



## EMPHASIZING SAFETY AT MCLEOD CO-OP POWER

**At McLeod Co-op Power, safety is more than just a protocol—it's a core value ingrained in every aspect of our operations. Leading this crucial effort is our dedicated Safety Coordinator, Debbie Ebert.**

### MEET OUR SAFETY COORDINATOR

Debbie Ebert began working in this role for McLeod Co-op in 2013. With over a decade of experience, Debbie has been instrumental in shaping our safety culture. Her role encompasses overseeing employee and line crew training, ensuring compliance, managing apprenticeships, and disseminating safety information to local schools. Debbie works tirelessly to maintain a safe work environment for everyone at the cooperative.

### A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

The importance of safety is deeply personal for Debbie. When she was younger, her 16-year-old cousin tragically lost her life to electrocution. This personal loss fuels her commitment

to electrical safety and drives her to prevent such tragedies through education and awareness. "Sharing this story during our school visits helps engage students and, hopefully, prevents similar incidents," she explained. "To be honest I am terrified of electricity, and I have learned working here that if you use all the proper procedures, you can work with electricity, and have a positive outcome."

### EVOLVING SAFETY STANDARDS

With Debbie's leadership, McLeod Co-op has significantly enhanced its safety program. Notable safety improvements over the past decade include moving into a new facility with better safety features, upgrading equipment to reduce back strains, and increasing both in-person and electronic safety training. Another success story has been the redesign of the Safety Recognition program to encourage employees to

*Continued on page 2.*

## UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

At McLeod Co-op Power, every member is a part-owner and shares in the Co-op's financial returns. We allocate 100% of our margins (revenue minus expenses) to members who purchased electricity during the year. These margins are set aside to be retired (or paid back) when the Cooperative's financial position permits. These funds serve as operating capital, not only helping the Co-op in paying off debts and maintaining an appropriate equity-to-assets balance but also to support the ongoing maintenance and expansion of our distribution network.

Any unclaimed capital credits are returned to the Cooperative and we need your help to find the rightful recipients. You can search our online database at [www.mcleodcoop.com/about/capital-credits/](http://www.mcleodcoop.com/about/capital-credits/).

If you have information that could help locate these members, please contact us at (800) 494-6272. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

## SAFETY AT THE CO-OP CONTINUED...

submit safety improvement ideas for a safer work environment, with implemented strategies being rewarded.

To stay updated on safety regulations and best practices, the co-op uses resources from NRECA, Federated Rural Insurance, MREA, the Minnesota Safety Council, and OSHA. We also participate in industry listservs for exchanging ideas with other safety professionals. McLeod Co-op Power also collaborates with NRECA's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), which involves regular reviews and feedback from other cooperatives, helping to refine and improve our safety protocols continually.

**COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING** McLeod Co-op places a strong emphasis on comprehensive safety training for all employees. Key trainings include CPR and First Aid for all staff, along with annual pole top and bucket rescue exercises for the line crew. Additionally, Mayday reviews and other specific training sessions are scheduled as needed. The co-op's safety committee, comprising line crew members, foremen, office employees, and staff, collaborates to achieve our safety goals. "Safety is everyone's responsibility," Debbie asserts, reflecting the cooperative's inclusive approach to safety.

### ENCOURAGING A SAFETY-FIRST MINDSET

Safety is an ongoing conversation at McLeod Co-op Power, with employees encouraged to voice concerns and engage in open discussions at all levels, ensuring safety in every task and decision. Recognizing and reporting potential hazards is crucial for maintaining a safe environment. Members also play a vital role, acting as "eyes and ears" to help identify and address hazards promptly. Debbie Ebert emphasizes that the safety culture at McLeod Co-op extends beyond the workplace, influencing employees' behavior outside of work and promoting safety within the broader community.



## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

At McLeod Co-op Power, we understand that unexpected expenses or circumstances may come your way from time to time. If you are experiencing financial hardship, call our Billing Department during business hours so we can work with you to set up an acceptable payment plan.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has energy assistance programs and resources available for members struggling to pay their utility bills. Contact the following agencies or visit [mn.gov/home](http://mn.gov/home).

**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



## CEO MESSAGE

"I'm just a bill, only a bill, sitting here on Capitol Hill" a lyric from a song that I suspect a lot of us heard as we were trying to watch Saturday morning cartoons. If you know, you know and probably have a little tune in your head at this very moment. If you don't know, well might I suggest you search for "I'm Just a Bill – Schoolhouse Rock" on YouTube and enjoy what you missed. This song was about how our government works to make laws.

