

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER NEWS

JANUARY 2024

2023 TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COMMUNITY AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

CONGRATUATIONS UNITED WAY OF MCLEOD COUNTY



Pictured above, Debra Siemsen, Executive Director UWMC, accepts a \$500 donation as the recipient of the 2023 Touchstone Energy Community Award from Bob Thomes, McLeod Co-op Power's Assistant Member Services Director.

As this year's award winner, United Way of McLeod County receives a \$500 donation from McLeod Co-op Power. Additionally, they will contend for the statewide Touchstone Energy Community Award with the statewide winner receiving an additional donation of \$2,000. The statewide award winner will be recognized at the Minnesota Rural Electric Association annual meeting in 2024.

We received a total of 9 nominations for this year's Touchstone Energy Community Award. We applaud these groups and all the others that are working tirelessly to improve their communities.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are part of a national alliance of more than 750 electric cooperatives in 46 states that adhere to the values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to the community.

McLeod Cooperative Power is honored to award its 2023 Touchstone Energy Community Award to the United Way of McLeod County. This annual award recognizes a local non-profit or community group that had a positive impact within our service territory during the past year.

United Way of McLeod County is being recognized for its youth scholarship program. This initiative provides financial assistance to deserving young individuals who are unable to afford various educational and extracurricular activities. These activities have included sports leagues, art classes, music lessons, scouting programs, leadership development workshops, and STEM-related educational programs.

This past year the organization awarded 115 scholarships ensuring that deserving youth in McLeod County can engage in activities that will positively impact their lives. The initiative invests in the transformative power of sports, art, and music to nurture the talents and character of area youth. These diverse experiences enrich their lives and foster a sense of belonging and purpose.

RELIABILITY
THIS WINTER

03

5 WAYS TO FIGHT THE
WINTER CHILL

04

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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, who 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. Details on rates and applications can be found online (www.mcleodcoop.com/services/renewable-energy/) using the Co-op's Nova Power Portal.



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



CEO MESSAGE

In the past, I have mentioned I look at our business of delivering electricity guided along three concepts those being physics, economics, and policy.

The early study of physics of electricity was studied by people like William Gilbert, Sir Thomas Browne and Benjamin Franklin which were followed by minds like Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison who helped create the foundation of our modern grid. Today we have a firm grasp of how to generate and deliver electricity to each one of us, physics. In my research, and to keep theming of this musing, Luca Pacioli is an Italian recognized as the father of accounting and modern bookkeeping (at least according to the internet).

While there were others before him exploring accounting, Pacioli is credited with being the first person to publish work using double-entry bookkeeping – debits and credits. Today our cooperative bookkeeping is guided by USDA’s Rural Utility Services which used to be the Rural Electric Administration. We understand the economics of delivering electricity.

This now leaves us with the policy of electricity. The history of government goes way back in time, but for us in the United States the founding fathers George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison along with others put in place the framework of governance. Policy isn’t as straightforward as physics and economics.

Every year the family of cooperatives in Minnesota along with our friends in the municipalities and investor-owned companies are engaged with our policy makers. At the end of the legislative session in 2023, the policy makers passed legislation that requires the electricity being delivered in Minnesota to be carbon free by 2040. The original legislation



CEO RON MEIER

was extremely problematic for our industry and through our advocacy work with our representatives we were able to help them craft legislation that is closer to being achievable. This legislation in 2023 eclipsed other decisions being made in St. Paul around labor laws, taxation, and other aspects of running a business for the cooperative. Policy isn’t as straight forward as physics and economics.

Every year policy makers in Minnesota and Washington DC are considering legislation that can attempt to influence the physics of electricity which usually impacts the economics. As we come into 2024, we all know it is going to be a very interesting time with it being an election year. As we all consider our choices for our representatives in all places of government, it’s important to understand how they look at energy. Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan project supported by the cooperative family that helps inform us of issues we all face when it comes to energy. You can find the website at “vote.coop” to learn more.

While we consider who we will be voting for in 2024 and all the topics to our whys, energy is one for me that is important and will be top of mind when I go to the polls.

Cooperatively,
R1PL

DECEMBER 2023
BOARD MEETING
HIGHLIGHTS

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The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on December 21, 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 November outage report was reviewed with a total of 47 outages, affecting 62 consumers.
- Operations Manager Brady stated all 2023 work plan projects are complete and additional maintenance has been done due to nice weather. The Bell substation is in progress with the transformer scheduled for installation the first week of January 2024.
- Manager of Finance Steph Jakel reviewed the November financials.
- A motion was carried to approve the 2024 budget.
- A motion was carried to approve a \$5,000 donation to NRECA International.
- A motion was carried to approve Board of Director Peterson to be a guest director at the GRE 2024 Member Director Meeting.
- A motion was carried to approve CEO Ron Meier as the NRTC Voting Delegate at the annual meeting at the NRECA PowerExchange.
- A motion was carried to approve Board of Directors Kirtz, Resch, Burdorf, Duesterhoeft, Anderson, Griebie, and Newman to attend GRE’s Regional Meeting in Mankato on February 6th and 7th.



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!
GET YOUR CALENDAR

McLeod Cooperative Power 2024 calendars are now available featuring scenic landscape photos from our service territory!

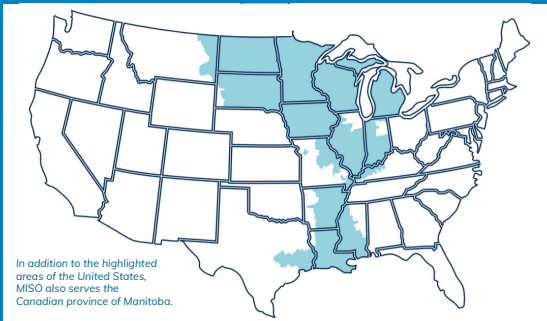
Stop by the office to pick up a copy today. Calendars are available on a first-come, first-serve basis while supplies last.



