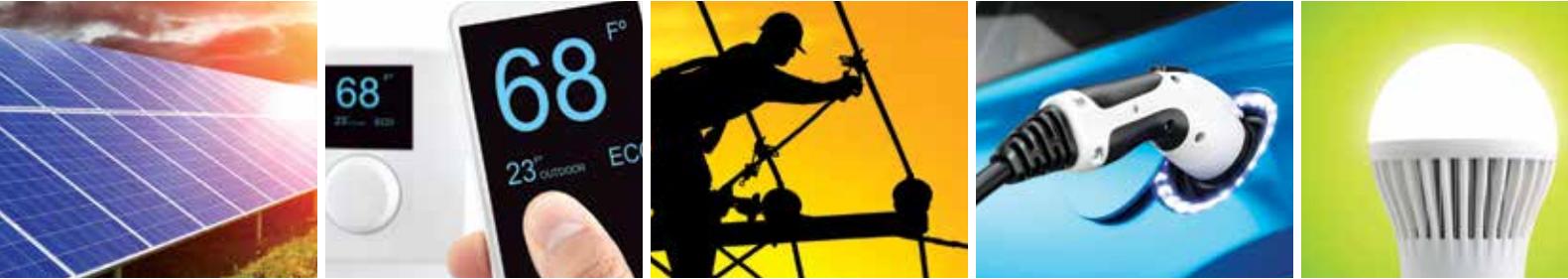


JAN. 2022

NEWS FROM YOUR PARTNERS AT PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE



## PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE'S *RESTATE BYLAWS* TO BE VOTED ON IN 2022



*As a not-for-profit cooperative we are governed by a member-elected Board of Directors as well as the Bylaws which are the governing rules for the Cooperative. Only the membership, by majority vote, can alter the Bylaws.*

Typically, it is the Board and/or cooperative staff that suggest changes; however, a member may propose a new bylaw or changes to the existing bylaws by submitting it to the Board of Directors at least ninety (90) days prior to the Annual Meeting. This process is outlined in Article 14 of the Bylaws.

In 2021, the Cooperative's Board of Directors, executive staff, and legal counsel performed a thorough review of the Cooperative's Bylaws over the course of five months to ensure they are current, compliant, and reflect best practices.

As a result, the Board of Directors is recommending several changes and has developed Restated Bylaws for the membership to vote on.

*The intent of the Restated Bylaws is to:*

- Modernize and simplify archaic language where possible
- Provide better guidance and more clarity of intent
- Account for advances in technology and changes that facilitate more efficient business practices
- Eliminate redundancies and contradictions between different articles and sections
- Correct grammar, punctuation, and capitalization where needed

The Restated Bylaws will be presented to the membership to vote on as part of the director election process in March. A booklet containing the edits and explanations of substantive changes will be included in ballot packets that are mailed to all members in early March. If you would like to review them before that time, an electronic version of the Restated Bylaws is available on our website at [www.peoplesenergy.coop/content/bylaws-articles-incorporation](http://www.peoplesenergy.coop/content/bylaws-articles-incorporation) or you may request a hard copy by contacting the Cooperative.

Instead of voting on the Restated Bylaws as a single "yes" or "no" vote, members will have the opportunity to vote by article. This provides more flexibility while voting in case a member agrees with some changes, but not others.

*Be sure to look for your ballot packet in early March so you can place your vote not only for board candidates, but also the Restated Bylaws. It's the democratic, cooperative way!*

## inside:

02. *CEO Message  
From President  
Mike Henke*

05. *NRECA's Electric  
Cooperative  
Youth Tour*

06. *See Your Name?  
Capital Credits  
Refund List*

10. *Save Energy  
When Working  
From Home*

# CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO



*Michael J. Henke*

mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

*On December 15, we experienced a storm more likely to happen in summer than in December. Lightning, high winds, and even tornadoes swept through our area and touched every inch of our service territory that spans over 1,000 square miles.*

As the forecasted severity grew in the days leading up to the 15th, a local weather person stated that it wasn't a matter of if there would be tornadoes, but rather how many there would be. Turns out, there were three confirmed affecting our service territory that hit south of Racine, Sumner Township, and the area east of Plainview.

