When they arrive, they determine that the power coming into the meter is working properly but there is an electrical problem on the member's side of the service. The member will need to get their electrician to fix their equipment problem. The member is not happy when they get a $400 bill for a weekend service call. The cost for two linemen at over-time rates, in a bucket truck that traveled 30-40 miles to the member's home and back, plus the time to troubleshoot the problem, needs to be paid for by that individual member. If there was an actual power outage on the Co-op's side of the meter, there would not be a direct charge to the member as power restoration on Co-op equipment is part of the service we provide to our members through the monthly System Delivery Charge. It's important to note that although we are not perfect, we strive to be fair to all members.

Most Popular Reasons for Purchasing a Standby Generator

Power outages can cause either a simple inconvenience or a serious problem. Power outages that last a long time can come with large price tags such as the cost of repairs to your home from frozen pipes bursting while the heat is off, a flooded basement while the sump pump was off, or a freezer full of spoiled food.

Here are nine common reasons why people have said they purchased standby generators:

1 "Keeping our fridge and freezer running during a storm has saved us a lot of money and wasted food."

2 "We travel often in the winter months and worry about the pipes freezing if the power is out and the house has no heat; not the kind of surprise we would want when we come home."

3 "I have livestock to water and cannot risk being unable to pump water for an extended period."

4 "I often travel on business and need to know that if the power goes out, my family and home are safe and secure when I'm not there."

5 "If our sump pumps don't run, our basement can flood very quickly. Battery backup for our sump pumps was an option but that only provided a few hours of backup and only supported the sump pump. A standby generator supports a whole lot more and ensures backup as long as I need it."

6 "I need the ability to work from home regardless of weather conditions. With a generator I ensure that I have access to the technology I need to keep business running as usual."

7 "We have a well and without electricity we have no water — no drinking water, no flushable toilets and no showers."

8 "Our standby generator increases the value of our home — future buyers will love the security and convenience of their already-installed emergency power source."

9 "Staying at a hotel is not a realistic option if the power goes out. Not only is it expensive and inconvenient, some hotels don't allow the four-legged members of my family!"

10 "Running a beauty shop in the home could turn into a disaster if a power outage occurred while I was doing a treatment to a customer. With a standby generator back-up, I don't have to worry about that."

Most popular reason:

11 "I did not want to hassle with my tractor-driven PTO generator any more. I wanted a generator that would start automatically, whether I was home or not. I did not want my wife worrying about how to get the tractor started and hooked up if I was on the road."

There are a lot of good reasons to install an automatic Briggs & Stratton generator that can power the entire house or farm. McLeod Co-op Power offers this turn-key installation and maintenance service. A complete, installed generator system for a residential home usually averages $5,800-$8,500. Final price depends upon location, wiring, and size of generator. Larger generators up to 200 kW are also available for farm, business or industrial applications. Call McLeod Co-op Power for more details or for a price quote.

MCPA winners from GRE survey participants

A few months ago, Great River Energy conducted an appliance saturation and end use survey from a random sampling of members from its member cooperatives. Two McLeod Co-op Power members were fortunate to have their names drawn as winners from the people who participated in the survey. Gary Rathmanner of Winsted and Robert J. Wolter of Glencoe each won a $100 electric bill credit. Congratulations Gary and Robert.

Thank you to everyone who completed an online or paper survey as the results provide useful information to our power supplier Great River Energy to plan for future enegery needs. It also provides good data for MCPA on energy and appliance use.

5 factors to keep in mind when purchasing an electric vehicle

The decision to purchase an electric vehicle (EV) instead of a conventional car that runs on gasoline is getting easier to make every year. Between operational cost savings and the fact you can install a personal, at-home charging station, owning an EV means no more trips to the mechanic for routine maintenance or to the gas station. As you get closer to making that choice, here is a list of items to keep in mind when searching for the right EV for you.

1 Not all EVs are created equal. There are three types of EVs: hybrid electric (HEV), plug-in hybrid (PHEV) and battery electric (BEV). HEVs have a gas-powered internal combustion engine along with an electric motor but do not plug in for charging. A PHEV has two ranges: electric and gasoline. Once the electric charge runs out, the vehicle seamlessly switches energy sources. On average, they can travel between 10 and 50 miles on electricity before needing to be plugged in, while their gas tanks extend total range to between 300 and 600 miles. Lastly, BEVs run exclusively on electricity from the grid and do not produce any exhaust from the burning of fuel.