POWERING THE REGION:

MISO'S VITAL ROLE IN RELIABLE ENERGY

Our wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, is a member of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which operates the transmission power grid across 15 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. MISO helps the region's electric providers deliver reliable, affordable energy in three ways:



IT ACTS AS AN 'AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER'

Forty-two million people depend on MISO every day. Think of MISO as the air traffic controller to the region's electric grid. Using sophisticated technology, processes and procedures, MISO maintains a broad view and control of the grid that goes beyond any one utility. This helps utilities maintain reliability on a regional level and prevent emergency operating situations.

IT MANAGES THE ENERGY MARKET

Electricity generation is sold into the MISO market and cooperatives buy back what they need to serve their members. The MISO energy market helps keep electricity affordable by ensuring the lowest cost generation available is used first to supply member-consumers and minimize flow constraints across the grid. MISO also provides improved price transparency with energy market price changes occurring every five minutes.

IT PLANS TRANSMISSION

Maintaining a reliable high-voltage transmission system requires ongoing planning efforts to meet future needs in the region. Utilities conduct their own transmission planning, while they collaborate with MISO, which uses advanced modeling to plan the transmission system that serves the entire region.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

During the winter, ensure your home is well sealed and properly insulated to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on energy bills. Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is needed.



MIDWEST ELECTRIC SYSTEM READY FOR WINTER WEATHER

Great River Energy (GRE) has provided an update for its members indicating that the winter forecasts look favorable with the region having sufficient resources for expected conditions as well as contingency plans for emergencies. GRE continues to work proactively with the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) to address reliability in all seasons, particularly when entering winter and summer when demand for electricity peaks.

MISO recently released its annual winter outlook in which it outlines expectations for the winter season. It is expecting a mild winter for most of its territory. January is forecasted to have the highest winter peak demand in the range of 102 to 107 gigawatts (GW), with generation supply availability expected to be 122 GW.

"GRE team members are ready to meet our responsibilities to our member owners and MISO by generating and delivering energy regardless of weather conditions," said GRE Vice President and Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke. "GRE is continuing to invest in its generation and transmission assets to support grid reliability for the future."

Among other projects, GRE and Minnesota Power are jointly developing the Northland Reliability Project, a 180-mile, 345-kilovolt electric transmission line from northern Minnesota to central Minnesota to ensure continued reliability into the future as the region transitions to greater levels of renewable energy.

Additionally, GRE's winter reliability plans received an important boost from a recent decision by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The PUC unanimously approved the addition of dual fuel capability

at GRE's Cambridge Peaking Station, which will enable the plant to operate on fuel oil when its primary fuel — natural gas — is either unavailable or prohibitively expensive. Dual fuel capability at Cambridge Peaking Station is expected to be operational in time for the winter of 2025-26.

Natural gas peaking plants are an important part of overall reliability of the electric grid by providing generation at times of greatest system need. The addition of dual fuel capability will further enhance overall system reliability and help keep businesses operating and homes safe and warm.

"Electric cooperatives serving Minnesota must be prepared for extreme winter conditions that are normal for our region," said GRE President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "Dual fuel capability in Cambridge is a small but absolutely critical enhancement to meet the needs and expectations of our member-owners on the coldest nights of the year."



DID YOU KNOW?

One of the biggest weather-related threats to the transmission system in Minnesota is an ice storm with wind during the winter. Great River Energy's new standard design includes structures that are strong enough to withstand the highest wind speeds recorded in the previous 300 years.



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.

Removing or adjusting electrical equipment carries the potential to harm yourself and others. 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 co-op's policy requires a trained co-op employee, using the proper protective equipment, to pull and reinstall any energized meter. We provide this service during regular business hours free of charge. 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 be incurred. Disconnection or tampering of a meter sends a power outage alarm to the co-op. If a line crew responds, the member will be billed at the applicable line crew service call rate of \$370 during business hours, \$555 on evenings or Saturdays, and \$740 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.


FIVE WAYS TO FIGHT THE WINTER CHILL AND SAVE ENERGY

Winter brings with it the charm of cozy nights and warm beverages, but it often also ushers in a dreaded spike in energy bills. McLeod Co-op Power understands the importance of managing your home's energy use efficiently, especially during the colder months. Here are five tips to help you combat the winter chill and keep your energy bills under control:




MIND THE THERMOSTAT

This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees.




SCHEDULE HVAC MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance of your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system is crucial for optimal performance. Schedule a professional inspection to ensure that your system is running efficiently. Clean filters, lubricated parts, and a well-tuned system can contribute to energy savings and a warmer home.



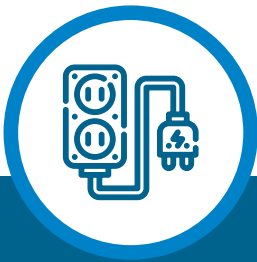
UTILIZE CEILING FANS

Believe it or not, ceiling fans can be useful in the winter. Set your fans to rotate clockwise at a low speed to create an updraft. This helps distribute warm air that naturally rises to the ceiling, keeping the entire room warmer.



OPTIMIZE DEVICE SETTINGS

Take advantage of energy-saving features built into smart home devices. Smart thermostats often come with options allowing you to automatically adjust the temperature based on your daily routines. Similarly, smart plugs can be programmed to turn off non-essential devices during periods of inactivity.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

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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:
Kirk Newman
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District 2:
Joe Griebie
(320) 779-1101

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