In total, the storm caused over 11,000 outages, which affected almost half of our members. Through the course of the storm, we had over 100 powerlines on the ground, 20 broken distribution poles, 60 leaning distribution poles, and had received around 20 emergency calls from county authorities. There were also 34 broken 69kV transmission poles that affected the two lines that feed power from different directions to our Stewartville substation.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recap the situation and share with you how we prepare for, respond to, and restore power after storms. Members asked a lot of good questions and I hope the following helps answer all of them.

**PREPARING FOR THE STORM:** Preparing for storms happens long before any storms are predicted. In the past 10 years, we have invested over \$10 million in tie lines, voltage conversions, and substation upgrades to build redundancy to our system. If one transmission line goes down, we can energize the area from another transmission line or locally from our distribution system. We have also invested nearly \$12 million in right-of-way clearing since 2015 to keep lines and equipment clear of trees and other vegetation that could fall into or tear down a powerline due to strong winds. This is an ongoing effort.

When a storm is predicted, staff prepare by fueling and stocking trucks, assembling the gear they may need, checking inventory levels and alerting vendors what may be needed, ensuring they are familiar with our Emergency Response Plan, and, in some cases, arranging childcare so they can work on restoral

efforts when called upon to do so which could be any hour of the day or night. **Picture A** on the next page shows a line worker's gear assembled and ready to go.

Plans are also made in advance as to who will work outage response in the field and in the dispatch center so it is covered 24/7 until all outages are restored. For safety reasons, line crews work 16-hour shifts max, so they are rotated through to ensure adequate coverage.

**ASSESSING THE DAMAGE:** After a storm hits, dispatch and line crews start responding to outages. In many cases, this happens while the weather may still pose hazards, so crews will set themselves up at a location to begin repairs as soon as it is safe enough to do so.

Line crews and staff trained to assess damage are called upon to help triage the situation so restoral plans can be made by engineering and operations to restore the most outages as quickly as possible. The storm in December posed a challenge to assessing damage because of the limited hours of daylight. It took nearly 24 hours to fully assess all the damage across our 1,000 square mile service territory. **Pictures B through D** on the next page show some of the damage from the storm.

**RESTORING POWER:** When damage is widespread and weather conditions are poor it is a challenge to know with certainty how long it will take to restore power. We do our best to keep members updated as much as possible through our Facebook page, website, and the local news media. The first 24 hours after the storm are the most challenging because, while we know there are outages, we don't always know how severe damage is and how long it will take to make repairs until a crew completes an assessment of the damage.

In some cases, we need to wait for other companies to repair a problem as was the case in December when transmission lines owned by ITC went down due to broken poles. This affected areas in the City of Stewartville formally served by Alliant Energy. The Stewartville substation on the southside of town is fed by two different transmission lines and, unfortunately, both were damaged. One had nine broken poles and was repaired first to restore power as quickly as possible and the other had 25 poles that were repaired over the weekend following the storm. We released one of our contracted crews to help ITC with repairs since

# CEO MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

they had a lot of damage to their system in Iowa and were stretched thin. The damage and restoral efforts of these lines can be seen in Pictures D and E.

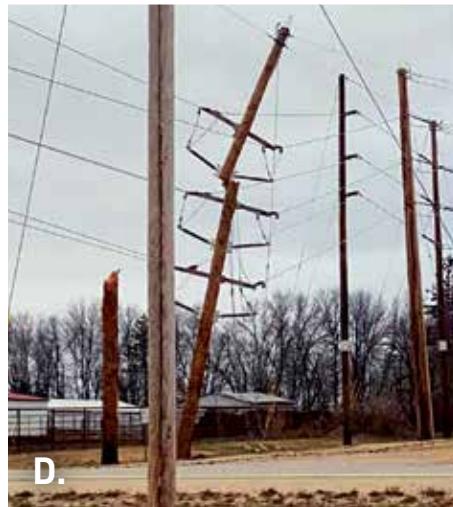
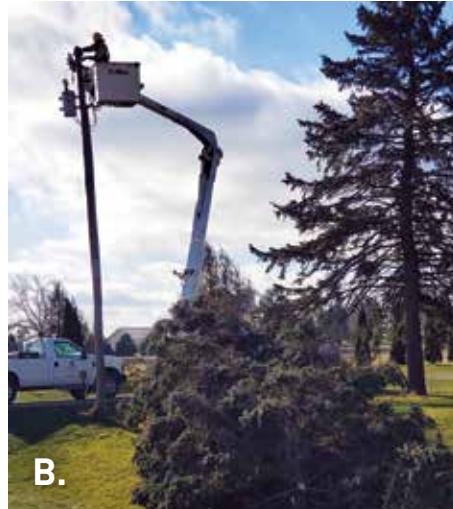
Once we anticipate that we'll need help to restore power, we start calling other cooperatives in our area to see if they can provide crews to help if we need them. In this case, we welcomed two crews from Dakota Electric Association and two from Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative to help within 24 hours.

