

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER

NEWS

JANUARY 2021



THIS IS WHY
WE WORK
SAFELY,
FOR LIFE
OUTSIDE
THE OFFICE

MCLEOD CO-OP POWER LAUNCHES EMPLOYEE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

This past fall, McLeod Co-op Power launched our “This Is My Why” safety campaign, encouraging employees to make a personal commitment to safety.

McLeod Co-op Power, like most electric cooperatives, provides a wide range of fundamental education and training to keep their employees safe. Our “This Is Why We Work Safely” photo series captures our employees and their families creating a more personal connection to safety. A reminder that the main purpose or WHY behind all the training is everyone has someone or something to go home to at the end of each workday.

“Safety is an important part of everything we do at McLeod Co-op Power,” said Operations/Safety Specialist, Debbie Ebert. This project is a creative way to keep safety top of mind and add a creative twist to messaging that gets monotonous.”

The purpose of this project was to increase the awareness and effectiveness of the McLeod Co-op Power safety program while demonstrating to employees that their safety is a priority and valued by their co-workers.

This campaign is not only meant to remind our employees about the personal benefits of working safely, it’s also meant to reinforce the importance of them taking personal responsibility for their safety. Whether it’s to go home to their family, their dogs, their hobbies, or whatever makes their life meaningful.

The campaign also encourages employees to not only be safe for themselves but also be safe for their co-workers – everyone has their very own and different reason “why.” The personal appeal of our employees’ family members creates a strong emotional connection that reiterates our message that safety is of the utmost importance.

“This campaign has also been a fun way to learn more about our coworkers and meet those closest to them. Photographer Jim Jordahl did an excellent job capturing many of our employees,” said Ebert.

Throughout the year, we’ll continue to spread this message on different platforms and through various activities. For now, the photos and banners throughout our office are great daily reminders to work hard and work safely.

THEIR WHY IS WHY WE WORK SAFE

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE REASONS OUR TEAM WORKS SAFE

We’re making safety personal this year at McLeod Co-op Power and these are just a few of the faces that motivate our dedicated employees to work safely. Each month check out our Employee Spotlight on page 3 for safety tips and a peek at the many “whys” behind our commitment to safety.



f LIKE US ON FACEBOOK
<https://www.facebook.com/McLeodCoop/>
FOR MORE PHOTOS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

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START PLANNING NOW FOR THE NEW YEAR

Does your list of New Year’s resolutions include a project that might require new electrical service or changes to existing service?

If so, let us know! It’s common for the Cooperative to receive many requests for service projects in the late fall and early spring. However, projects requiring electric lines to be built, rebuilt or moved aren’t as simple as they may seem and sometimes require a more complex process. We strongly encourage anyone thinking about projects that might require new or modified electrical service to contact the Cooperative and begin the planning process as early as possible. For questions, please contact the Cooperative during regular business hours at (800) 494-6272.



CEO MESSAGE

20/20 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Here at McLeod Co-op Power, we are heading into 2021, looking ahead with 20/20 vision from recent successes and lessons learned. The board and staff at the Co-op will be deep in the process of revising our strategic plan at the beginning of the year. A good strategic plan that is implemented well will guide us into the future with purpose. The process to develop a strategic plan can be daunting, but not so much for McLeod Co-op Power because we are fortunate to be building from an existing plan. You will hear more about this as we get towards the end of this process.

2020 presented many unique challenges, but it didn't slow us down keeping safety top of mind. As you read in our feature article, we rolled out a safety initiative called "This Is My Why." This initiative helps us remember that at the end of the day, we have families that are counting on us to come home. In our 2021 newsletter editions, we will be utilizing our Employee Spotlight to shed more light on just how big of a role safety plays in the day-to-day operations of our electrical co-op.

We are also supporting efforts to foster innovation of Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) in 2021. The original program was created back in 2007, and a lot has changed since. It established a set of goals for electric utilities in Minnesota to reduce annual electricity sales by 1.5% and spend at least 1.5% of our revenues to achieve this goal. We have met these goals year after year, but CIP is now at the point where it needs to evolve to enable new technologies that were not available over 13 years ago.

In partnership with a diverse set of stakeholders, the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO)



CEO RON MEIER

Act was born to do just that. The bill emphasizes energy efficiency across energy, transportation, agriculture, and other key factors. ECO expands the focus beyond electricity and natural gas. It will encourage diverse improvements across all energy sectors.

For example, it will allow us to count electric vehicle incentives towards our goals. These incentives will lead to an accelerated reduction in greenhouse gas from transportation as more and more electric vehicles find themselves on the road. It will also reduce costs to our cooperative by removing the 1.5% spending requirement. Much like our industry, CIP needs to innovate for the future, and ECO will do just that.

We are asking our members to take a little time and reach out to our legislators and advocate for this bill. You can find your legislator online at <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>. We will also have more information on our website at <https://www.mcleodcoop.com/eco-act/>.

