

# MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

MARCH 2021



## EFFICIENT WATER HEATING SAVES MEMBERS MONEY

If your monthly utility bills have got you in hot water, McLeod Co-op Power can save members money on monthly electrical bills with Storage Water Heating.

Hot water is essential for clean dishes and an enjoyable shower. But did you know water heaters also account for nearly 17% of a home's energy use? That's why McLeod Co-op Power's Stored Water Heating Program is a reliable way to lower members' electric bills in a way that fits their lifestyle.

### HOW IT WORKS:

The water heater is allowed to heat from approximately 10 PM – 6 AM only. Then your family uses the stored hot water all day long. Water heaters re-heat as needed on most weekend days.

In January of 2013, Mike and Stacey Waletzko installed a Marathon Water Heater on the Co-op's stored water heating program. They currently save around \$20 - \$25 per month on water heating alone for three people.

"We wanted a water heater with a good warranty and the Marathon fit the bill," said Stacey. "My brother works at the Co-op and had always recommended the program to us."

When you enroll in the Stored Water Heating Program, McLeod Co-op Power will help you

size the storage system to your family's daily hot water needs and provide wiring diagrams for an electrician to install the radio receiver and metering device that is required.

### INCENTIVES:

- Energy used for water heating is billed at a lower off-peak electric rate.
- Rebates up to \$400 may be available.

"We love our water heater and the program," Mike shared. "When asked about it, we always recommend it because it saves us money, it's maintenance-free and silent, and there's no gas lines or venting."

Marathon Water Heaters, sold by McLeod Co-op Power offer a lifetime warranty from leaking, plus a six-year warranty on elements and thermostats. It is the highest efficiency, R-25 insulated electric water heater on the market making it a perfect fit for the Stored Water Program. The durable exterior tank won't rust and they don't have anode rods. Marathon Water Heaters are available in 50-gallon, 85-gallon, and 105-gallon tanks.

All electric water heaters sold by the Co-op meet high-efficiency standards. Call us during business hours at (800) 494-6272 for pricing details or more information on the Stored Water Heating Program.

Ask an Expert About  
Smart Thermostats

03

Electrifying Your  
Lawn Care

04

## LINE WORKER SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

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/](http://www.mcleodcoop.com/about/youth-programs/) or by calling (800) 494-6272.

## LATER ANNUAL MEETING

## EXTENDS DIRECTOR NOMINATION PERIOD

With the Annual Meeting being scheduled in July this year (July 13th) versus the traditional Spring timeframe, the filing date has been extended for those interested in serving on McLeod Co-op Power's Board of Directors. This year's election will include Districts 4, 5, and 6. The election process ensures that every member has a voice in the operation of this organization. Directors represent our members by responsibly overseeing the business of the co-op and determining its strategic direction.

Members in districts 4, 5, and 6; who meet the Bylaw qualifications and have an interest in serving as a director of McLeod Co-op Power should complete a director application at [mcleodcoop.com/about/co-op-info](http://mcleodcoop.com/about/co-op-info) by 4:30 p.m. on March 31, 2021. If you have additional questions, need more information, or would like to request an application by mail please call (800) 494-6272.

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

**DISTRICT 5:** Lynn and Acoma Townships in McLeod County, and Ellsworth Township in Meeker County.

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





CEO MESSAGE

MAJOR OUTAGES IN TEXAS AND WHAT THAT MEANS TO US

As I sit down with pen in hand (ok, keyboard under fingers), ready to write a quick article to let you all know about what is going on in our cooperative, there are areas in our country that have been struggling to keep the lights on. Bitter cold is common here in our communities, so we know how to handle it. Places like Texas, not so much. Millions of people were out of power, and you can find their stories wherever you get your news. While large-scale power outages are not uncommon, this one is a little different.

What we saw going on was the intentional turning off the grid in some areas to keep the lights on in other areas. In other words, most of the blackouts were not because the lines have been torn down. It is because there was not enough generation or supply to keep everyone in power.

The electrical system is the largest machine in the world, and it operates in real-time. We generate electricity as it is needed. It is in a state of constant balance of supply and demand. As the frigid temperatures found their way into Texas, the need for electricity went up. At the same time, many of the generators in the region were not able to run, and the ones left running were not able to keep up. They had to turn off the lights.

So, it has been asked, “What about us?”, “How can we keep it from happening here?”. Good questions, and while I cannot promise there will not be a time, we all need to remember; our system is built for extreme weather, and Great River Energy, our partner in this endeavor works with diligence to plan for these types of events. Whether it is the polar vortex coming to town to



CEO RON MEIER

visit or the heat and humidity of summer, GRE is executing plans to keep enough electricity coming our way, so the lights stay on.