After a major storm such as the one in December, we always analyze what happened and identify what went well and what we can do to improve for next time. Overall, I'm very pleased with how things went. We had several employees who are still relatively new to their job and hadn't experienced a storm like this before. They rolled their sleeves up and dove in to get the job done. With each storm we learn something new as no two storms are ever the same. We're so thankful that this storm wasn't as bad as what happened the week prior in the southeastern part of the US.

I am also thankful that all of our employees worked safely during the storm, despite having a truck damaged by a falling tree. Safety of our staff and the public is paramount in everything we do.

*Thank you to all the members who offered words of kindness and encouragement as we worked through restoral efforts. It helps keep us going when the days are long. We know over 2,000 members, including some of our employees, were without power for over 36 hours and really appreciated everyone's patience.*

*Sincerely,*  
**Michael J. Henke,**  
President & CEO,  
(800) 214-2694



# highline

Vol. 86 • Issue 01

## MANAGEMENT

**Michael J. Henke,**  
President/CEO

**Patrick Nelson,**  
Director of Engineering  
and Operations

**Michelle Olson,**  
Director of  
Member Services

**Anthony Stern,**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Gwen Stevens,**  
Director of Cooperative  
Relations

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### DISTRICT 1:

**Joe Book**  
(507) 251-7148, jbook@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 2:

**Jodie Tvedt**  
(507) 218-2141, jtvedt@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 3:

**Robert Hoefs**  
(507) 254-3787, rhoefs@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 4:

**Tracy Lauritzen,**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
(507) 261-8740, tlauritzen@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 5:

**Jerry Wooner,**  
Board Chair  
(507) 259-7217, jwooner@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 6:

**Art Friedrich**  
Vice Chair  
(507) 951-0590, afriedrich@  
peoplesenergy.coop

### DISTRICT 7:

**Jeff Orth**  
(507) 254-6358, jorth@  
peoplesenergy.coop  
Visit peoplesenergy.coop  
for a listing of the areas  
covered by each district.

### Business Hours:

7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M-F



## MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on December 21. During the meeting, the following items were discussed:

*the December 15 storm: outage numbers, causes of the damage, and estimated costs; transmission project update; results of the RUS Operational Audit; a recap of a meeting with Senators Carla Nelson and David Senjem at PEC on December 8; and Joe Book, Director for District 1, announced that he will not be seeking re-election in the 2022 Board elections.* A quorum of directors was present, and the following actions were taken:

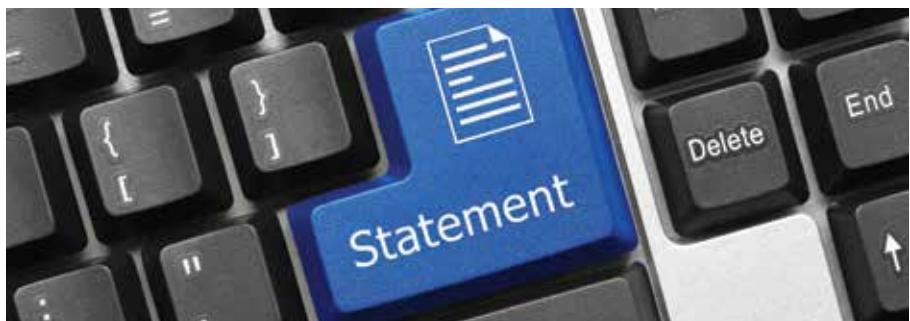
- **Approved a .800 mill power cost adjustment for Legacy members for December usage billed in January.**
- **Approved the Strategic Plan as presented.**
- **Approved holding a Member Advisory Committee Meeting on January 20.**
- **Approved the voting option for the Bylaw amendments.**
- **Proposed removal of text from Article 4, Section 4.5 in the Bylaws to be included in the amendments up for vote in March.**
- **Approved the 2022 Work Plan and Budget as presented.**

## THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO CHOOSE PAPERLESS!

People's Energy Cooperative members may want to save paper or appreciate the protection that comes with a secure portal. No matter the reason, choosing paperless billing helps the Cooperative reduce fixed costs, which means less costs passed on to you, the member. Twenty-five thousand eight hundred thirty-one.

