

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

MAY 2023



BELL SUBSTATION UPGRADES TO IMPROVE RELIABILITY AND SERVICE

Substations play a critical role in the electric grid by facilitating the transmission and distribution of electricity from power plants to homes and businesses. They are responsible for changing the electrical voltage from high transmission levels to lower distribution levels, enabling the safe and efficient delivery of electricity to end-users. Substations also provide a way to manage the flow of electricity, ensuring that power is delivered where and when it is needed.

McLeod Co-op Power's 2nd largest substation, Bell Substation, will be replaced this summer to improve reliability and accommodate growth in our service territory. The existing substation originally built in 1955 was constructed of wood materials which no longer meets modern electric infrastructure standards, making an upgrade necessary.

The new substation will be built just to the east of the existing structure on a 3.8-acre neighboring site near Hwy 15 in Hassen Valley Township. The substation will be constructed of steel – which for obvious reasons stands up to harsh weather and is less prone to electrical fires. The size of the substation will also be increased to a 10 MVA Power Transformer and include five circuits serving electricity to Acoma, Hassen, Lynn, Collins, and Sumter townships. Distribution from this substation serves approximately 1,181 members through 177 miles of line and across 4,425 power

poles. The additional capacity of this substation positions the Co-op for additional growth in these areas as well.

One of the notable features of the new substation is the installation of electronic breakers, which will provide more detailed information for tracking and outage management. Additionally, the expansion of the site will provide a greater setback along State Highway 15, further reducing the risk of vehicle accidents and enhancing the overall reliability of the substation.

The construction of the new Bell Substation is scheduled to begin in June 2023, with a projected completion date of March 2024, depending on equipment availability. The estimated cost of the project is \$1.6 million.

Despite construction, electric service to our members will not be interrupted, and the existing substation will continue to serve the Bell substation territory until the new Bell Substation is completed.

The upgrade of the Bell Substation is an essential project that is designed to meet the needs of future growth and deliver reliable service for years to come. The upgrade is an investment in the future, and it demonstrates McLeod Co-op's commitment to providing quality and dependable service to its members.

BUILDING OR EXPANDING IN 2023

Does your spring to-do list 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 in the spring. However, projects requiring electric lines to be built, rebuilt or moved aren't as simple as they may seem and sometimes can be more complex than members realize.



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.

We'll discuss your project and address any electrical needs that might arise. If your service needs upgrading or alterations, getting on our construction schedule is important because it helps us ensure that the necessary electrical equipment and materials are available. Longer lead times and supply chain delays make this all the more important in 2023.

For questions, please contact the McLeod Co-op Power during regular business hours at (800) 494-6272.

PREPARE FOR
SUMMER STORMS

03

OPERATION ROUND UP
DISTRIBUTION

04

DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR NOMINATIONS BY PETITION FOR DIRECTOR CANDIDACY

Cooperative members residing in Districts 1, 2 & 3 may petition to have their name added to the slate of candidates for the 2023 director election in their district. To have another name on the ballot, in addition to the two candidate names selected by the nominating committee, you may file a nomination by petition. The petition form can be found online or by contacting our office. The petition must be signed by 20 or more McLeod Co-op Power electric members residing in your district. The last day that a petition can be submitted is May 27th, 2023.



MANAGER MESSAGE

I'm pleased to be the guest columnist for this month's newsletter to provide an update on the results of the 2023 Member Survey. The survey was mailed out to our members earlier this year and we were fortunate to have 1,672 surveys returned.

The survey is designed to measure members' satisfaction on various topics. The Co-op generally conducts this survey every other year allowing us to analyze trends over longer periods of time. Below is a summary of several key survey categories from this year's survey.

RELIABILITY OF ELECTRIC SERVICE:

As with the other categories, members were asked to rate their satisfaction level with the three options being Poor, Satisfactory, or Excellent. This was one of our highest rated categories with 86% responding that the Co-op is Excellent at providing reliable service (up from 79% in 2018). Furthermore, 80% of survey respondents rated us as Excellent for restoring power promptly (up from 72% in 2018). We appreciate receiving this feedback as reliability continues to be a key priority for us.

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Supporting our members is key to all we do, so this is an important area of focus for us. With this survey, 76% of respondents gave us an Excellent rating. We also scored the same rating when asking if we have helpful employees with 78%, giving us an Excellent rating. We will continue to focus on improvement given that 1% of respondents indicated a Poor ranking. To that point, I encourage members to consider signing up for SmartHub, as this can enhance your customer experience through various communication, such as text alerts, and online payment capabilities.

BOARD & MANAGEMENT:

When asked to rate MCPA as a well-managed organization, 62% gave an Excellent rating (up from 54% in 2018). In fact, only 6 individuals of the 1,665 total respondents gave a Poor rating. Member engagement is key to ensuring the Co-op is a well-run organization. The Annual Meeting on July 11th at the Crow River Winery is another opportunity for just that.