2 You'll save money up front and over time. Through federal and state tax incentives, along with energy management off-peak rates provided by the Co-op to save money on charging your EV's battery overnight, and not having to even get oil changes again, you'll realize a variety of savings.

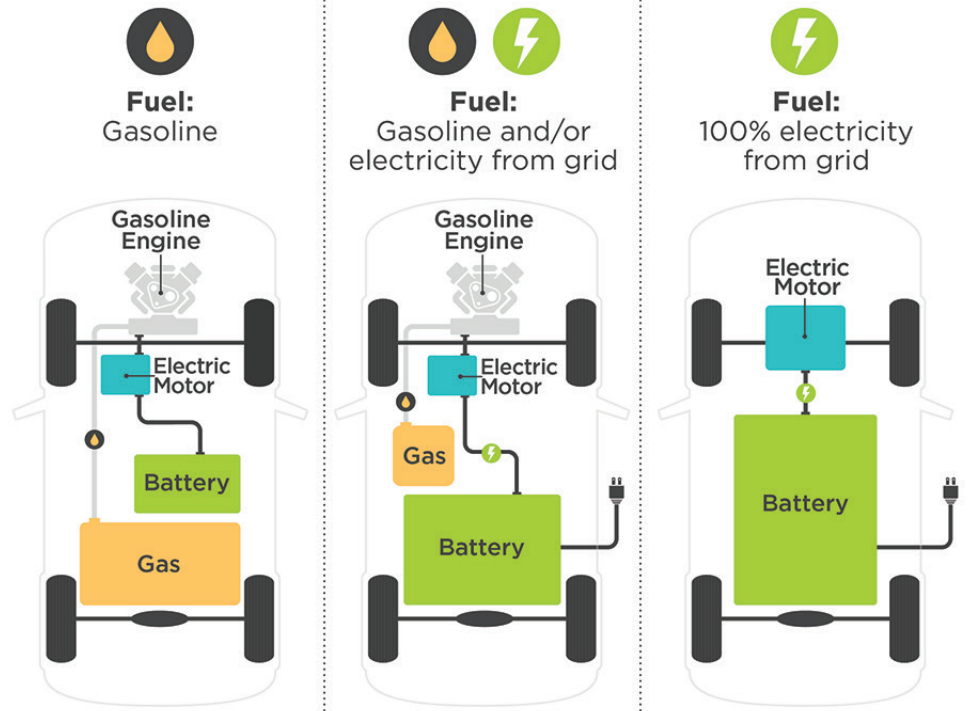
3 Ranges have improved. Range anxiety is real, but with BEVs now typically equipped with ranges of more than 100 miles – plus Tesla, Chevy and Nissan all having cracked the 200-mile range – you're not likely to be left stranded. Future models are even promising ranges of around 300 miles. Typical U.S. drivers travel less than 60 miles on weekdays, so owners of most 2017 model EVs could go multiple days without recharging.

4 Public charging stations are easy to access. There are three types of charging stations with varying charging times. Level 1s, on average, fully charge in about eight hours; Level 2s take anywhere from two- to-six hours; and DC fast chargers can fully charge an EV in about 30 minutes. There are nearly 270 public charging stations across Minnesota, most of them Level 2 but about 30 fast chargers as well. Infrastructure continues to build out into non-metro parts of the state, including an all-new electric corridor that makes it easy to travel up through Minnesota's North Shore and back with an EV.

5 EV 'fuel' is getting greener. Electric motors are already 80 to 95 percent efficient, so they use significantly less energy than vehicles with a traditional drive train. But the fuel used in those EVs is being generated by a growing number of renewable energy resources. Utilities, including your Cooperative, are incorporating more wind and solar energy in their portfolios to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EV owners can even rest assured that their vehicle is being fueled solely by wind energy if they enroll in the Co-op's Revolt program. Find out more by visiting mnrevolt.com or calling the Co-op.

