

# MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020



## FALL INTO ENERGY SAVINGS

As scarves and jackets leave closets this fall, be ready to cut the chill and your energy bill with these seasonal tips.

**ADJUST THE TEMPERATURE:** When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature. (Please note that adjusting your thermostat in this manner is not recommended for heat pump installations.)

**ADJUST BLINDS AND CURTAINS:** Keep them open to let in sunlight during the day, and close at night to keep heat inside and protect from drafts.

**REDUCE HOT WATER TEMPERATURES:** Heating water accounts for 12 percent of the average home's energy use. Set your water heater's thermostat to 120° or lower—that's usually sufficient for a household's hot-water needs. Also, if you've had your water heater for more than 12 years, you might want to consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient model.

**SEAL AND INSULATE:** This is the best way to keep heat in and air out. Check your home's weather stripping for air leaks around doors, windows, baseboards, and wherever pipes, wires and vents enter the house. Make sure the warm air you paid for won't escape.

**HAVE YOUR HEATING SYSTEM SERVICED** by a certified contractor, and **REPLACE FURNACE**

**FILTERS** at least once every three months. Clean filters once a month during the heating season to keep the system at peak performance.

**MAKE ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTING CHOICES:** Now that you'll be using your lights more, replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient LEDs. Decorate for the holidays with energy saving LED holiday lights.

**CONSIDER A CO-OP HEATING PROGRAM AND EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT:** McLeod Co-op Power offers excellent heating programs that offer value, safety and a competitive advantage to other heating options. Off-peak programs are offered at a reduced electric rate to help you lower your energy bills. Each program varies in the way it heats, so you can choose the method that best meets your needs. Each method is safe, clean, energy efficient, and cost effective.

Options include:

- Dual Fuel
- Room Storage Heaters
- Central Storage Furnaces
- Slab Storage Heat
- Hot Water Storage
- Interruptible Water Heating
- Air Source Heat Pumps

### LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.mcleodcoop.com](http://www.mcleodcoop.com) or call (800) 494-6272 for more information on each of these programs and products. Rebates may be available!

## NOMINATE A COMMUNITY DIFFERENCE MAKER

Each year, McLeod Cooperative Power celebrates volunteerism and community service with the Touchstone Energy® Community Award.

One winning organization receives a \$500 cash prize and competes with winners from other electric cooperatives for statewide recognition and an additional \$1,000 cash prize.

We are now seeking nominations! Applications for the award are now being accepted and are available at [www.mcleodcoop.com/touchstone-energy-community-award](http://www.mcleodcoop.com/touchstone-energy-community-award).

### TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COMMUNITY AWARD



The application will require a description of the project, program or event, as well as the positive impact it brings to the community, and must be received by October 31.

Any civic organization or nonprofit in our service territory is eligible to compete for the award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the local community.

Organizations are eligible to apply for the award themselves, or community members may apply on behalf of a deserving organization.

As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, McLeod Co-op is a partner in a national alliance of more than 750 local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives dedicated to the values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

Learn About the  
MN Cold Weather Rule

03

Scholarships Awarded  
To Local Students

04

## New Headquarters Now Open

The McLeod Cooperative Power office has moved! As of August 18, we are now serving you from 3515 11th St. East, Glencoe, MN 55336.

After several years of planning and twelve months of construction, the new McLeod Cooperative Power combined facility is a reality. By consolidating all of our resources in one facility, McLeod Cooperative Power will be able to improve response times in emergency situations, provide better service to our member-owners, and serve the community for years to come.

Adjusted lobby hours, in response to COVID-19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. remain in place and masks are required. We appreciate your patience while our team adjusts to our new facility.





CEO MESSAGE

“Time Stand Still” by the rock band “Rush” is one of those songs that just sparks a bit of emotion for me. There are three lyrics from that song that I find in my head quite often:

“Time stand still, I’m not looking back, but I want to look around me now.”

As we start to see the end of 2020 on the horizon, it is time take a moment to be stand still and look around.

