

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER

NEWS

JULY 2022



SAY GOODBYE TO GAS THIS SUMMER

ELECTRIFY YOUR YARD CARE

Electrification isn't just for inside the home. Your garage is full of opportunities to "go electric." Lawn equipment options run the gamut including mowers, leaf blowers, trimmers, and chainsaws. These days more and more homeowners are opting for electric models as opposed to gas-powered. "Choosing a battery-powered tool means convenience, low maintenance, cleaner air, an easier start, and quieter operation," shared Shannon Jerabek, Energy Management Specialist.

LAWN MOWERS

When it comes to electric push mowers, they 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 riding 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, translate 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.

OTHER LAWN CARE EQUIPMENT

Cordless electric trimmers, chainsaws, and leaf blowers also are great options to consider. In addition to being much quieter and easier to use, battery-operated models are often much lighter. Most batteries can last 30-45 minutes before the next charge.

When looking to make a purchase, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time, and power. Do your homework online and look for reviews from trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you'll be ready to tackle your lawn chores with less maintenance, hassle, and noise.

ANNUAL MEETING

REMINDER

Join us at the Annual Meeting of the Members of McLeod Co-op Power on Tuesday, July 12 at the Hutchinson Event Center.

9:00 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. Meeting Called to Order

- Members are asked to RSVP for the meeting by calling (320) 864-3148 or toll free (800) 494-6272. RSVPs will also be accepted by email at mcpainfo@mcleodcoop.com.
- All registered members will receive a McLeod Co-op Power coffee mug.
- Door Prizes include an air fryer, leaf blower, weed whip, fire extinguisher, and electrical extension cords. (Must be present to win. Door prizes subject to change without notice.)
- Grab and Go lunches will be provided following the meeting, catered by Chef Craig.

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

Members in Districts 7, 8, and 9 have the opportunity to vote for a director to represent their respective district.

Mailed ballots must be received in our office by 4:00 p.m. on July 11. If you prefer, you can bring your ballot with you to the Annual Meeting.



McLeod Co-op Power publishes an annual report for our membership that details the events, challenges, successes, financial strength of the previous year. View the report at www.mcleodcoop.com/about/co-op-info/

STORM
SAFETY TIPS

03

RURAL ELECTRIC
YOUTH TOUR

04

SUMMER LAWN CARE REBATE SPECIAL

McLeod Co-op Power is now offering rebates for electric lawn care equipment (including lawnmowers, chainsaws, trimmers, and leaf blowers). Members will receive a \$25 rebate on equipment with a purchase price of \$149 or less, and a \$50 rebate for purchases of \$150 or more. Rebate forms are available at www.mcleodcoop.com. This offer is valid for purchases made 6/1/22 – 10/1/22. (Rebates must be claimed by 10/31/22.)



CEO MESSAGE

Will the lights stay on?

It seems it's a question that is being asked more and more lately. It's the question that we always have asked of ourselves since the beginning of the co-op.

Here at McLeod Co-op Power, we have been on a path to improve our reliability by investing in underground lines to get them out of the weather and away from the critters that like to climb to higher places. For those lines that are staying in the air, we are nearing the end of an enhanced tree trimming program. We have been aggressively trimming the trees out of the right of way of the lines, making more space for the lines and the trees to separately coexist. After next year we will transition into keeping a focus on maintaining what was created through this effort.

Great River Energy, our wholesale power provider, has been working diligently to ensure they have enough generation for its members. While they recently sold the Coal Creek power plant, they have been developing and deploying projects to further their abilities to keep the lights on. In addition to developing large-scale wind resources, they have been working on enhancing their peaking plants by adding "dual-fuel" capacity at those locations that don't have it already. Also, they are working on a very large battery storage project that is based on a different type of battery technology that will allow for longer-lasting energy output. They also work with their partners at the regional and national levels to keep the lights on.

This is where it is getting interesting. In May, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) published its 2022 Summer Reliability Assessment. NERC is responsible for the reliability of the larger system across North America and works with all the utilities and planning groups. The report stated there is a concern with MISO's North and Central areas when it comes to having enough power for the summer. The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is an independent organization that is responsible for operating the power grid across parts of Canada and



CEO RON MEIER

fifteen states: including Minnesota. Like almost everything, you can find the report on the internet if you are curious.

Because of this report and even before it, planners are looking at the various challenges and how to mitigate them. Their plans take into account everything from load conservation efforts, getting large backup generators online in the region, importing power from other regions, to even having to use regional rolling outages and various load shed measures if there is an emergency. This planning has been going on since the beginning of the grid. Even here at the Co-op, we must think about what we would do if we lost certain parts of our system.

Ultimately, there are a lot of smart people doing everything they can to continue to bring reliable power to your home, but as we know there will be times when the lights don't stay on. This is where backup generators, alternative heating sources, and even future technology like batteries in a car can help for those times when the lights go out.

While we want to be able to answer the question about the lights staying on with an affirmative "Yes", we can't. As it always has been with electricity, there will be times when the power goes out. On our website, we have a section dedicated to outages and what you can do.