At the Annual Meeting last month, I shared how we try to connect with our youth. For starters, we go into schools to teach the younger ones about electrical safety. Our employees do various demonstrations to really stress why it is important not to play around our electric lines, especially of those that might be on the ground after a major storm.

With the older ones, we talk about all the opportunities that can be found working at electric cooperatives. Whether we are looking to inspire more to go into line work or other parts of the cooperative, we want them to know there are career opportunities that they might not hear about.

So, what does this have to do with a Schoolhouse Rock song about being a bill on Capitol Hill? Well, as we all know, our policy makers tend to come across bills on the stairs to the capital buildings that impact our day-to-day operations. Whether it is a bill talking about carbon reduction, renewable power, tax credits for electric vehicles or making grants available to reinvest in the electric grid; it is important to be part of the process advocating.

After all, there was a bill that became the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that enabled communities such as ours to bring the light. A part of our engagement with our policy makers is to expose our youth to the process. We do that through the Washinton DC Youth Tour put together by NRECA. This year Sawyer Guerrero was selected by us to attend, and it turns



**CEO RON MEIER**

out Sawyer was also selected by his Minnesota peers to represent the state at NRECA's Annual Meeting next year.

You'll find a great article on page 5 where Sawyer provides a great overview of his experience participating in this year's Youth DC Trip. I've included just a couple quotes below that highlight his experience and provide a sneak peek of the expanded article that I invite all of you to read.

### **What was the most impactful part of the trip for you and why?**

"The most impactful thing to me was learning how important cooperatives were to the USA. It shone a new light on the issue of energy security in America."

### **This trip is made possible by the cooperative member-owners and the board of directors, do you have anything you'd like to share with them?**

"I'd like to thank every member-owner for allowing me to go on this trip, and hope you keep sending kids in the future."

Our community involvement is one of our core values and spending time with the kids is a major part of that involvement. For more information on our various youth programs, including our annual scholarship application for students pursuing a career as a line-worker, members can get more details at [www.mcleodcoop.com/community/youth-programs/](http://www.mcleodcoop.com/community/youth-programs/).

**Cooperatively**

*R1PL*

## JULY 2024 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on July 23, 2024, at McLeod Co-op headquarters. Eight board members, attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

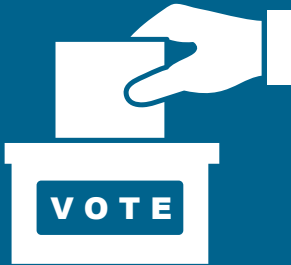
Highlights of the meeting included:

- The June outage report was shared with a total of 77 outages, affecting 519 consumers.
- Assistant Member Service Manager Thomes reported that Great River Energy sent MCPA a donation in the amount of \$6,385 for Operation Round Up.
- Manager of Finance Jakel reported that Great River Energy has requested their annual budget load projections from each member. It's likely there will be a significant decrease in projected kWh purchases due to the potential of Heartland Corn Products using generators as their main energy source.
- Manager of Finance Jakel reviewed the June financials.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2024-07-01 Vote in Connection with August 1, 2024 GRE Special Meeting.
- A motion was carried to approve Director Randy Hlavka as the voting delegate and Director Susan Anderson for the alternate for the GRE Special Meeting on August 1, 2024.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2024-07-02 Adoption of Contract for Legal Services.



## 2024 ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The McLeod Cooperative Power Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at the Crow River Winery with 285 members in attendance. Steph Jakel presented the financials for 2023, noting a clean audit report from CliftonLarsonAllen and positive total margins. Jon Brekke, VP & Chief Power Supply Officer for Great River Energy, discussed GRE's energy portfolio, highlighting new wind energy projects and a battery storage pilot project. Ron Meier concluded the meeting by showcasing various projects and milestones for the Cooperative during 2023 and addressing member questions. Thank you to all members who attended!



## BOARD OF DIRECTOR ELECTION RESULTS

We extend our gratitude to all the members who participated in this year's election and cast their votes for the Co-op's Board of Directors. Following the announcement at the Annual Meeting, we are pleased to introduce the candidates elected by the membership to represent their districts over the next three years: Doug Kirtz for District 4, Allan Duesterhoeft for District 5, and Gary Burdorf for District 6.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the other candidates, Paul Rettmann, Karl Reinhard, and Michael Checketts, for their active involvement in this year's election and for their interest in serving the Co-op. Your dedication and commitment to our Cooperative are highly valued.