With our 20/20 vision, we know that 2021 is going to be a good year for the cooperative.

Cooperatively,

R1PL

DECEMBER 2020 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on December 22, 2020, at MCPA headquarters. All nine board members, the attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Operations Manager Dan Schade, reviewed the outage report for November 2020 which included a total of 58 outages, affecting 720 consumers.
- Burnham Tree Services has completed its work for 2020 and will start again in January 2021.
- 2021 Residential Rebates were reviewed, including a new \$25 rebate for WIFI thermostats. The Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) rebates will utilize a HSPF (Heating Seasonal Performance Factor) rating factor for 2021.
- The Annual Meeting was scheduled for July 13, 2021.
- SmartHub, the software that allows members to view their account information and pay their bill online, has been rescheduled to go live in July 2021.
- The 2021 Budget was approved.
- The Strategic Planning Session is scheduled for January 11-12, 2021. It will be held at the Glencoe City Center so social distancing guidelines can be followed.
- A member requested the co-op release three lots he owns in Acoma Township to be serviced by Hutchinson Utilities. It was the consensus of the Board not to release these services.

APPLY TODAY: OPERATION ROUND UP APPLICATION DEADLINE MARCH 1

Since 1935, McLeod Co-op Power has been committed to improving our members' quality of life. This tradition continues with our community service program called Operation Round Up. Members participate by agreeing to have their monthly energy bill amount rounded up to the next whole dollar. Members make a tax-deductible donation of \$.01 to \$.99/month, a maximum annual donation of \$11.88 a year. On average, our members each donate \$6 a year.

Yet, taken together, these contributions add up to something pretty remarkable: thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships. The collected funds are placed into an independent 501(c)(3) trust and disbursed through an application process. An independent trust board meets annually to review grant requests, and Operation Round Up contributions are then used in the local area for charitable and educational purposes.

HOW TO DONATE

As a McLeod Co-op Power, no action is required on your part to donate. Members are automatically enrolled in the Operation Round Up program, and your contributions will appear as a separate line item on your energy bills.

OPT-OUT OF OPERATION ROUND UP

Participation in Operation Round Up is completely optional. If you would like to opt-out, please complete and submit the form available at www.mcleodcoop.com

APPLY TODAY

Operation Round Up funds are given to local civic organizations and worthy causes through an application and selection process. Contributions will generally be made to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations for projects such as:

- Community service
- Education and youth
- Emergency assistance
- Environment
- Disaster Relief

The deadline to submit applications for the next grant cycle is March 1.

For further information or to obtain an application form, visit <https://www.mcleodcoop.com/services/operation-round-up/> or call (800) 494-6272.



SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY: SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT

McLeod Co-op Power's Operation Round Up® program has awarded nearly \$130,000 thousand totaling 163 donations to local nonprofit organizations and community service programs since the program's inception in 2004.

2021 REBATES

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES

Energy Star Dehumidifier \$25

Energy Star Electric Clothes Dryer \$25

RECYCLING

Old Freezer or Refrigerator \$25
(Proof of recycling required, limit of two per year.)

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Level II EV Charging Station \$500
(Install a level 2 charger on the co-op's
Storage/Off Peak Program)

WATER HEATERS

Heat Pump Water Heater \$500
(50-gallon minimum capacity)

Replacement Electric Water Heater \$50
(40-gallon minimum capacity)

Electric Storage Water Heating Program \$400

ENERGY STAR SWIMMING POOL

Air Source Heat Pump Pool Heater \$400

Variable Speed Pump \$200

ENERGY STAR LIGHTING

Energy Star LED Yard Light \$60

HVAC

Wifi Thermostat \$25

Central Air Conditioner or
Air Source Heat Pump Tune-up \$25

Electric Thermal Storage
Space Heating \$50 per kW

Air Source Heat Pump 8.2-8.99 HSPF \$400

Air Source Heat Pump ≥ 9.0 HSPF \$1,000

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump \$300

Ground Source Heat Pump \$400 per ton

ECM \$50 (retrofit only, no new construction)

Maximum Annual Rebate Amount

The maximum annual rebate amount per member is \$5,000. All rebates are on a first-come, first-serve basis while rebate funds remain available.

CONSULT THE CO-OP BEFORE PURCHASING OR INSTALLING SOLAR



As prices decline and technology improves, installing a residential solar system—also called a photovoltaic or PV system—makes sense for some consumers. However, even with these recent improvements in PV, it's important to find out the facts before committing to a purchase. Consider these points as you explore whether solar is right for your situation.

CONTACT THE CO-OP

So what is the process for installing solar at my home or business? The very first step if you are thinking about installing solar is to have a conversation with McLeod Co-op Power. Our experts will help you assess if owning solar is right for you, educate you about the interconnection process, and review your current energy use to determine what size solar system you might need.

CONSIDERATIONS

There are many considerations you should make before choosing solar as well. For rooftop solar, you need to consider the overall efficiency of the home or building, the age and pitch of the roof, tree coverage near the home or building, local weather patterns, and orientation of the building to the sun.