Types of Electric Vehicles

If you're looking to purchase an electric vehicle, use this cheat sheet to help determine the various options. Drivers can choose between three types of electric vehicles (EVs). EVs are classed by the amount of electricity that is used as their energy source.



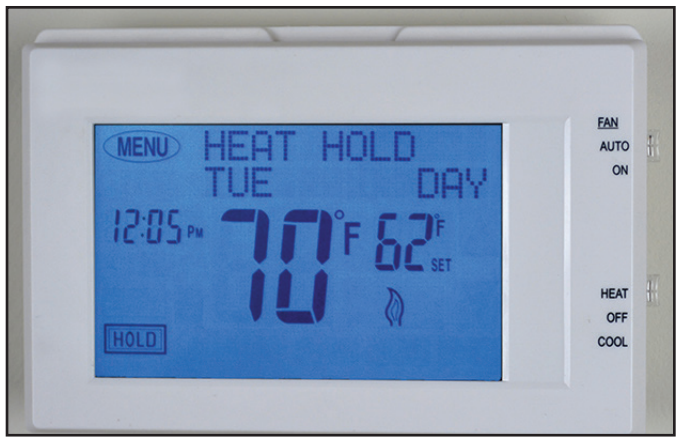
Source: Electric Power Research Institute

How smart should you get when purchasing a new thermostat?

Today, many thermostats offer great new technologies and can do things thermostats of the past simply could not do. That said, it's certainly worth asking if these new thermostats can save enough money to justify the extra cost. Let's start by looking at the three main options for thermostats: manual, programmable and smart.

The main benefits of a manual thermostat are that it's simple to operate and there are no batteries to wear out and replace. You just have to remember to raise and lower the temperature setting in the morning and evening, and whenever you leave the house.

The second option is the programmable thermostat. Typically, this type of thermostat allows settings for four different periods each day. Some models can even handle a different schedule for each day of the week. You control the settings so they will suit your climate, schedule and temperature preferences. You can easily override your program settings anytime.



A programmable thermostat is only effective if it is programmed correctly. Photo Credit: Public Domain, no attribution required (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Programmable_thermostat)

Smart thermostats learn from your behavior to maximize energy savings. Photo Credit: Public Domain, no attribution required (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nest_Labs)

The third option is a smart, or "learning" thermostat. A smart thermostat connects to your home's Wi-Fi network. After installation, you input the basics of your schedule and temperature. Over time, as you change the settings, it learns your schedule and adjusts to minimize energy use. Smart thermostats can also detect when no one is home. You can also control it remotely by using an app on your smart phone or tablet.

The move to smart technology is a significant investment. Units can cost up to $400, although one manufacturer has a new model for about $170. It's also important to note not all homes have the proper wiring in place to accommodate smart thermostats, so you may need to hire a professional to handle the installation.

Are newer, more expensive thermostats worth the extra cost? How much a thermostat can save depends on how much you spend on heating and cooling your house. You can estimate your heating and cooling expenses by examining your electric bills (and other utility bills) related to heating your home. Compare the bills for winter and summer to those for spring and fall. Most of the difference is likely due to heating and cooling. If that amount is more than $900 per year, which is the national average, you have a better chance of a good return on your investment.

The second factor that will determine how much you can save is how you are operating your old thermostat. If you are conscientious about adjusting the temperature to save energy when you're leaving the house or going to bed, the new thermostat may not reduce your bills that much, even if you program it correctly or if it learns your behavior.

Whichever direction you go, remember there are other ways you can use your thermostat more efficiently:

- Don't adjust the thermostat temperature drastically in the hopes of making it heat or cool your home more quickly.
- For the greatest savings during winter months, keep the temperature at or below 68 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home during the day, and cooler during the night; during summer months, keep it at or above 78 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home.
- You can save up to 10 percent off your monthly heating and cooling bill by turning back your thermostat by 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours a day.
- The thermostat is just one piece of the energy efficiency puzzle. You might be able to save more by adding insulation or sealing air leaks. A professional energy audit is always the best way to identify your home's energy weaknesses.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on thermostats, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Industry News

Energy market benefits cooperative members

The electricity that toasts your breakfast and cools your milk could be produced at a wind turbine in Minnesota, a power plant in North Dakota or a hydroelectric dam in Manitoba. And, over the course of a day, you might receive electricity from all three.