### OUR FIRST DRAWING WILL BE IN MARCH!

*As a reminder, each quarter in 2022, we're drawing 10 member names and giving them a \$100 or \$50 gift card to one of a variety of local businesses in our service territory. Your account just needs to be set up for paperless billing to be eligible! To sign-up, visit [peoplesenergy.coop/choose-paperless](http://peoplesenergy.coop/choose-paperless).*



## PEC: OUR COOPERATIVE HISTORY



It's hard to believe now, but when our headquarters building located on North Broadway opened in 1950, it was at the edge of the City of Rochester! The building still stands today across from the Rec Center at North Broadway and Elton Hills Drive.



## ATTENTION GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: Scholarships Are Available!

We all know pursuing your future career can be a significant investment. People's Energy Cooperative is proud to offer scholarships from unclaimed capital credit funds for graduating high school seniors in our service area. Scholarships are available in the amount of \$1,000 for general education and \$2,000 scholarships for lineworker education.

Don't wait! Apply before 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Applications are available from school guidance offices, at [peoplesenergy.coop](http://peoplesenergy.coop), or by calling the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694.



### NRECA'S

### YOUTH TOUR IS BACK!

*We are excited to share that in June, high school students from across Minnesota will travel to Washington, D.C. to join more than 1,900 other students from around the nation for the 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.*

"The Youth Tour is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we're proud to send our best and brightest to Washington, D.C. to participate," said Gwen Stevens, director of cooperative relations. "These students will gain a first-hand glimpse of the legislative process and make connections with others from across the country that will last a lifetime. Our youth are the future for our community and our country, and we can give them the tools to succeed. We look forward to this year's trip and continuing the Youth Tour tradition for many years to come."

Students on the tour will participate in leadership training, engage in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jumpstart their national peer network, and tour Washington, D.C. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C. for over 50 years and nearly 50,000 students have participated in this program. This opportunity is fully sponsored by People's Energy Cooperative. Twenty-seven thousand four hundred fifty-seven.



*Interested juniors and seniors must apply and are selected by the Cooperative. For more information, visit [peoplesenergy.coop/education-programs](http://peoplesenergy.coop/education-programs).*



# CAPITAL CREDITS

## DO YOU KNOW ANYONE ON THIS LIST?

*Checks are mailed to former members at their last address on file with PEC. Some checks are returned as undeliverable. Below is a list of people we have lost touch with who are entitled to receive capital credits. Call our office at (507) 367-7000 or (800) 214-2694 or email [jgoulson@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:jgoulson@peoplesenergy.coop).*

David E. Adank  
Russell J. Ahern Est.  
*(c/o Lisa Ulmer)*  
Timothy P. Ahern  
Randall S. Albers  
Norman G. Allan  
Sandra M. Allen  
Leah M. Allert Est.  
*(or Tom Allert)*  
Delford D. Anderson  
*(c/o Mark Anderson)*  
Quarve & Anderson  
*(or Nicholas W. Gilk)*  
Teresa L. Anderson  
Thomas W. Anderson  
James M. & Geraldine Anglin  
Robert Askildson  
Tony R. & Aretha J. Atkinson  
Vanessa & William Austin  
Mitchel Baldus  
Alden R. Banks, Jr.  
Allan T. & Karen H. Bard Est.  
Douglas D. & Michelle L.  
Becher  
Arlie A. & Phyllis R. Benike  
Nancy C. Benike  
Michael P. & Debra L.  
Benson  
Donald Benton  
Mary Bergstrahl  
Kent Billman  
Andrew Bisek  
Bette Bittner  
Russell D. Bjerke  
Christoph J. & Kathryn M.  
Blain  
Chanse & Chelsie Blanshan  
Kale Bodily  
Valerie A. & Ben W. Bohle  
Born Free Ranch  
*(c/o Doyle Lindahl)*