DAN EHRKE

RATES:

The Co-op scored the lowest satisfactory ratings within this category. With that said, ratings in this category have increased considerably since 2010. At the same time, 42% of respondents gave us an excellent rating for controlling costs and another 53% rated this as satisfactory. Even with these improved rankings, rates are and always will be a topic of discussion for the member owners, management team, and the Board of Directors.

OTHER:

We also received some great feedback in the comments section. Some topics included electric vehicles, future energy sources, and our vegetation management efforts. These are great topics that we will be covering in the next couple editions of the newsletter to give members more information.

I'd like to thank all of you who returned your survey. Getting this input allows us to take a step back from our day-to-day activities and evaluate our work. Of course, getting input doesn't always have to take the shape of a formal survey. Our members are always welcome to stop by or call us if they have any ideas or feedback.

Best Regards,

Dan Ehrke

Dan Ehrke
Member Services Manager

APRIL 2023
BOARD MEETING
HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on April 25th, 2023, at McLeod Co-op headquarters. Eight 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 March 2023 was reviewed with a total of 61 outages, affecting 128 consumers.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2023-04-02 Bell Sub Station – Construction Contract Award to Highline Construction Inc.
- Tree Story representative and owner, Mark Kivisto, was invited to the meeting to present on vegetation management.
- Brian Stavenger from the accounting firm of Eide Bailly LLP presented the annual Audit Report to the board via Zoom for financial statements as of December 31, 2022.
- Manager of Finance, Jakel reviewed the March 2023 financials.
- A motion carried to approve Policy 5-7 Retirement, Insurance, and Savings Program.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2023-04-01, Authorizing Amendment of 401(k) Pension Plan.

KEEP COOL AND
TUNE UP YOUR
AIR CONDITIONER

McLeod Cooperative Power members are eligible for a \$25 rebate when an HVAC contractor performs a central air conditioning tune-up.

Clogged coils, low refrigerant levels, plugged drain lines and a host of minor problems can greatly affect the efficiency of your air conditioner, driving up power bills.

A well tuned cooling system will:

- Lower utility bills by 5-25%.
- Extend equipment life.
- Provide peace of mind for your family.
- Fewer repairs and improved system reliability.
- Increase cooling capacity.

Learn more at:
mcleodcoop.com/i-want-to/rebates



BENEFITS OF AN A/C TUNE UP

INCREASE EFFICIENCY

SAVE MONEY

EXTEND LIFE OF A/C UNIT

LOWER HUMIDITY

NO POWER?
NO WORRIES

When a power outage occurs, a Briggs & Stratton standby generator is designed for what matters most, your total peace of mind.

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

Call (800) 494-6272 for more info!



CAPTIAL CREDIT ALLOCATION NOTICE

The amount of capital credits allocated to each member for 2022 is shown on the electric bill that was mailed in mid-April. It is based on margins allocated. McLeod Co-op Power allocations may be refunded to the member at some time in the future when capital credits for 2022 are retired. The amount shown is not available to be deducted from the bill at this time. It is merely a notice of allocation.



CO-OP 101 YOUR CO-OP, YOUR ELECTRICITY

McLeod Co-op Power is excited to be hosting another Your Co-op 101 member engagement night on Wednesday, June 7th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the McLeod Co-op headquarters in Glencoe. Participants will learn about our Cooperative as well as a review the electrical grid illustrating how the system works getting power from generation to our members. There will also be a tour of the McLeod Co-op headquarters.

These sessions are free to attend, and refreshments will be provided; however, each session will be limited to 36 participants (limit of 2 guests per membership). Members are asked to RSVP by calling 1.800.494.6272. The deadline to RSVP is June 1st.

Summer is a time for fun in the sun, but it can also bring unexpected power outages due to severe weather, increased energy demand, or many other reasons. Losing power can disrupt your daily routine which is frustrating and could even be dangerous if you're not prepared. Here are some tips to help you prepare for summer power outages and stay safe:

- 1. Stock up on essential supplies: Make sure you have enough water, non-perishable food, and other essentials to last at least three days. Have a first aid kit and a supply of any medications you take. Also, stock up on batteries, flashlights, and other sources of light.
- 2. Protect your home: Invest in surge protectors to protect your electronics and appliances from power surges that can occur when the power comes back on. Unplug sensitive equipment before the outage is restored to prevent damage. If you're concerned about losing power for an extended period of time, consider investing in a backup power source, such as a generator. Be sure to follow all safety guidelines and hire a professional to install the generator if necessary.
- 3. Stay cool: Losing power during the summer can be uncomfortable and dangerous, especially for young children, the

elderly, and those with medical conditions. Plan ahead by purchasing battery-powered fans, portable air conditioners, or ice packs. You can also use a wet towel or spray bottle to cool down.

