

# MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

OCTOBER 2022



## THE IMPORTANCE OF LOAD MANAGEMENT: MAXIMIZING BENEFITS FOR THE MEMBER & CO-OP

Currently, electricity cannot be effectively stored in bulk; it must be generated, distributed, and consumed immediately. When the need for electricity (demand) is at its peak, network operators must either find additional supplies of energy or find ways to reduce the electrical load. One way to help reduce the demand for electricity is through load management, or demand response programs. When demand and cost for electricity are at the highest load management programs can be utilized to help with consumption in its service territory and stabilize rates.

In our case, McLeod Co-op Power coordinates our load management programs with Great River Energy (GRE), to help curb electricity demand. Members enrolled on these programs help the co-op manage overall energy costs for the entire McLeod Co-op service territory, benefitting all members. In return, participating members receive a lower electricity rate or a credit on their monthly electric bill. Rebates for necessary equipment might also be available.

As of this past month, McLeod Co-op Power has 2,221 accounts participating in the water heating programs, 2,185 accounts participating in the space heating, and 1,219 accounts in the cooling load management programs. The sum of all the program participants speaks to the Co-op's ability to reduce its energy demands when called upon.

Load management programs help delay the need for additional generation resources. Without demand response, GRE and other utilities would need additional generation and transmission infrastructure to meet the region's increasing electrical demand. Load management programs also help avoid building high-cost peaking plants or purchasing expensive energy in the wholesale market.

### LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

- Dual Fuel
- Cycled Air Conditioning
- Stored Water Heating
- Peak Shave Water Heating
- Electric Vehicle Charging

More information on our load management programs, load control notifications and hours of control can be found on our website, [www.mcleodcoop.com](http://www.mcleodcoop.com). If members have any questions or wish to enroll in an off-peak program, we encourage them to call us at (800) 494-6272.

### PARTICIPANT NOTICE:

As the winter heating season approaches, we anticipate increased control hours due to energy supply constraints, rising costs of fuel, and other inflationary pressures.

As a reminder, the primary heating system for Dual Fuel (DF) participants can be controlled up to 12 hours per day. For the heating season, DF participants can be controlled up to a maximum of 400 hours, which remains unchanged.

Our power provider, Great River Energy, calls for load control on days of high electrical demand, high wholesale energy prices and/or system emergencies. GRE's daily load control schedule can be found online at [imguide.greenergy.com](http://imguide.greenergy.com).

While increased control periods are expected due to high electricity prices, most participants shouldn't expect a significant impact to their lifestyle. However, please contact our Member Services team during business hours at (800) 494-6272 if you have any concerns.

## WINTER READY ..... DUAL FUEL

The winter heating season is approaching and we want you to be winter ready. If you have a Dual Fuel Heating system, now is the time to be sure your back-up heating system is prepared and that you have adequate fuel supply.

### BE PREPARED:

1. Fill backup fuel tanks now, ahead of peak winter heating months.
2. Operate both your electric heating equipment and oil or propane system to be sure they respond to a "call for heat" from the thermostat.
3. Have your gas or oil furnace/boiler checked periodically by a professional HVAC contractor. For cold weather, there is nothing better than having peace of mind knowing your dual fuel heating system will work as it should.
4. If you wish to monitor the anticipated control periods of dual fuel through the heating season, visit your McLeod Co-op's website to view load control times at [www.mcleodcoop.com](http://www.mcleodcoop.com).



SAFETY IN THE FIELDS  
THIS FALL

03

COLD WEATHER RULE  
REMINDER

04

## Winter Load Control Hours

On control days the recharging period for water heating and space heating is 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from October 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023 during the winter season.

It should also be noted that the recharging period for electric vehicle charging is daily from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.





CEO MESSAGE

So, the other day I was sitting on the couch and not surprisingly, I eventually decided to get off the couch which ultimately led me to the inspiration for this month's article. There is a lot we must consider when getting off a couch. Of course, there is the “Why?”, mine was time to take the dishes into the kitchen. The “What” and the “Who” should be understood. I will get to the “How” in a moment.

Let's talk about safety. Tragically we have had too many electrical contacts and other accidents in our Minnesota family of cooperatives recently. I would say “luckily not at our cooperative” but safety is not based on luck. We have some of the best lineman I have been around, and they don't take safety lightly. Their group has a meeting every Monday to prepare for the week, and the topic of safety is how they start it. They have their work rules to keep them safe, so let's talk about the rules for everyone else when it comes to electricity.

When working on your home electrical system, it is best to hire a good electrician. If you are one of the many handy folks out there and take on electrical projects on your own, make sure to turn the power off to whatever you are working on and test it.

If you come across a downed power line, stay clear! Assume it is still on and know unlike house wiring where you might get by with a good shock, one of our power lines will ruin not just your day, but the rest of the lives of your family. See a downed power line, call us right away.

If you are ever in an accident while driving or working the fields in a good old tractor that involves a power line. It's always best to stay in the vehicle. Remember always assuming the power lines are live. If you must get out of the vehicle before we get there, make a point to jump clear of the vehicle breaking contact with it before hitting the ground. Electricity is looking to get back to the earth



CEO RON MEIER

and if it finds your body as a path, it will take it and once again ruin a lot of days.

Speaking of vehicles, one of the more dangerous things we do is drive. Throughout the year while the roads we drive typically don't change path, who we share the roads with do. As our Manager of Finance can attest, when it is time for harvest and the combines are headed out, the drive to work gets longer. Also let's pay a lot of attention to those school buses too.