We still all need to be ready though at our homes. With our families and communities, we need to plan and be ready for a time when the lights are not on for a day or two. Have enough food and water, heat, and some good books to read. If we can, know our neighbors and their needs. We are all in this together.

For myself, while I do have a portable generator in my garage and plenty of gas that can keep some heat in the house, now I am thinking about buying a standby generator from the cooperative to provide more electricity when the power cannot come from our grid.

Oh, and by the way, we have started to plan for our Annual Meeting. It will be a little bit later this year and we are changing the location. Mark your calendars for July 13th and if all goes as planned, we will be ready to host the meeting at our new headquarters on the east side of Glencoe: 3515 11th Street East.

Cooperatively,

R1 PL

FEBRUARY 2021 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on February 23, 2021 at MCPA headquarters. All nine board members, the attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

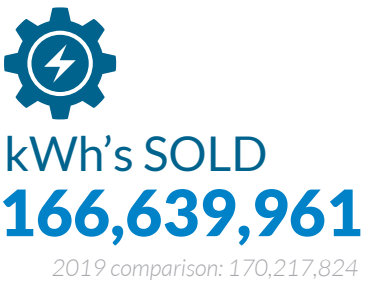
- The January outage report was provided showing a total of 45 outages, affecting 89 consumers.
- Operations Manager Schade reported that 62 work orders were completed, and 10 new work orders were created in January. The Engineering Department continues preparing for the 4-year work plan projects.
- A motion was carried to approve the Annual Cogeneration Report, filing Schedules 1-4, and tariff sheet.
- A motion was carried to approve removing convenience fees for all electronic payment options from Policy 3-1 Schedule of Charges effective immediately.
- A motion was carried to approve minor changes to Policy 4-4 Payment of Accounts.
- The board approved rescheduling the Tuesday, March 23 Board Meeting to Thursday, March 25 with a start time of 8:30 a.m.
- A motion was carried to approve Directors Anderson, Brinkmeier, and Kirtz to attend the virtual GRE Annual Meeting on April 7.
- A motion was carried to approve Director Anderson as the Voting Delegate and CEO Ron Meier as the Alternate Voting Delegate for MREA Annual Meeting.

BY THE NUMBERS | Q4 2020

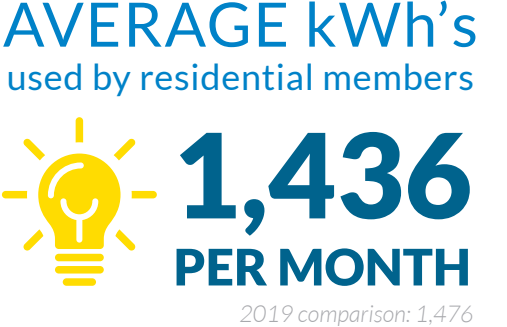
McLeod Co-op Power’s leadership spends substantial time managing and providing oversight of the Co-op’s operations, including ensuring that the organization remains in a strong and stable financial condition. Below is an overview of our Third Quarter Unaudited Financial Report.



	2020	2019
Cost of Purchased Power	\$12,656,274	\$12,988,279
Other Operating Expenses	\$7,751,921	\$7,482,499
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$20,408,195	\$20,470,778



	2020	2019
Operating Margins	\$154,373	\$340,479
Non-Operating Margins	\$592,675	\$869,001



GO WITH CONFIDENCE

A Belle mobile medical alert system uses the latest technology and is certified on the Verizon 4G LTE network. Our 24/7 monitoring and local in-person installation and service give you peace of mind.