## COST OF SERVICE STUDY UPDATE

As previously highlighted over the past few newsletter editions, McLeod Co-op Power is currently working with a consulting firm to develop a Cost-of-Service Study for our cooperative.

Although this study is not quite complete, the preliminary findings show a need for an overall revenue increase. These findings confirm the internal financial projections that were made at the end of 2023 when we elected to do a smaller increase to allow time for us to complete this study. We anticipate that we will be finalizing the study and rate adjustments by the end of September 2024.



# YOUTH TOUR WINNER RETURNS FROM D.C.



***This summer, thirty-four Minnesota students, including Sawyer Guerrero from Glencoe, experienced the thrill and excitement of the Rural Electric Youth Tour, a unique opportunity sponsored by McLeod Co-op Power and coordinated by the Minnesota Rural Electric Association. From June 18-23, 2024, the students participated in an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., where they learned about their government, explored famous landmarks, and discovered the vital role of electric cooperatives in America.***

Sawyer had the unique opportunity to engage with legislative representatives during the trip. "Amy Klobuchar was very likable. She talked with us and answered my question about her work with biofuels and her stance on nuclear energy. We didn't spend much time with Tina Smith, but her assistant answered a lot of our questions," he shared, highlighting the value of these interactions. Talking to and hearing from politicians made Sawyer feel like he could possibly be in a similar position in the future. The trip inspired him to consider a career in politics.

During the trip, Sawyer also visited many monuments and museums, but the American History Museum stood out as his favorite. "The amount of historical and cultural artifacts there was mind-blowing," he said, reflecting on the impression the museum left on him.

The most impactful part of the trip for Sawyer was understanding how important cooperatives are to the USA. Sawyer learned that cooperatives are much more widespread and integral to the nation than he previously thought. It was fascinating for him to learn about the history of their formations. "It shone a new light on the issue of energy security in America," he noted.

We are also excited to announce that Sawyer was selected by his peers to represent Minnesota on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). As a delegate to the YLC, he will meet virtually with NRECA and the other state YLC representatives

to focus on leadership skills. He will then work with McLeod Coop on a project, applying the knowledge gained from the monthly meetings. At the conclusion of the program Sawyer will give a speech for the Co-op and have the chance to be selected to deliver the speech at the NRECA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia that he will attend with fellow state delegates.

Being elected as the Minnesota delegate meant a lot to Sawyer, as it validated his leadership abilities in the eyes of his peers. "I like to think I'm competent, but it's nice to see that others think the same," he added.

Sawyer expressed his gratitude to the cooperative member-owners and the board of directors for making this trip possible. "I'd like to thank every member-owner for allowing me to go on this trip, and hope you keep sending kids in the future," he said.

Sawyer's experience on the Rural Electric Youth Tour has not only enriched his understanding of cooperatives and government but also inspired him to pursue leadership roles in the future. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of this unique program.



⚡⚡⚡ 2024 ⚡⚡⚡

# POWER OUTAGES

MONTH	OUTAGES	MEMBERS	AVG. MINUTES
January	38	109	55
February	31	122	39
March	50	58	60
April	75	412	79
May	68	415	74
June	77	519	111