- 4. Know how to manually open your garage door: This may involve pulling a release lever or using a key to unlock the door from the outside.
- 5. Have a communication plan: Make sure you have a way to communicate with family members and emergency services during a power outage. Have a charged cell phone and a backup battery, or consider purchasing a solar-powered charger.
- 7. Stay informed: Stay informed about power outages in your area by signing up for alerts from your McLeod Co-op Power SmartHub account or follow our Facebook page. Have a battery-powered radio on hand to listen for updates and news.

Remember power outages can happen at any time, and being prepared is essential. By following these simple steps, you can make sure that you and your family are safe and comfortable during a summer power outage.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, out of direct sun light or in a shaded area, or away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary.



FREE!

YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2023 / ARLINGTON, MN

OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!

FIELD:

Arlington Baseball Park
410 2nd Ave NE
Arlington, MN 55307

HOST:

McLeod Cooperative
Power Association &
Arlington Baseball Association

TIME:

9:00 - 11:00 AM

REGISTER:

PLAYBALLMN.COM







MCLEOD CO-OP POWER DISTRIBUTES \$46,500 IN OPERATION ROUND UP FUNDS

Through Operation Round Up, members donate pennies each month by volunteering to have their electric bills rounded up. **In March 2023, the Cooperative and Operation Round Up® contributed \$46,500 to 20 area organizations.** (See the complete list to the right.)

Operation Round Up is offered by hundreds of electric cooperatives across the United States. The program has raised millions of dollars for various charitable organizations and community projects, such as food banks,



health clinics, and educational programs. Here at McLeod Co-op alone, the Operation Round Up program has distributed over \$230,000 to local organizations since the program's inception in 2004.

One of the benefits of Operation Round Up is that it allows members to make a positive impact on their community with just a small contribution. The extra change from each member's bill may not seem like much, but when combined with the contributions of other members, it can add up to a significant amount of money that can make a real difference in people's lives.

Operation Round Up also allows McLeod Co-op to give back to the communities we serve in a meaningful way. As not-for-profit organization, McLeod Co-op is committed to improving the quality of life of our members. Operation Round Up is one way that we can fulfill this commitment by supporting local organizations and initiatives.

"While we can calculate how many dollars have been granted through Operation Round Up, there's no way for us to know the total number of lives that have been positively affected," said Bob Thomes, Assistant Member Services Manager. "It's just a few cents each month for our members, but that 'small change' adds up to make a huge impact. The generosity of our members and employees has created a ripple effect that has spread across our area in immeasurable ways."

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Glencoe Historical Preservation Society	\$2,000
Hector Police Department	\$2,600
Olivia Hospital & Clinic Foundation	\$2,000
Hutchinson High School Robotics Team	\$1,000
Silver Lake Civic Association	\$1,000
New Auburn Fire and Rescue	\$2,600
United Way of McLeod County	\$2,000
Teuby Continued (DBA 2B Continued)	\$2,000
Wheel and Cog Children's Museum of Hutchinson	\$2,000
Lester Prairie Fire Department	\$2,600
Gibbon Fire and Rescue Department – City of Gibbon	\$2,600
Common Cup Ministry	\$2,500
Arlington Fire Department	\$2,600
Arlington Area Ambulance Service	\$2,600
Glencoe Fire Department	\$2,600
Brownston Fire Department	\$2,600
Norwood Young America Fire Department	\$2,600
Winsted Fire Department	\$2,600
Crow River Habitat for Humanity, Inc.	\$3,000
Renville County Food Shelf	\$3,000

McLeod Co-op Power's Operation Round Up® is an opt-out program. Residential accounts are automatically enrolled, and electric bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar unless the account has been opted out. If you would like to opt out of the program and haven't yet done so, please call (800) 494-6272.

USPS 2220
PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
HUTCHINSON, MN



3515 11th St. East
Glencoe, MN 55336

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: \$6.10 per year for members and \$12.20 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

MCLEOD CO-OP PURCHASES NEW DIGGER TRUCK



McLeod Co-op Power recently purchased a new digger truck as part our our vehicle replacement program, which aims to ensure that our fleet of vehicles is up-to-date and equipped with the technology needed to serve our members efficiently and effectively. The new truck will be a valuable addition to our operations. The old truck was sold to Minnesota West Community & Technical College Jackson Campus for their lineworker electrical program.

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

24-HOUR OUTAGE PHONE
(800) 927-5685

WEBSITE
www.mcleodcoop.com

EMAIL ADDRESS
mcpainfo@mcleodcoop.com

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Ronald Meier

EDITOR
Dan Ehrke and Fuller Creative

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1:
Currently Vacant

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

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(320) 587-9134

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(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

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