Great River Energy is a member of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which administers the wholesale energy markets in the Midwest.

Participation in energy markets is beneficial for cooperative members because it enables Great River Energy to access a diverse energy market instead of relying solely on its own resources to serve members. And it provides Great River Energy with the ability to sell power from its resources across a wider footprint.

This combination of market opportunities and generation ownership ensures the membership receives reliable power at a low cost. The market also facilitates the flow of energy from where it is generated to where it is needed.

"Weather patterns and energy consumption vary throughout the Midwest. The market optimizes generation resources to supply everyone as efficiently as possible," said Great River Energy Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke.

According to MISO's calculations, the exchange of energy and other services through a coordinated energy market provides approximately $3 billion in benefits to the region.

One of Great River Energy's strategies is to position its portfolio of power supply resources to produce the optimum value for members. That includes strategically purchasing some energy from the market when it is advantageous to do so, while maintaining the proper generation resources to provide reliability and serve members economically in all market conditions.

"Market dynamics change. We need to deliver electricity today, but our larger goal is to supply affordable and increasingly renewable power for decades to come," said Brekke.

-Electric Energy Online

Power Line Worker Scholarship Offered

Students accepted into one of Minnesota's three power line technology programs for the 2018-19 school term, may apply for a $500 scholarship. The Cooperative will award one $500 scholarship for a local student.

If you are graduating from a high school in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or Carver County or are a resident of one of those four counties, and have been accepted into the line worker program at Minnesota West in Jackson, Minnesota State in Wadena or Rosemount Technical College in Rosemount, you are eligible to apply. Applications and informative career brochures are available on the Co-op website www.mcleodcoop.com or by calling the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272. Applications must be completed and returned by April 13, 2018.

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 28 to be included in the March issue. Thank you!

Please run this ad in the next MCPA News

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Telephone number: _____

Remember to limit your ad to nine words!

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Please check ad category

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

For Sale Miscellaneous

- Adult electric wheelchair. Used less than 6 months. $2,000/bo. 320-234-7181
- 40in X 48in wood pallets, 4-way, good condition. 320-583-1200
- Arctic Cat Purple Power-lube racing formula snowmobile oil. 952-467-2103
- 55-gallon steel barrels with removeable tops. $15/each. 952-353-2351
- Yale forklift 5,000lb lift. 320-582-1534
- Schwartz snow bucket. 320-582-1534
- Kids play house/school bus shelter. 320-582-1534
- Detroit 353 motor. 320-582-1534
- 3 point mounted snow-blower. 320-582-1534
- John Deere garden tractor, blower, mower, cab. 110 10hp. $1,600. 320-510-1428
- 8ft LEER pickup topper, tan in color. $150. 320-223-5171

For Sale Farm

- White 5100 corn-planter, 6 row, narrow. 320-395-2716
- McDon 4000 haybine. 320-395-2716
- 6ft Wayneís tile plow. 320-582-1534
- Round bales for bedding. 320-582-1534
- 2-225 bushel gravity boxes. 320-582-1534
- Tractor cab for IHC tractor. 320-582-1534
- 20 disk John Deere grain drill grass seeder. 320-864-4496

Wanted

- Super 8 movie-projector in good working condition. 320-510-1107
- Grill guard off a 1992-1996 Ford F-Series. 612-581-0448
- Young farmer looking for land to rent. 2018 and beyond. 320-583-9343
- Concertina quad or triple key of C. 320-587-8438

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.

Partners in power: Great River Energy and its members

Cooperatives formed Great River Energy to supply the energy they need to power their members' lives. Great River Energy does that by remaining financially sound, keeping rates stable and competitive, and continually evaluating its generation and transmission system to make sure it meets members' needs.

In 2017, Great River Energy served its members well and positioned itself for more strong performances in the years ahead.

Sharing financial success

Great River Energy recorded impressive finances in 2017, so the cooperative decided to share its success with its members. At the end of the year, Great River Energy issued a refund of $6 million to its member-owners, which include McLeod Co-op Power and 27 other electric cooperatives in Minnesota.

Although 2017 was successful, Great River Energy's member cooperatives continue to see flat or declining energy sales. Great River Energy has positioned its generation portfolio and deployed other cost-saving measures to ensure stable wholesale electricity rates and a strong financial position.