What I can promise though, from our lineman and all the employees at the Co-op, we will get them turned back on as soon as we safely can.

Cooperatively,
R1PL

JUNE 2022 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Due to the timing of this newsletter in relation to our Annual Meeting and the mailing schedule, minutes from the June 2022 Board Meeting will be delayed and presented next month.

STAY SAFE STAY COOL

It's expected to be a hot summer! So as the heat waves make their way across Minnesota this year, McLeod Co-op Power wants to remind members advice on how to stay safe and cool at home without running up your electric bill.



First and foremost we want you to be safe. Extreme heat can be dangerous, so follow these tips to keep your body cool and prevent heat related illness.

- Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
- Limit your outdoor activity, especially midday.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Seeking medical attention if experiencing symptoms of heat stroke or exhaustion.

Extreme heat also means more energy use and higher bills. "These times when people are using more electricity all at once to stay cool are called 'peak hours,'" said Dan Erhke, Members Services Manager. "The cost to provide power increases due to added demand. By conserving energy use during this period of high temperatures, you'll not only be saving yourself money, but you'll be helping maintain the reliability of our regional electric grid by reducing stress on it."

Here are a few easy ways to conserve energy for the benefit of yourself and your neighbors:

- Adjust your thermostat by raising it a few degrees during the day.
- Use ceiling fans to create a wind-chill effect that will make the air feel cooler to the skin.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes or shades.
- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible.
- Turn off lights and electronics Run large appliances at night (e.g., dishwashers, laundry machines).



FARMFEST 2022!

McLeod Co-op Power will be at FarmFest 2022 along with other Touchstone Energy Co-ops. Stop by, visit with us and don't miss your chance to win battery powered electric lawn care equipment!



AUGUST 2 - 4 • REDWOOD FALLS, MN • BOOTH 2301

Bring this coupon to Booth #2301.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
You must be a member of one of the participating electric cooperatives to win.



DO NOT REMOVE
YOUR METER
WITHOUT CO-OP
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 attempt to prevent these risks, we stress the importance of never cutting the seal, tampering with, or removing a meter for any reason without the assistance from the Co-op.

Our 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 \$85. 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 (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.).

WARNING: If an electrician or member does pull an electric meter to disconnect a 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 \$325 during business hours, \$490 on evenings or Saturdays, and \$650 on a Sunday or holiday.

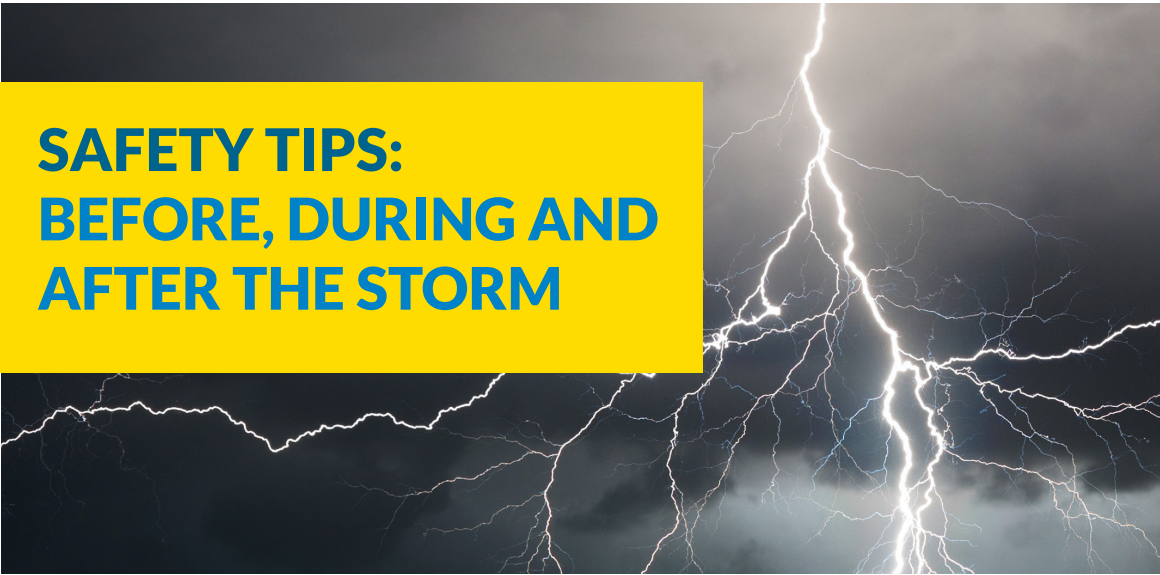
Your cooperation is appreciated. Our only goal is to protect you, your neighbors and our line workers from possible injury.



ENERGY
EFFICIENCY

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

SAFETY TIPS:
BEFORE, DURING AND
AFTER THE STORM



Storm season is in full swing. Many summer storms have the potential to produce tornadoes—they can happen anytime, anywhere, and can bring winds over 200 miles per hour.