Here at McLeod Cooperative Power, there’s no doubt that our financials to date have been impacted by the wild ride of 2020, just like most of yours. Our revenues are down about \$100,000 compared to the same time last year. And while our wholesale power costs are down about the same amount, which is helpful, our expenses are up primarily due to COVID-19 and its impact on how we’ve had to adapt our operations. Our total margins are also down compared to 2019 which you can see below.

The comparison to last year might be alarming at first glance but this is a moment to look a little deeper and realize that 2019 wasn’t necessarily “normal” either. I have been told 2019 marked an exceedingly successful year in terms of margins due to some unusual weather and a strong harvest season. Which means these numbers aren’t necessarily as bad as they look, but we still need to address our thinning revenue and operational plan through the end of the year.

As usual, our team will continue to watch spending closely. While it will be a while before we reach our “normal” operational practices, we are getting closer and this will help reduce the gap.



CEO RON MEIER

COVID-19 has caused us all to look around with a new perspective. While the pandemic caused some pause for us, it hasn’t stopped us from keeping the lights on and serving you the best we can. McLeod Co-op continues to operate in new ways to provide the same great service you expect. The safety of our employees and the members who come into our office is paramount. We will continue to offer modified office hours and require masks when you visit us in person.

Speaking of in person visits, if you haven’t heard, we are now in our new facility on the east side of Glencoe at 3515 11th Street East. Our address has changed, but our phone numbers have not. It was a big lift by all our employees and our partners to get here, but we’re excited to be in our new space and realize the efficiencies of having our team and equipment in one central location. We look forward to hosting an open house when it is safe to do so. We can’t wait for our members to see result of their investment in the Cooperative’s next 85 years.

It’s always good to take time, stop, and ask time to stand still to look around, but it’s just as important to look to the future. The employees of McLeod Co-op are doing that every day and the future is bright. No matter what 2020 has in store for us to its end, we are ready we’ll always keep the lights on!

Cooperatively,

R1PL

AUGUST 2020 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

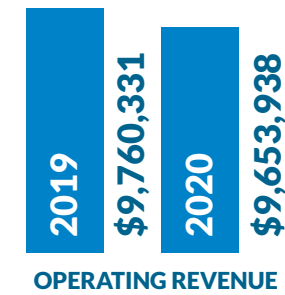
The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on August 25, 2020 at MCPA headquarters. All nine board members were present for the meeting. The attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers were also present.

Highlights of the meeting included:

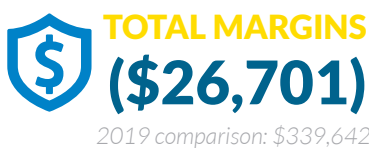
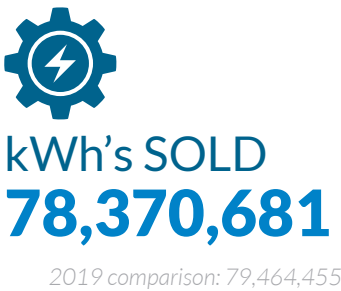
- Updates were provided on the new facility. A safety orientation for all employees was conducted on the first day in the new facility. Trainings have been scheduled to familiarize employees on the security system, generator, lighting and HVAC.
- Long-time employee, Grant Miller will be retiring September 8, 2020. The search for a Journeyman Lineman to replace Miller is underway.
- The Billing Department created a strategy for resuming the full collection process, including disconnects, for the month of August. Several notifications were sent in July to delinquent accounts, which included information on a flexible payment plan available. These efforts reduced the cumulative past due amount substantially.
- James Fahey, President of Fahey Sales Auctioneers and Appraisers reported on the progress of the sale of the existing cooperative headquarters on Ford Avenue and the bare lot on the Northeast corner of 12th Street and Ford Avenue. A motion was carried authorizing CEO Meier to negotiate the sale of the existing facilities on the terms and conditions approved by the Board.
- The cooperative has engaged National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) to facilitate a Strategic Planning Session in the next few months. The Board will review potential dates.