And of course, there are also financial considerations. Is the estimated energy savings worth the investment? Are there rebates or financial incentives available? Are there hidden costs such as roof repairs prior to installation? Is there a large, up-front payment required or are fees spread out over time? When assessing solar options, it's also an excellent time to examine other potential energy efficiency improvements for your home. The Co-op can help you answer these questions or direct you to reputable contractors and/or installers.

INTERCONNECTION

In Minnesota, consumers cannot legally install solar until after they have applied for interconnection to the power grid, met the requirements for a safe installation, and been approved to interconnect. Contacting your co-op ahead of time can save you money and time.

Any member wanting to interconnect a distributed energy resource (DER) to the grid on the Co-op's distribution system will need to apply and have their application approved before installation work can begin. To begin the process visit us online at www.mcleodcoop.com/services/renewable-energy/ and then follow the link to the NOVA Power Portal to access application forms, requirements, tariffs, etc.

Applications and processing fees may both be submitted online via the portal.

INTERCONNECTION APPLICATION PROCESS FEE		
Process Track		Process Fee
Simplified		\$100
Fast Track	Certified	\$100 + \$1/kW
	Non-Certified System	\$100 + \$2/kW
Study		\$1,000 + \$2/kW Additional study fees may apply.

A standard interconnection charge of \$623 (effective April 1, 2020) will apply prior to the final inspection of approved projects. Any costs for upgrading facilities to serve DER loads are the responsibility of the member installing the system.

HERE TO HELP

We are ready to help you determine the best option and navigate the interconnection process. Call (800) 494-6272 and ask to speak to Justin for more information.

PEOPLE BEHIND YOUR POWER

DAN SCHADE OPERATIONS MANAGER

As the head of McLeod Co-op Power's Safety Program, Dan cares deeply about making sure everyone goes home safely; and his responsibilities include overseeing cooperative-wide safety training and education. His own reason WHY includes his wife, family, and grandchildren.

The best safety advice he's been given is, "Look at the whole picture and don't rush into things."



Photo Credit: Jim Jordahl



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use.

UTILITY CAREERS OFFER VARIETY AND EXCITEMENT PLUS: LINE WORKER SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

Energy impacts every part of our daily lives.
And it's the people in our workforce who are behind the scenes making it happen.



UTILITY CAREERS

A huge range of different career paths is available within the energy and utility sector, ranging from technical and engineering roles to managerial and sales positions.

If you enjoy building and maintaining technical equipment, working outdoors, and solving problems, utilities hire lineworkers, mechanics, and electrical technicians. If you enjoy planning, designing, working with computers, or analyzing information? Engineers, GIS services, safety coordinators, and analysts are sought after in the utility industry.

Careers in energy and utilities don't stop at technical and practical work either. Much like every other industry in-the-world, these operations require processes, strategy, and budget management to keep everything running smoothly. Hence, an abundance of management, finance, administration, and IT careers are available within energy and utility companies.

If the idea of a career in energy and utilities interests you, then it might be worth exploring the potential career paths in this exciting and evolving industry has to offer.

POWER LINE WORKER SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE NOW

McLeod Co-op Power is pleased to offer a \$500 scholarship for a student entering an accredited line technician program at a Minnesota vocational school, to help fulfill their ambition of becoming an electrical lineworker; and having a career in the electric utility industry.

Applications are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 15, 2021. Application forms are available online at www.mcleodcoop.com/about/youth-programs/ or by calling (800) 494-6272.

Not sure if linework is the right career for you? Check out the Co-op's "Power Line Worker Career brochure" also available at www.mcleodcoop.com/about/youth-programs/ to learn more about the role, education requirements, on-the-job training, daily work duties, salary range, and more.

USPS 2220
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DO NOT REMOVE YOUR METER WITHOUT COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE

Electricians and/or members are not authorized to pull an electric meter to perform work on a service.

Electrical safety is a primary concern for McLeod Co-op Power. Removing or adjusting electrical equipment carries the potential to harm yourself and others. In an attempt to prevent these risks, we stress the importance of never cutting the seal, tampering with, or removing a meter for any reason without assistance from the Co-op.

The cooperative's policy requires a trained co-op employee, using the proper protective equipment, to pull and reinstall any energized meter. McLeod Co-op Power provides this service during regular business hours for a fee of \$80. A notice of two business days is requested, so coordinate your

work needs with our team in advance by calling (800) 494-6272 during business hours.

WARNING: If an electrician or member does pull an electric meter to disconnect service, significantly higher fees will incur. Disconnection or tampering of a meter sends a power outage alarm to the co-op. If a line crew responds to the outage, the member will be billed at the applicable line crew service call rate of \$225 during business hours, \$425 on evenings or Saturdays, and \$525 on a Sunday or holiday.

Your cooperation is appreciated. Our only goal is to protect you, your neighbors, and our line workers from possible injury.



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WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM

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