In April, a video of NBC Washington chief meteorologist Doug Kammerer went viral. During a live broadcast, Kammerer called his teenage son to warn him of a tornado that was headed straight for their home. Knowing the kids were likely playing video games and not paying attention to the weather, he told them to head straight to the basement. Kammerer debated if he should call his family on-air, but he knew it was the right thing to do. Luckily, the kids made it safely through the storm.

As adults, we understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to talk to your family and have a storm plan in place. Here are a several tips you can share with your loved ones.

BEFORE THE STORM

- Talk to your family about what to do in the event of a severe storm or tornado. Point out the safest location to shelter, like a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: when you hear thunder roar, head indoors.
- Make a storm kit. It doesn't have to be elaborate—having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Try to include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, a First-Aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

DURING THE STORM

- Pay attention to local weather alerts—either on the TV, your smartphone or weather radio—and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado watch means these events are possible and you should be prepared; a warning means a thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area and it's time to take action.
- If you find yourself in the path of a tornado, head to your safe place to shelter, and protect yourself by covering your head with your arms or materials like blankets and pillows.
- If you're driving during a severe storm or tornado, do not try to outrun it. Pull over and cover your body with a coat or blanket if possible.

AFTER THE STORM

- If the power is out, conserve your phone battery as much as possible, limiting calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.
- Stay off the roads if trees, power lines or utility poles are down. Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.
- Wear appropriate gear if you're cleaning up storm debris on your property. Thick-soled shoes, long pants and work gloves will help protect you from sharp or dangerous debris left behind.

Summer is a time for many fun-filled activities, but the season can also bring severe, dangerous weather. Talk to your loved ones about storm safety so that everyone is prepared and knows exactly what to do when a storm strikes.



DOWN MEANS
DANGER

Always assume a downed power line is dangerous!

STAY PUT – If the lines come down on or near your vehicle, stay inside until you are rescued or it could be fatal. If you must leave the vehicle because of fire or other danger, jump away from the vehicle keeping your feet together when you land.

STAY CLEAR – If you come across a vehicle involved in an accident where power lines have fallen, do not touch the vehicle, the lines or drive over the fallen lines, call 911.

STAY ALIVE - ALWAYS treat fallen power lines as live. Downed lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away.

RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR WINNER RETURNS

More than 1,700 students from all across America take part in the Youth Tour experience each year. This unique trip gives young people the opportunity to watch history come alive, explore museums, memorials, and monuments, make friendships that will last a lifetime, and be part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life, including U.S. Senators and CEOs.



They're back! 36 Minnesota students, including Rebecca German of Hutchinson, recently returned from a fast-paced, action-packed and unforgettable 6-day trip to Washington, D.C.

The Rural Electric Youth Tour, sponsored by McLeod Co-op Power and coordinated by the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, is an all-expenses-paid experience that offers young adults the opportunity to learn about their government and electric cooperatives, make friends, and visit famous landmarks.

On the June trip, the Minnesota delegates met with their elected representatives to discuss current issues. They toured Capitol Hill and the Library of Congress. They also explored monuments and museums, including Mount Vernon, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Institution, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Lincoln, Jefferson and Vietnam Veterans memorials, among others. They spent time at Arlington National Cemetery while attending a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The group enjoyed a sightseeing cruise on the Potomac River and took in a show at the Kennedy Center.

Other events included Youth Day, coordinated by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, when all of the approximately 1,700 Youth Tour delegates from about 45

states came together for a special event with guest speakers.

Here's what this year's Rebecca had to say about the experience:

"What I loved most was getting to tour and see all the buildings with the beautiful architecture and art, something that is sadly very scarce where I live. The Library of Congress and the National art gallery were probably my favorite places.

Our group was able to meet with Amy Klobuchar, Dean Phillips, Angie Craig, and Pete Stauber. We learned a lot about some current issues which are obvious in America today. I think the most valuable thing I learned from speaking to the representatives is that everything is linked together and we can never only solve one problem, problems start and end with people and it's with them and for them we look for solutions.

When I left for the tour I knew little about cooperatives and how vital they are for rural communities, I understood the general concept and how everyone is involved in decisions but not much else. During the tour I got to meet lots of people with a greater understanding and better knowledge of the history behind coops. If you think about it and really consider how much we rely on electricity for everyday



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tasks you would only have an idea of what it was like for farmers in the 1930s, who had to go through the day relying on wood stoves for heating and cooking in their home, and lanterns for light. Big power companies ignored rural areas, running lines out to remote farmers wouldn't be cost effective and they weren't willing to compromise their business for the sake of some farmers with little to offer in return. This is what our cooperatives still do for us today - put their members first.

I cannot ever fully express how grateful I am for this opportunity. There is no way for me to ever properly thank you for what I have been gifted, all I can say is I will carry this experience with me forever and cherish the memories I made, and I know that it was by your acknowledgement of my ambitions that I received such an incredible week."

McLeod Co-op Power has sponsored a student for the D.C. Youth Tour annually as part of its mission to support the communities it serves. If you know a high school junior or senior whose parents live in McLeod Co-op Power's service territory and are interested in this trip, learn more on our website at www.mcleodcoop.com/about/youth-programs/.



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WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM

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