Zine & Eddine J. Boutaghou  
Sharon Boyce  
Kenneth Boyer  
Andrew Bram  
Michael J. Brantmeier  
Rhonda K. Breese  
Jennifer Briske-Smith  
Richard L. & Roberta A.  
Brown  
Richard F. Brubaker  
Douglas P. Budensiek  
Thomas P. & Arlene E. Burns  
James E. Busch  
Jeanne M. Cafourek  
Michael W. Callahan  
Patricia B. Capek  
Anthony & Bonnie Casucci  
Central Bank  
James T. Chapman  
Sharon E. Chapman  
David Christensen  
Michael & Meredith Clark  
George M. & Helen L. Clay  
Ralph Conder  
Peter Condon  
Chris D. & Carla Y. Cook  
Michael D. Corcoran Est.  
Allen R. & Tammy L. Costello  
James Curtis  
Christine K. & Jeffrey Dahle  
Robert J. & Harriet Daiker  
Sheila Daley  
Tamela R. Danielson  
Robert J. Davis  
Chuck P. & Mary J. Dery  
David A. Desharnais  
Mrs. Janet L. Dillon  
Stephen Dixon  
Jacob & Tabitha Dodge  
Jesse D. Dodge

James E. & Leigh D.  
Donaldson  
Nicholas C. & Lois  
Dondlinger  
Sarah Dos  
John Dougherty  
Rose A. Enquist  
Will Erickson  
Evans Brothers  
*(c/o Signe Fineid)*  
Arman H. & Margo L. Fathie  
Jason R. Fellows  
Jeffrey L. Fieseler  
Matt R. Finley & Claudia U.  
Zendejas  
Ernst F. Flury, Jr.  
Brittney Flynn  
Winifred C. Flynn  
*(c/o Orinn Peck)*  
Matthew & Anna Fournelle  
Nancy J. Fredrickson Est.  
*(or Anne M. Fredrickson)*  
Kathryn M. Freeberg  
Bradley J. Funke  
Larry G. Gardiner  
Brenda M. Gardner  
Kay L. Geppert Est.  
*(or Mary Dallmann)*  
Donald & Katherine Gerhart  
David Glaess & Juli  
Harrison-Glaess  
Daryl S. & Melissa Goetsch  
Karen & Galen Govier  
Bethany K. Gravos  
Brian & Theresa Greger  
James Grobe  
Jan Grobe  
Tammy L. Gross  
Richard & Joanne Gustafson  
Henry L. Haack  
Keith & Kathleen Halphide

Sara Hamilton  
Mehmed Hamzagic  
Dr. David G. & Barbara J.  
Hanlon  
Daniel J. Hansen  
James W. Hanson  
Patricia H. Harnack  
Charles E. Harwood  
Edward Hayes-Hall  
William A. Heins  
Starr E. Heller  
Kevin T. Henderson  
Edward C. Hiatt  
Carl Hickmann  
Ashley M. Higgins  
David J. & Catharine L.  
Hildebranski  
Harold J. & Jona D. Hines  
Steven & Judy Hjortness  
H.C. Hoaglan Est.  
*(or Hersh F. Hoaglan)*  
James D. Hoekstra  
Jon R. Hoffman  
Earlynn J. Hoffmann  
Michael T. & Kristina  
Hofmeister  
Elmyra Holtz  
Jessica A. &  
Darren D. Hooley  
Mark E. & Shannen R.  
Horsman  
Robyn L. Hottman  
Heather Hovland &  
Matthew Gunderson  
Dale E. Hrubes  
Edward & Susan M. Hruska  
Jennifer A. & Michael F.  
Huiras  
James R. & Theresa L.  
Hurley  
David M. & Janine M. Islam