Heartland Security 888.264.6380 heartlandss.com

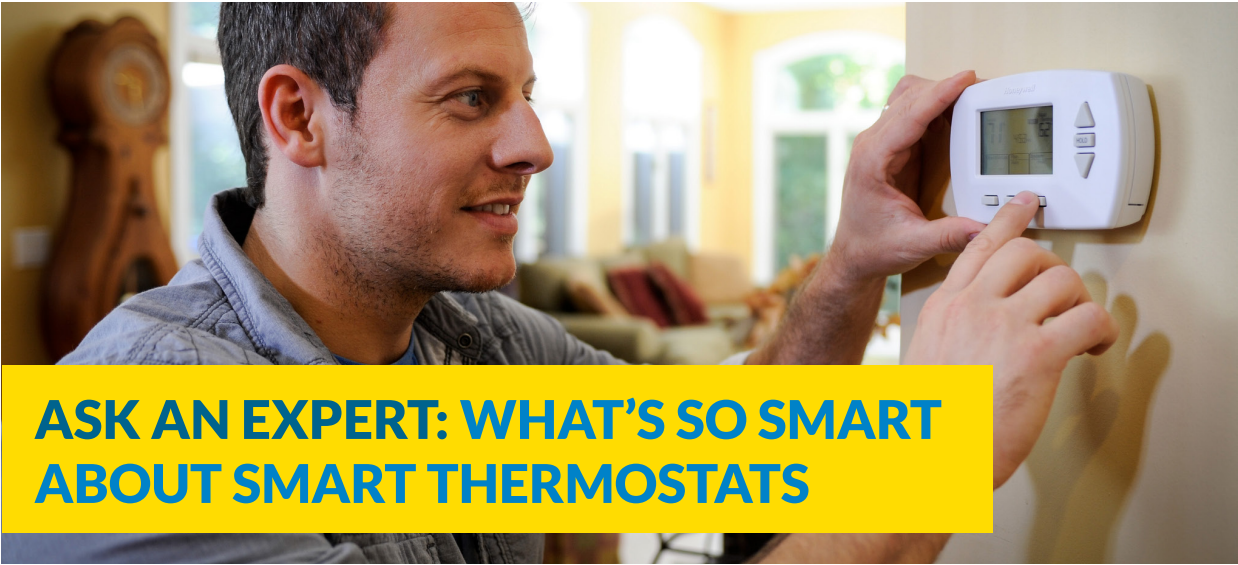


# NOTICE TO COGENERATORS

In compliance with McLeod Cooperative Power Association's adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, McLeod Cooperative Power Association is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility.

McLeod Cooperative Power Association is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility.

Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the McLeod Cooperative Power Association Board. Interested members should contact McLeod Cooperative Power Association, 3515 11th St. East, Glencoe, MN 55336 or call (800) 494-6272.



## ASK AN EXPERT: WHAT'S SO SMART ABOUT SMART THERMOSTATS

*In an era where convenience is king, it's no wonder that smart thermostats have been integrated into so many homes. But what is so smart about smart thermostats? To find out, we asked Shannon Jerabek, Energy Management Specialist.*

These gadgets enable homeowners to control their HVAC systems remotely via a smartphone or, of course, locally via a user-friendly screen. Plus, they provide more information than ever before as they track and analyze heating and cooling habits and record energy usage.

**1. Installing a smart thermostat is a first step toward saving money on heating and cooling.** While smart thermostats are undeniably convenient, Jerabek tells us that one of their biggest benefits is their ability to conserve energy. "Smart thermostats can save money on energy costs in two ways: the ability to monitor and control temperature remotely and the function (on select models) to learn user behavior and adjust settings accordingly," Jerabek says. Each of these capabilities helps ensure that your HVAC system won't be running unnecessarily when no one is around to appreciate the comfort.

**2. Smart thermostats offer a variety of advanced climate controls.** When describing gadgets, the word "smart" often refers to their ability to connect to other WiFi-powered devices, but these products are also often smartly designed, tailored for seamless, intuitive operation. Some smart thermostats sense when a room is occupied, then tweak the temperature to suit. Others know when you're on your way home from work—using a GPS-based feature called "geofencing"—and adjust the temperature so your house is comfortable upon your arrival.

**3. A Wi-Fi connection is required.** While smart thermostats can operate manually without a wifi connection, you won't have access to a large number of the thermostat's features. "Homeowners

will always need a Wi-Fi network to reap the benefits of a smart thermostat," Jerabek says.

**4. A mobile app is necessary for smartphone control.** Home installation isn't the only part of the process; a new smart thermostat requires installation on a smartphone, tablet, or laptop as well. Every smart thermostat pairs with a free-to-download mobile app from the same manufacturer that provides remote access. "The ability to control smart thermostats through a mobile app is perhaps their best feature," Jerabek says. "The app can be used to keep an eye on your home while on vacation, or to simply turn up the heat or A/C on the way home from work."

**5. Consider your existing smart-home system when searching for the right model.** Today's smart thermostats not only do a great job automating and monitoring temperature settings, but they also tend to be more integrated with the home. Most boast compatibility with one of the big names in smart-home voice assistants—Google Home, Amazon Alexa, etc. When shopping for the right thermostat, make sure the one you choose is compatible with your existing smart-home system.