BY THE NUMBERS | Q2 2020

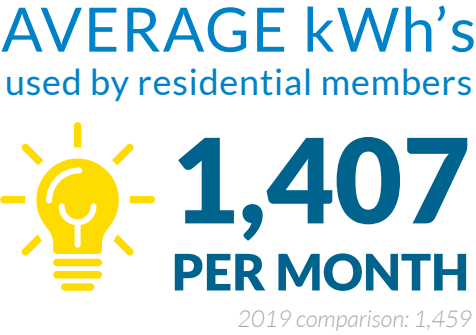
McLeod Cooperative Power’s leadership spends substantial time managing and providing oversight of the Co-op’s operations, including ensuring that the organization remains in a strong and stable financial condition. Below is an overview of our Second Quarter Financial Report.



	2020	2019
Cost of Purchased Power	5,751,857	5,817,869
Other Operating Expenses	4,049,162	3,845,891
Total Cost of Electric Service	9,801,019	9,663,760



	2020	2019
Operating Margins	(147,081)	96,571
Non-Operating Margins	120,380	243,071



NO POWER? NO WORRIES

Protect your home and family from the expense and inconvenience caused by power outages. Operate your sump pump, furnace fan, lights, refrigerator, and other important appliances with a Briggs and Stratton Automatic Generator sold and installed by McLeod Cooperative Power.

Call (800) 494-6272 for more info!





# ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

## KANDIYOHI, MCLEOD & MEEKER COUNTIES

United Community Action Partnership  
(800) 992-1710  
Willmar: (320) 235-0850  
Hutchinson: (320)587-5244

## MCLEOD COUNTY AREA

McLeod County Social Service Center  
(320) 864-3144 | (800)247-1756  
Hutchinson: (320) 484-4330

## RENVILLE COUNTY AREA

United Community Action Partnership  
(320) 523-1842

## SIBLEY COUNTY AREA

Sibley County Public Health & Human Services  
(507) 237-4000 | (866) 396-9963

## MN Valley Action Council

(800) 767-7139  
Gaylord: (507) 237-2981  
Mankato: (507) 345-6822

## CARVER COUNTY AREA

Scott-Carver-Dakota  
Community Action Agency  
(952)-496-2125

## WRIGHT COUNTY AREA

Wright County Community Action  
(320) 963-6500

## ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY SHUT-OFF PROTECTION

Minnesota law provides that a public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential member for nonpayment, that has been issued orders into active military duty, for deployment or for a permanent change in duty station, provided that they enter into an agreement with the utility to make payments towards their bill. Forms are available upon request.

# MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE NOTICE AND SUMMARY



Notice to members who are behind in your bill payments: the Cold Weather Rule may not protect you! Make plans now to pay your bill to avoid being without electricity this winter.

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

- 1
- An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:
- Your total household income is less than 50 percent of the State Median Income.
  - You have contacted McLeod Co-op, have set up a payment arrangement, and are reasonably current with your scheduled payments.

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

- 2
- Before disconnecting service to a residential member during the cold weather months, McLeod Co-op will provide a disconnect notice, statement of member rights and responsibilities, a list of local energy assistance providers, and available payment plans or options to the affected member. Inability to pay forms are available upon request.

- 3
- If a residential member is disconnected during the cold weather months they can either pay their outstanding balance or set up a mutually acceptable payment arrangement in order to be reconnected.

At McLeod Cooperative Power our members are important. We would rather work with you to set up a plan to pay your bill than disconnect your service.

- 4
- The Cooperative will not disconnect service to a residential member who has not responded to a disconnection notice without first investigating whether the dwelling is occupied. This investigation includes a personal visit to the dwelling. If the unit is found to be occupied, the cooperative will immediately inform the occupant of his or her rights under this policy.

- 5
- Involuntary disconnections between October 15 and April 15 will not occur on a Friday or on the day before a holiday.

- 6
- Members have the right to a hearing with the Cooperative's Board of Directors in the event of a dispute over a residential member's inability to pay for service, income eligibility, the reasonableness of payment schedules, or any other issue related to the Cold Weather Rule. Both the cooperative and the member will have the right to present evidence and be heard in person at that hearing which will be followed by the Board of Directors' written decision within 10 days. No disconnection will occur while a dispute is pending.