## RECOGNIZE ANY NAMES? CAPITAL CREDIT RETURNED CHECK LIST

Molly Johannes  
 John R. & Ila Johnson  
 Michael W. Johnson  
 William J. & Bonnie L. Johnson  
 Melissa M. & Stephen E. Jordan  
 Kenneth E. Juers Est. (or Florence Juers)  
 Mark A. & Tammy Julian  
 Robert Kennedy  
 James M. & Susan M. Kiefer  
 Dale I. Kimpton  
 Patricia M. King  
 Ann C. Kinyon  
 Dawn M. Kisner  
 Rita B. Klenke  
 Daniel S. & Erin M. Klote  
 Margaret A. Koenig  
 Melvin K. & Jo Anne Kraft  
 Mary T. Kramer  
 Paul & Ann M. Kreiser  
 Eric Kreter  
 Deanna Krier  
 Marvin R. Kulas Est. (or Judith Kulas)  
 Scott E. & Frances M. Kunz  
 Lisa A. Kurzejeski  
 Earl E. Labrash, Jr.  
 Robert R. Landes Est. (or Cynthia Landes)  
 Lawrence J. Landherr  
 Patrick E. Landree  
 Susan H. Langins  
 James J. Lebeau  
 Dwayne C. Lee  
 Eric J. Lee  
 Matthew M. & Kristie K. Leth  
 Debra M. Lewis  
 Richard L. Lewis Est. (c/o Marilyn Lewis)  
 Theodore Loftsgard  
 Roger L. Loos  
 David A. Lucas  
 Michael Maag  
 Joanne R. & Mark J. Manahan  
 Mark B. Manzow  
 Mark Twain Cablecomm  
 Constance J. Martin DBA: MPI

Judy A. Martin  
 William H. & Elaine Martin  
 James R. Mattson  
 Glenda K. McBride  
 James D. McCormick  
 Amy & Jesse McEachern  
 Mary McGrath  
 Michael & Stacy Mehrkens  
 Michael F. Melvin  
 Joyce E. Mensink  
 Luis Merced  
 Miranda Meyer  
 Steven R. Meyers Est. (or Teresa Meyer)  
 Brandon Milde  
 James Milde  
 David N. Jr. & Mary J. Milliken  
 Ivan C. Moen  
 Harland Morehart, Jr.  
 Kent R. & Merry L. Morris  
 Allen & Aimee Muhlenbeck  
 Linda M. Mulholland  
 Jack W. Murphy  
 Denise & Rob Mutter  
 Jonathan D. Nelson  
 Bridgett Ness  
 Daniel Ness  
 Krista M. Nielsen  
 Vera Novak  
 Paul B. O'Byrne  
 H.R. Oleson Est. (c/o Ruth L. Oleson)  
 Owners Plumbing Inc.  
 Robert F. Pahl  
 Patricia A. Palmquist  
 Natalie Pappas Est.  
 Marcus C. Parrish  
 William J. Paynter  
 Amy Pearce  
 Sherrie L. Pernu  
 James W. Perry  
 Leslie S. & Connie Peterson  
 Dana L. Point  
 Jared K. Post  
 Peter J. Potosky Est. (or Roxanna Potosky)  
 Michael T. Prasil  
 Steven M. Prinsen  
 Tim J. & Kelly L. Puent

Joseph M. & Jaynee Puetz  
 David E. & Kaari J. Pugh  
 Kelly Rae  
 Helen M. Ratz  
 Rehm Body Shop (or WM/Ronald Rehm)  
 Ronald C. Reinalda  
 Thaddeus G. Reniker  
 Doug M. Rickeman Est.  
 Robert L. Ritlinger  
 Cindy K. Ronningen  
 Luella Rueber  
 Christine E. Rud  
 Todd T. & Laura A. Ruth  
 Cindy Ryan  
 Thomas J. Ryan  
 James M. Sabatine  
 Daniel J. & Becky J. Sargent  
 Mark H. Sawyer  
 Scott L. Schauss  
 M.B. Schneider Farms  
 Kristina J. Scholze  
 Schreiber Bros. (c/o C&M Schreiber)  
 Glenn W. & Tamara Rick  
 Scott C. Schultz  
 Steven D. Schultz Est. (c/o Kristiann Schultz)  
 Rhonda S. Schumacher  
 Dale F. Schwirtz  
 Gertrude B. Sehl Est. (or Maureen Owusu)  
 Donald P. Servick  
 Rodney P. & Cindy Severson  
 Nicole Simmons  
 Gary N. & Janice L. Slawson  
 Junior M. Sleezer Est. (c/o Dennis Sleezer)  
 Darlean Smith  
 Kelly M. Smith  
 Samantha Smith  
 Clement H. Snyder  
 Edward T. Snyder  
 James A. Soukup Est. (c/o Mary Lou)  
 Kurt Stevermer  
 Gordon A. & Linda Stiller  
 George M. & Deborah Suppes  
 Supreme Outdoor Advertising