**6. Unless you know a lot about wiring, have an electrician install your smart thermostat.** Unlike older thermostats, smart thermostats often require additional wiring," Jerabek explains. Many newer homes have this extra wiring, but some older ones don't. In those cases, homeowners should hire a professional electrician to install one or, if that's not an option, select a smart thermostat that offers an alternative method of powering the unit.

+

MCLEOD CO-OP POWER OFFERS A

\$25 REBATE

for members that purchase and install a smart thermostat. Learn more at [www.mcleodcoop.com](http://www.mcleodcoop.com)

# PEOPLE BEHIND YOUR POWER

**ROBERT THOMES**  
ASST. MEMBER SERVICE MANAGER  
**KATIE IDE**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT / HR SPECIALIST  
**CURTIS HANSON**  
STAKING TECHNICIAN

Serving members for a combined 75 years, these employees know the importance of safety in our daily lives and agree that family is the number one reason to work safely; each day. Their best safety advice for members? Stay away from down powerlines and call before you dig.



Photo Credit: Jim Jordahl



# ELECTRIFYING YOUR LAWN CARE

Electricity is starting to power more than just the vehicles that get you to and from your daily destinations; it's also being used to replace the gas you normally fill your lawn mower with.



Electric models may be more expensive upfront, but they require less upkeep, maintenance costs, electricity and fuel costs, while also being environmentally friendly and much easier to use. When you take in all factors, electric lawn mowers on average will result in a 35% savings over gas-powered mowers.

When it comes time to buying a lawn mower, there are several reasons to opt for an electric version as opposed to the gas-powered option. Not only are battery-powered lawn mowers more environmentally friendly, but they require less maintenance and are quieter during operation.

Electric push mowers tend to weigh much less than their gas-powered counterparts, making them easier to transport and use. Another advantage is their push-button start. Not having to deal with a pull-cord, an engine that is reluctant to turn over, or gas that had simply gone bad are driving factors behind many first electric mower purchases. Electric lawn mowers are also quieter and do not pollute.

There are corded and battery-powered push models available. Corded mowers are suitable for smaller yards because you will need to use an extension cord to run the mower while battery-powered models are more versatile. If you have a large yard or an incline, keeping two sets of batteries charged and ready is advised.

Need a riding lawn mower? Several new all-electric ride on mowers entered the

market in the past few years. Benefits of these mowers include:

- **Less yearly maintenance costs.** You can forget about changing the oil, oil filter, spark plugs, belts, and air filters. Just change/sharpen the mower blades and check the tire pressure as needed.
- **Less expensive to operate.** Filling your tank with electricity versus gas or diesel will save you fuel costs. According to the Electric Mower Report, a half-acre lawn mowed with a gas-powered lawn mower will cost approximately \$1.50 per half acre mowed, while an electric lawn mower will cost \$0.10 per half acre mowed. Yearly costs, if you mow approximately 20 times, translates to \$31.50 for gas and \$2.10 for electric.
- **Less expensive to own.** An electric riding mower powered by Lithium-Ion batteries and brushless motors will pay for itself and save you money over the life of the mower compared to a gas-powered one.
- **Quieter to operate.** You can mow without the deafening roar of a lawn tractor engine. Mow your lawn in the early or late hours of the day with no worry of your neighbors complaining.

USPS 2220  
PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE PAID  
HUTCHINSON, MN

## SEND US YOUR BEST SHOTS

Our Member Services team is excited to announce that the photo contest for our 2022 calendars is now open for entries. The contest is designed to spotlight the photography talents of our members, but just as importantly the scenic beauty and unique characteristics of our service territory.

Members are encouraged to begin submitting photos representing all four seasons in our community. Photos will be accepted until August 1, 2021. **Winners will receive a \$20 credit on their electric bill.**

### PHOTO GUIDELINES:

- Only members may enter the contest (photos must be taken by the member submitting the photo).
- Photos must be in horizontal/landscape orientation.
- Photos must be electronic and high quality in resolution (at least 2MB in file size).
- Photos and the following information must be submitted to [dehrke@mcleodcoop.com](mailto:dehrke@mcleodcoop.com) to be considered: name, address, phone, email, photo location, and short description.

By entering the photo contest, you agree to give McLeod Co-op Power rights to use your photo in the Co-op's calendar, newsletter, future contest promotions, and other publications or digital media.



Learn more about the 2022 Calendar Contest and read complete photo submission guidelines and requirements at [www.mcleodcoop.com/2022-photo-contest-now-open/](http://www.mcleodcoop.com/2022-photo-contest-now-open/)



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: \$7.38 per year for members and \$14.76 per year for non-members.

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

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