## WHAT'S CAUSING OUTAGES?



PLANNED  
48.17%



MAINTENANCE  
14.63%



PUBLIC  
9.76%



ANIMALS  
9.45%



OTHER  
7.93%



WEATHER  
7.62%

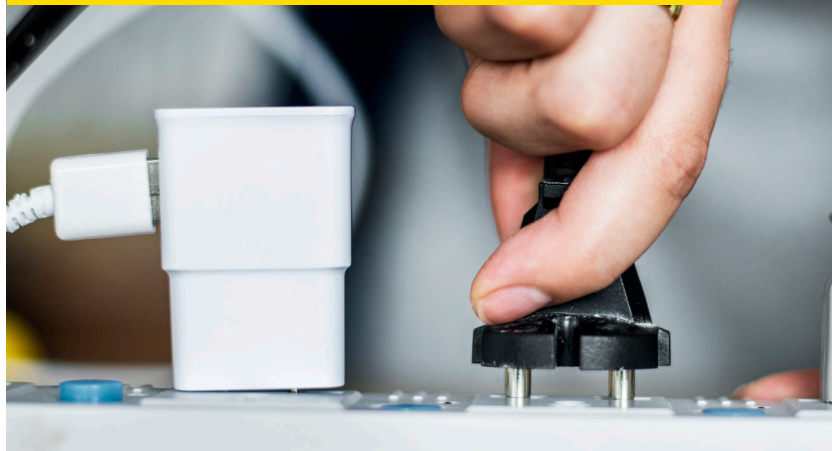


EQUIPMENT  
2.13%



UNKNOWN  
0.30%

## POWER SURGES: HOW THEY HAPPEN AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM



A power surge can occur in a split second, causing significant damage to electronic devices, appliances, and outlets in a home. While power surges can't always be prevented, understanding their causes and how to mitigate damage can be helpful.

### WHAT CAUSES POWER SURGES?

- **Electrical Overload:** Occurs when too much power is drawn from a single circuit, often due to overusing extension cords and plugging in too many devices.
- **Faulty Wiring:** Damaged or exposed wires can cause surges. Signs include outlets with burn marks, a burning smell, buzzing sounds, and frequently tripping circuit breakers. If these signs are present, unplug devices and contact an electrician.
- **Lightning Strike:** A direct strike on power lines creates a large voltage spike, causing a power surge.
- **Power Outage:** The return of electricity after an outage can cause a sudden jump in current, leading to a surge.

### HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR HOME?

- **Unplug during storms:** This is the best way to protect appliances and electronic devices.
- **Use appliance-grade surge protectors:** Surge protectors with a high joule rating (2000+ joules) can protect critical appliances like computers, refrigerators, and home theater systems.
- **Have an electrician evaluate your wiring:** Especially in older homes, an electrician can identify potential issues that may cause surges.
- **Beware of post-outage surges:** During an outage, power down and unplug electronics to avoid a surge when power returns.
- **Distribute your appliances:** Avoid overburdening outlets, extension cords, and power strips by distributing appliances and using dedicated surge protectors.



Get notified when it matters.

### GET NOTIFICATIONS AND VIDEO ALERTS WHEN ACTIVITY OCCURS.

As part of a monitored security system, receive email, text, or image alerts when alarms are triggered, doors or windows opened, the power goes out or any other activity occurs.

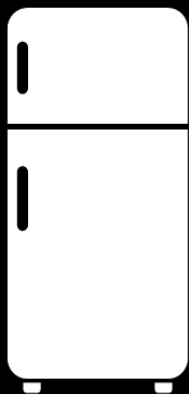


888.264.6380 heartlandss.com  
Security | Automation | Video | Medical Alerts



# WAYS YOU CAN USE ELECTRICITY

that costs less than a to-go coffee



RUN FRIDGE  
24 HOURS



FULLY CHARGE  
CELL PHONE



WATCH 2 HOURS  
OF TV



USE OVEN 4 HOURS



POWER LAPTOP  
8 HOURS



DRY A LOAD  
OF LAUNDRY



## WHERE DO YOU FIND VALUE?

Did you know the national average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases.

*That's real value.*

### 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: Kirk Newman  
(952) 955-3319

District 2: Joe Griebie  
(320) 779-1101

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(952) 449-1793

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(952) 250-3109

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



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts. Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.



3515 11th St. East  
Glencoe, MN 55336

[WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM](http://WWW.MCLEODCOOP.COM)

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## HOME RUN SUCCESS: LOCAL YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC

**75+ local youth joined the PlayBall! MN Youth Baseball Clinic hosted by McLeod Co-op Power and the Arlington Baseball Association. Discover how this community-driven initiative made a lasting impact on young athletes.**

More than 75 local youth took part in a fantastic Youth Baseball Clinic at Arlington Baseball Park, organized jointly by McLeod Co-op Power and the Arlington Baseball Association. The event, held on July 20, aimed to cultivate young talent and promote the love for baseball among children of all ages and skill levels.

The Youth Baseball Clinic at Arlington Baseball Park offered a fun and educational experience for the young participants. The event was made possible in part by the sponsorship of Great River Energy, McLeod Co-op Power's wholesale power provider.

Children from neighboring communities came together to embrace the sport, receiving expert coaching and guidance from experienced volunteers. The clinic emphasized essential baseball skills such as batting, fielding, and pitching, while also teaching important life lessons like teamwork and discipline.

McLeod Co-op Power is proud to be part of this great program that showcases the power of sports in bringing communities together and fostering the growth of our youth.