Timothy A. Swanberg  
 R.R. & Peggy Swenson  
 Charl S. Swiggum  
 Thomas & Janet L. Szajner  
 Ted Tendick  
 Michael K. Tenney  
 Edward J. Tentis Est. (or Jason Tentis)  
 Brian D. & Susan M. Thiede  
 Michael L. Thobe  
 Robert Thoen  
 Jennifer A. Thompson  
 Shawn M. Thompson  
 Mark A. Thorson  
 Dennis Timm  
 Kenneth E. Tlougan, Jr.  
 Bryan C. Tousley  
 Treefrog Treasures, LLC  
 Shay Tushaus  
 Elisa M. Umpierre  
 Fabian G. Van Schaick Est.  
 John J. & Kelly K. Vriezen  
 Nataliya S. Watson  
 Bruce J. & Teri L. Weissinger  
 Dana Weitzenkamp  
 Darcy J. Welhaven  
 Patricia White  
 Thomas L. Whiting  
 Russell L. Wildeman  
 Terrance J. & Rhonda A. Willford  
 Denise R. & Michael G. Williams  
 Evelyn A. Williams (c/o Mrs. Larson)  
 Kyle & Nicole Williamson  
 Stacy Wilson-Ecerson  
 David G. & Julie N. Winkels  
 Michael & Constance Wittek  
 Michael P. Wolf  
 Norman W. & Donna Yarolimek  
 John E. Young  
 Debbie L. Zieman  
 Raymond P. & Margery Zobel





## OPERATION ROUND UP® SPOTLIGHT

# Dover COMMUNITY Kitchen

A \$5,000 Operation Round Up grant was recently awarded to the City of Dover to help establish a much-needed community kitchen. The new kitchen will be constructed in the City's old school building and will be rented out for a variety of events.

"We get phone calls all the time from people looking for a place to hold events, whether it's a family gathering or a community event," explains City of Dover Clerk/Treasurer Gary Pedersen. He mentions how people used to rent out the City's fire hall, but with that no longer being a good location for community events a new, affordable rental space was needed.

The City of Dover owns the old school building in Dover. After moving city hall to the building, the City is now working to develop other possible public and private uses for the facility. The community kitchen will be used for events like birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and other celebrations. The City also has a future goal of establishing a daycare in the building; having a kitchen could help make that happen.

Construction on the community kitchen is scheduled to begin early in 2022. "We are ready to go, with the room all prepped," Pedersen reports. "There are six classrooms on the main level. We're taking one of them and turning it into a kitchen. People can also use the gym for their events."

The estimated cost of the kitchen project is \$64,000. Pedersen mentions how the City is continuing to raise funds for the kitchen. Approximately half of the funds needed are committed at this point. He says the City has received many generous donations, with strong support for the project.

*"Community projects like this are so important to keep a community flowing. I would like to thank all of the People's Energy Cooperative members who participate in Operation Round Up and made this donation possible. Operation Round Up is a very valuable program for our community."* -

Gary Pederson, City of Dover Clerk/Treasurer



## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RENEWABLE ENERGY?

For members who want to support renewable energy efforts but can't or don't want to install their own system, People's Community Solar might be the right fit. This program allows members to subscribe to the energy output from the solar array located off Hwy. 42 in Elgin. Panel subscriptions are now \$562.50 per panel. A limited number of panels are available.

[peoplesenergy.coop/peoples-community-solar](http://peoplesenergy.coop/peoples-community-solar)



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
to our Engineering &  
Operations Coordinator  
Ben Kubista for 5 years  
of service at PEC!  
**THANK YOU, BEN!**



## GET SOCIAL!

A fast, easy way to share Cooperative news and info with members!