Now back the “How” of the couch. As I got up, I didn't take a moment to check in with my legs and it turns out the left one was “asleep”. It had no feeling in it and as I took my second step, my ankle rolled, and an extremely painful feeling came back right away. If I hadn't caught myself on a cabinet, I probably would have been on the floor with just my dogs in the house to help me. Yeah, the wife was out of town and the son had long been gone to college in Duluth. Luckily, I had only sprained my ankle. With a bag of frozen corn and elevation of it, I was able to get moving around pretty good in a couple of days. If I had taken a little more time when getting off the couch, I probably would have not hurt myself.

Let's all take some time in our lives to be safe.

Cooperatively,

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SEPTEMBER 2022 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on September 29, 2022, at McLeod Co-op headquarters. Nine board members, the attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The outage report for the month of August 2022 was reviewed with a total of 135 outages, affecting 950 consumers.
- A motion was carried authorizing the CEO Ron Meier to enter into a 5-year contract with treeStory beginning January 1, 2023, as presented to the Board.
- Member Service Manager Ehrke made a recommendation of having the 2023 Annual Meeting at the Crow River Winery as the space fits our parking and technology needs. A motion was carried to conduct the 2023 Annual Meeting at the Crow River Winery.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Revolving Loan Fund application from the City of Winsted in the amount of \$150,000 with an interest rate of 1.5% over a 10-year term. The economic development funding will be used by the City of Winsted to construct Industrial Drive.
- Manager of Finance Steph Jakel presented the Operating Statement and Balance Sheet for the month of August 2022.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2022-09-01 General Retirement of Capital Credits.
- CEO Ron Meier conducted an in-depth review of the cost-of-service study results and options for the needed rate increases that Staff have been developing.

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SAFETY MOMENT



ALWAYS CUT THE POWER

If you ever have to deal with electrical issues, always cut the power at the breaker box. Before you start work, test to make sure the outlet, fixture or switch is shut off. Then plug something in, flip the switch and use a tester. It will only take a few seconds to cut the power and test the circuit to prevent injury.



# FALL OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

With cooler temperatures and autumn festivities, the fall season welcomes a variety of outdoor activities. The crisp fall air provides a pleasant excuse to work outside, and perhaps even complete some outdoor electrical work. As such, we want to remind everyone of a few outdoor safety tips:



- Safely store warm weather tools like lawn mowers and trimmers. Check cold weather tools, such as leaf and snow blowers, along with their power cords, for unusual wear and tear. Repair or replace worn tools or parts right away.
- Unplug and safely store battery chargers that won't be in use again until spring.
- Use only weatherproof electrical devices for outside activities. Protect outdoor electrical devices from moisture. Make sure electrical equipment that has been wet is inspected and reconditioned by a certified repair dealer.
- Keep dry leaves swept away from outdoor lighting, outlets and power cords.
- Use a fiber glass ladder and steer clear of overhead power lines while cleaning gutters, painting home exteriors, trimming trees, or repairing roofs.
- Call 811 at least two working days before beginning a project that involves digging to locate buried utilities.

## SAFETY IN THE FIELDS THIS FALL

*The culmination of a season of hard work can be an exciting and exhausting time. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes.*

Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment. Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busyness of harvest time, it's easy for farm workers to forget about the power lines overhead. Failure to notice them, however, can be a deadly oversight.

Review the farm activities that take place around power lines with all workers. Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance. Keep equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines above, below and to the side – a 360 degree rule.

Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it's only a few feet. Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result. Also use extreme caution when raising the bed of a grain truck.

Farm workers should take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins.
- Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.
- Operators of farm equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if their vehicle comes in contact with a power line. Stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so. If the power line is energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and ground, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result. Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, shuffle your feet to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.



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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

With winter weather on the way, now is the time to seal drafty windows. If you can see daylight around a window frame or if you can rattle a window, the window likely needs to be sealed. Most window leaks can be sealed with caulk or weatherstripping, which come in a variety of compounds and materials.

## NO POWER? NO WORRIES

*Protect your home and family from the expense and inconvenience caused by power outages.*

McLeod Co-op Power offers a "turn-key" sale and installation of fully automatic standby generator systems.

- |               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| • Residential | • 12-200 KW             |
| • Farm        | • Turn-Key Installation |
| • Business    | • Annual Maintenance    |

An automatic generator can operate your sump pump, furnace fan, lights, refrigerator, and more. McLeod Co-op Power sells and installs automatic generator systems by Briggs and Stratton. We also offer an annual maintenance program with the first year being free when you purchase your generator through us.

Call (800) 494-6272 for more info!





# COLD WEATHER RULE & ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOTICE

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:

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 1 and April 30 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 nonpayment.

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.

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.

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. If the unit is found to be occupied, the cooperative will immediately inform the occupant of his or her rights under this policy.

Involuntary disconnections between October 1 and April 30 will not occur on a Friday or on the day before a holiday.

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.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

# 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

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## JOIN US AND LEARN MORE

### MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SERIES

# CO-OP 101

## OCTOBER 27

6:30 PM - 7:45 PM

## WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR CO-OP?

McLeod Co-op Power is excited to be offering a new member engagement series called “Your Co-op, Your Electricity” featuring a series of classes and behind the scenes experience. Our goal with this program is to foster good communication, create a sense of ownership and participate in meaningful conversations. We want to understand our membership better and we want you to understand your Co-op better.

The first session will be held on Thursday, October 27th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. at the McLeod Co-op Headquarters in Glencoe. In this Co-op 101 session participants will learn about the Co-op and how the electrical grid works from power generation to delivery at your home. A tour of the McLeod Co-op headquarters will also be included.

These sessions are free to attend, and refreshments will be provided; however, an RSVP is required due to limited seating. Each class will be limited to 36 participants. Please RSVP by calling (800) 494-6272 by October 13.



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