# PEOPLE BEHIND YOUR POWER

## STEPHANIE JAKEL MANAGER OF FINANCE

Steph recently joined the McLeod Co-op team to take responsibility for the financial wealth of the cooperative by overseeing financial statements, developing and planning long term financial goals, and evaluating investment opportunities. After six years at a neighboring cooperative, Steph values the sense of "family" and willingness of coworkers to be there when you need them, which are a part of co-op culture.

**Fun Fact:** Each Fall, Steph enjoys her favorite season by sitting outside with a blanket and a good book among the colorful leaves.



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.



# PREPARATION AND AWARENESS FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Harvest season is one of the busiest times of the year for farmers—and among the most dangerous. Before taking to the fields, McLeod Cooperative Power urges farm workers to be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment and extensions far away from them. We encourage farm managers to share this information with their families, and workers to keep them safe from farm-related electrical accidents.



*Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards.*

McLeod Cooperative Power’s Member Services Manager, Dan Ehrke, reminds members that a little preparation can go a long way in making the harvest season safer. “Take the time to look up and look out for electrical lines,” said Ehrke. “Be aware of where the lines are in relation to your machinery and keep at least 10 feet away from any electrical equipment. And of course, don’t forget to lower extensions before you move and keep an eye out for guy wires,” he added.

Here are some safety tips for your fall harvest:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

- Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and auger when working after dark.
- Equipment with auto-guidance systems often require less focus for steering, but it’s important to remain aware of navigation issues and obstructions such as electrical equipment.

**If the machinery you are operating does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for a McLeod Co-op crew to cut the power.**

Only on the rare occasion that the machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Never touch anything that is in contact with a power line.

Safety starts with preparation. Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins. Have a safety plan, and make sure that farm workers and family members are aware of your procedures.

USPS 2220  
PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE PAID  
HUTCHINSON, MN

## SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH: CO-OP AWARDS LOCAL STUDENTS \$500 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ridgewater College Foundation has awarded two \$500 scholarships on behalf of McLeod Cooperative Power to students Reece Schwartz and Nathan Litzau. Each year the co-op donates \$1,000 from its unclaimed capital credit fund to be used by the Ridgewater College Foundation to support local students furthering their education. Congratulations to our recipients!



Reece Schwartz, a Glencoe graduate, is a first-year entering the electrician program. He looks forward to working with his hands and working his way through the electrician ranks.



Nathan Litzau, a Glencoe graduate, is entering his 2nd year of the electrician program. He aspires to get his Master Electrician License and work in an industrial plant or commercial wiring.



3515 11th St. East  
Glencoe, MN 55336

[WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM](http://WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM)

The McLeod Cooperative Power News (USPS 2220) is published monthly by McLeod Cooperative Power Association, 3515 11th St. East, Glencoe, MN 55336-0070. Subscription rate: \$4.61 per year for members and \$8 per year for non-members. McLeod Cooperative Power is an equal opportunity employer.

Periodicals Postage Rate is at Hutchinson, MN. 55350 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: McLeod Coop Power News, 3515 11th Street E, Glencoe, MN 55336-0070

**OFFICE PHONE**  
(320) 864-3148  
(800) 494-6272

**24-HOUR OUTAGE PHONE**  
(800) 927-5685

**WEBSITE**  
[www.mcleodcoop.com](http://www.mcleodcoop.com)

**EMAIL ADDRESS**  
[mcpainfo@mcleodcoop.com](mailto:mcpainfo@mcleodcoop.com)

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
Ronald Meier

**EDITOR**  
Dan Ehrke and Fuller Creative

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**District 1:**  
Oria Brinkmeier  
(320) 485-2554

**District 2:**  
Joe Griebie, Vice President  
(320) 779-1101

**District 3:**  
David Resch, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer  
(952) 449-1793

**District 4:**  
Doug Kirtz, President  
(320) 583-7673

**District 5:**  
Allan Duesterhoeft  
(320) 587-9134

**District 6:**  
Gary Burdorf  
(507) 964-5815

**District 7:**  
Randy Hlavka, GRE Representative  
(320) 583-0037

**District 8:**  
Keith Peterson  
(320) 583-0997

**District 9:**  
Susan Anderson, Secretary-Treasurer  
(952) 250-3109