Great River Energy estimates rates will increase by approximately 1.5 percent annually over the next 10 years, slower than the anticipated pace of inflation.

A modern generation portfolio

The Midwest's most efficient coal and nuclear power plants remain critical to reliable energy, but several new types of power generation have emerged.

"The rise of renewable energy has added up over time and now represents a significant portion of the energy serving our membership," said Great River Energy Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke. ***"In fact, Great River Energy met the state of Minnesota's renewable energy standard of 25 percent renewable energy in 2017 — eight years ahead of the requirement."***

After 50 years serving Minnesota cooperatives, Great River Energy retired the Stanton Station power plant in central North Dakota in May. The coal-based power plant was no longer economical to operate in the Midwest energy market, but its closure opened several opportunities for Great River Energy to give back to the local communities.

December 2017 Outage Summary

During the month of December 2017 the Cooperative had a total of 50 outages, affecting 426 consumers. The largest number of outages were due to extreme cold and unknown causes.

The outage affecting the most consumers was on Saturday, December 2 at 10:24 p.m. when a tree fell into a line, causing an outage for 113 accounts in the Buffalo Lake area. The outage lasted just over two hours. The second largest outage was Tuesday, December 5 about 2 a.m. between Glencoe and Green Isle. Eighty-two members were without power for 23 minutes. Cause of outage was ice and sleet on lines.

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.

Line crews patrolling distribution system

Do not be surprised if you see a Cooperative truck near you. Linemen have been performing their annual maintenance patrol. They are surveying the distribution system and fixing potential concerns before they become an issue.

Crews have completed their inspections in several substation areas but have many more to go in the next few months. MCPA also encourages members to report anything they see that may look like an equipment issue to the Co-op. An example would be if you see a guy wire that has come loose, a damaged pole or meter, or any other issue with the Co-op's facilities. We appreciate our members being our eyes out in the service area.

Line trucks may also pull into your yard to inspect the service, meter and hardware to make sure all is working properly. Our linemen try to be as unobtrusive as possible during such visits.

Operation RoundUp donation benefits area high students

Glencoe area youth have a new gathering place above the Temple Service Center on 11th Street in Glencoe. The group renovated the 2nd floor of the building, which was originally constructed as a Masonic Lodge in 1895.

Tori Kidd has helped the youth group secure funds, fix up their new off-site space, and serves as one of the adult supervisors when the Lighthouse is open.

A new youth room, named the Lighthouse, was benefited by an Operation Round Up® donation of $1,000 in 2017. The funds were used to help remodel and renovate the upstairs of a historic building in Glencoe that is becoming a safe gathering spot for area youth. High schoolers spent the summer patching cracks and painting walls to fix up the space to have a place where they could meet with their peers, play games, and grow friendships.

The project started with Tori Kidd, Director of Christian Education at First Lutheran Church in Glencoe, applying for a donation to get the paint and resources to renovate the building for the youth group. The youth and adult volunteers put in the labor to fix up the rooms into a youth recreation center over the summer. It opened in September of 2017.

The Lighthouse is located above the Temple Cleaners on 11th Street E. in Glencoe. The building was built in 1895 as a Masonic Lodge. Brian Grochow, owner of The Temple Service Center (Dry Cleaners & Formal Wear business), bought the building in 1990. He was key to getting the youth an off-site gathering place. The Lighthouse renovation has been funded by community donations, the Operation Round Up grant and volunteer labor, not church funds. And a key criteria in eligibility for the grant was that this facility would benefit many youth from the community, not just one church's youth group.

Currently, the youth in grades 8-12 from First Lutheran and Good Shepherd Lutheran congregations in Glencoe and St. Paul's Lutheran in Lester Prairie have been using the facility for Sunday night games and socializing. Sunday night attendance has been about 20-45 youth

The larger rec room, complete with foosball tables, is used as a safe gathering place for 8th-12th graders.

A small kitchen area aids in serving snacks and meals when youth gather on Sunday evenings.

per night, depending upon the planned activities. Events are open to any youth from the community. Youth group kids are welcome to bring their friends. The youth play foosball and games, share food and watch sporting events on TV. But more importantly they are building a support network of their peers and growing friendships in a safe place.

In spring they are hoping to be open after school, as well as Sunday nights. Hours are limited as the Lighthouse is only open when adult supervision is present.

Youth interested in participating or needing more information may contact Tori Kidd at 320-864-5522.

Members in the Operation Round Up Program donate from $0 to $.99 a month, depending upon the amount of the electric bill. The average member donates $6.00 a year to the program. Many worthwhile charities benefit from the proceeds of the trust each year.

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, 2018.

Energy Star Appliance Rebates for 2018

Dehumidifiers $25

Dryers $25

Refrigerators & Freezer (Max of 2/year)
- Refrigerator harvest $75
- Refrigerator w/recycling $75
- Freezer Harvest $75
- Freezer with recycling $75

AC Tune Up $25

Ductless ASHP
- Delivered Fuels $300
- Primary Electric heat $500
- ECM $50
- GSHP ($/ton) $400

QI ASHP
- SEER 14.5 ..... $480
- SEER 15 ..... $580
- SEER 16 ..... $630

ETS Space Heat - per kW $50

ETS Water Heating
- 100 gallon minimum capacity $400

Heat Pump Water Heater
- 50 gallon minimum capacity $500

Swim Pool ASHP $400

Pool Variable Speed Pump $200

LED Light Bulbs $2

LED Yard Light $60

Electric Vehicle & Chargewise $500

This is a residential summary only. The Co-op also offers agricultural, commercial and industrial 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 on the Co-op's website www.mcleodcoop.com. 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 hvacreducation.net website. A list of all "registered contractors" in Minnesota is on www.mcleodcoop.com website. There are no rebates for central air conditioners. The Co-op encourages any member replacing a 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. Rebate for recycled refrigerator or freezer must be for removal of old but still operating unit from location served by MCPA, and recycling documentation required.

Medical priority list during outages

Members with medical needs encouraged to have battery backups and generators

If you or a member of your household has a medical condition for which electrical service is vital, please contact McLeod Co-op Power to be put on its medical priority list.

Your Cooperative maintains a medical priority list to inform members of planned outages and to make sure these members have a backup plan for extended outages. Crews will also try to give members with medical issues priority for outage restoration in most instances. However, your Cooperative cannot guarantee medical priority members will have their power restored first during a major outage because crews work from the substation outward to restore the greatest number of members possible.

For that reason, medical priority members should consider battery backups and/or generators for their vital equipment during outages. Surge protectors are also a good idea to help protect equipment from lightning strikes and other possible surge situations. Another good idea is to check with your hospital or doctor's office to make arrangements to move to a facility with adequate service should a major outage occur.

Please call 800-494-6272 to be put on the medical priority list.

Time for high school juniors and seniors to apply

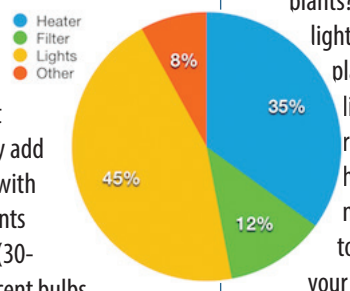
High school juniors and seniors have until March 2, 2018 to apply for the Cooperative's Washington Youth Tour competition. One local youth will win an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. June 9-14, 2018 from the Cooperative.

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 th Co-op website www.mcleodcoop.com. Click on ABOUT US tab and then YOUTH PROGRAMS tab. You will have until March 2, 2018 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.

Fish Aquarium Energy Use

The biggest consumption of electricity in an aquarium is by the lighting system, which accounts for approximately 45% of the total bill. Usually the heater comes in second at about 35% of the total cost. Filters commonly run at about 12% while air pumps, etc. account for the remaining 8%. This is based on the average aquarium setup.

Lighting is the only component in the aquarium that doesn't run on a 24-hour shift. Furthermore, the lighting expenses can easily be controlled by the lighting time as well as the equipment we use.



The common fluorescent light bulb (15 - 40 Watts) that is provided with most hoods doesn't significantly add much cost. Planted tanks with higher lighting requirements that use power compacts (30-100 Watts) or VHO fluorescent bulbs (75 and 160 Watts) and/or a combination thereof obviously will lead to higher power consumption. A reef tank may even run on metal halides which consume from 150 - 1000 Watts which will quickly add to the bill.

Heating an Aquarium

Heating an aquarium can also be expensive. The larger the tank the more heat is required. Further, a tropical fish environment usually requires a higher water temperature making it more expensive to heat compared to non-tropical fish tanks. For example, a 30-Gallon tank heated at 72 F (22 C) will consume approx. 110 kWh per year. The same tank heated at 82 F (28 C) will consume about 440 kWh per year. That is 4 times as much!

Water pumps, air pumps and filters kWh use per month

Water pumps start at three Watts and easily go up to 400 Watts depending on the gallon per hour (gph) rate. Some ball park rates are 10 Watts for 200 gph and 30 Watts for 300 gph. 150 Watts can be consumed by 600 gph and up.

Powerheads, air pumps and filters are low in consumption starting at only three Watts and generally not exceeding 25 - 50 Watts for the heavy-duty models. Ultraviolet filters run between eight to 130 Watts and up.

Generally spoken, a fish-only aquarium runs at a rather low cost. Cost increases as tank size gets bigger, plants or coral are added, or you have a saltwater tank or reef tank.

How to reduce aquarium energy consumption and cost

Many aquarium enthusiasts may want to use higher wattage bulbs than necessary for their aquarium. For instance, take a look at the type of plants in your aquarium. Are they low light plants? Moderate light plants? High light plants? Some plants require very low lighting. In a 10 gallon tank, low light plants can slide by with a five-Watt light, while higher light plants require around 30 Watts to stay healthy. This trick alone can save many dollars per year by switching to a much lower wattage light on your aquarium.

Many fish preferences have a range, for example, between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. To save money, simply adjust your heater to the low end of the spectrum. This means your heater will run much less because it is not constantly trying to hold a higher temperature. If your house is hot, maybe turn your air conditioner to 80 degrees so that the heater almost never has to run because the tank is already the correct temperature. This way your air conditioner should cost less too.

Your filters, pumps, and powerheads can be adjusted to a lower GPH to save electricity. Slower running takes less electricity. This is, of course, only an option if your tank does not need high flow. Tanks with picky corals may need a lot of flow. Freshwater tanks or low flow corals such as mushroom corals are just fine with low flow rates.

Choose LED lights if you wish to save money on your electric bill. LEDs oftentimes provide the same lighting power, with less wattage compared to fluorescent or metal hallide lighting. There are also specific light choices designed to be economical. There are also economical heaters, or heaters that are more reliable and great at sensing temperatures so they do not turn on at random times when they do not need to. Choose energy-efficient products to put into your tank, and your electric bill will be less costly.

How to Calculate Your Aquarium's Energy Consumption

To calculate the energy consumption of your aquarium, you will need to know the Watts per equipment and the overall running time. The running time of the heater can either be observed in measuring the actual running time or by estimating. 15 minutes out of every hour (6 hours total per day) for lower temperatures or 30 minutes out of the hour (12 hours total) for higher temperatures. This will of course vary greatly, depending on your room temperature.

Watts multiplied by hours will give you the daily wattage per equipment. (1000 Watts equal 1 kWh. The kWh x $0.12 will be used in our calculations. In summer it will be a penny higher at the kWh x $0.13.

The Formula

(Watts x hours) divided by 1000 x kWh cost ($0.12) x 30 = monthly electrical cost of the aquarium

The exact usage of electricity for each piece of equipment can only be determined by actual readings using an amp meter, which measures the actual energy used and not the energy based on the maximum output. The formula will provide an approximate cost only.

Average Cost to Operate an Aquarium

	10 Gallon	30 Gallon	50 Gallon	100 Gallon
Heater	$1.08	$2.16	$4.32	$8.64
Lights with plants/coral	$1.19	$1.98	$3.96	$7.92
Filter	$0.42	$0.86	$0.86	$0.86
Air pump	$0.22	$0.22		
Power head	$0.39	$0.39	$0.60	$0.86
TOTAL/ month	**$3.30**	**$5.61**	**$9.74**	**$18.28**
ANNUAL COST	**$39.60**	**$67.32**	**$116.88**	**$219.36**