# FutureForward

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Over the last few months, People's Energy Cooperative (PEC) has been working on a Business Retention and Expansion Survey to identify opportunities to help local businesses grow, as well as obstacles that may be preventing them from growing or put them at risk of leaving the area. One of the key areas of concern mentioned by nearly every business is "workforce" – including both access to people and the skills needed to do the work.

FutureForward is a new partnership program through Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC) that aims to help with these workforce challenges. SSC is a public, non-profit agency with a mission of shaping the future for communities of leaders and learners. Its FutureForward program supports the local economy by connecting classrooms to careers and bringing learning to life. Nine thousand five hundred forty-two.

"Most of our regional businesses are smaller companies that may or may not have an HR or recruiting person, probably don't have much time to spend organizing events with the local school, and almost certainly don't have time to network with the dozens of schools in the region that might have students interested in the work they do," explains Marty Walsh, PEC's economic development and key

accounts manager. "The FutureForward program and staff streamline that to match the needs and offerings of companies with the interests and skills of hundreds of students as efficiently as possible."

Many students are unaware of what happens behind the walls of the businesses in their own town, let alone a neighboring community. As a result, they may not recognize all of the interesting work opportunities available to them close to home. By exposing students to local businesses, interest is generated in area companies and new career fields.

As Walsh explains, even small companies have many roles to fill. While a business might be seen as a bank, a welding shop, or a school; they need more than bankers, welders, and teachers. Bringing students together with employers helps show there is a need for computer programmers, translators, robotic mechanics, and geneticists in our region too.

"Prior to my work at PEC, I was the Economic Development Director for Fillmore County, and worked on the first programs that became FutureForward," Walsh says. "I can say the increased awareness of local job opportunities and communication between the companies and students benefited everyone involved. I can't wait to see what we can do around the PEC service territory."

*For more about FutureForward or to get involved with the program, visit [futureforward.org](http://futureforward.org).*



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# 5 WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

## WHEN WORKING FROM HOME

- By Abby Berry

### TODAY, MORE AMERICANS ARE WORKING FROM HOME THAN EVER BEFORE.

*More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day. If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are five easy ways to save energy when working from home.*

**1. USE A SMART POWER STRIP.** Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.

**2. UNPLUG YOUR LEAST-USED EQUIPMENT.** If your home office includes equipment like printers and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices, since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.

**3. CHOOSE ENERGY STAR®-CERTIFIED OFFICE EQUIPMENT.** If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the ENERGY STAR® label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.

#### **4. FLIP THE SWITCH AND USE NATURAL LIGHT**

**INSTEAD.** It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun. When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in – and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use! Twenty-one thousand six hundred four.

**5. LOWER THE THERMOSTAT.** Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so all the more reason to mind the thermostat.

*Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use. Contact the Cooperative if you have questions about your bills or want additional information about saving energy at home.*



**AUTHOR ABBY BERRY** writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

# NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE DANGER OF DOWNED POWER LINES

*The extreme weather event we experienced December 15 reminded all of us that downed power lines are extremely dangerous. When the right weather conditions exist, such as high winds, ice, or heavy snow, overhead power lines can become vulnerable.*

After a strong storm moves through, there is often debris left in its path. Trees can fall, branches can break, buildings can become damaged. Unfortunately, this debris can intertwine with downed power lines or damaged power equipment that are still energized. This hazardous situation can endanger not only bystanders, but also responding lineworkers. It is vitally important to assume downed power lines or damaged power equipment are energized and dangerous. When a downed line is energized, it can energize the ground and anything in it is in contact with for up to a 40-foot radius. If you come upon this type of situation after a storm – stay away and call the Cooperative or local authorities.

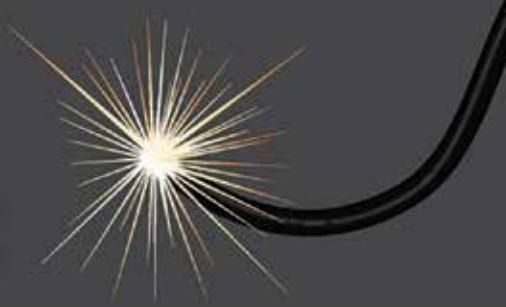
If you see road barriers up due to storm damage, do not drive around them. These barriers may be protecting you and others from downed power lines, and you do not want to risk driving over them.

It is also important to remember that if you see a downed power line, call the Cooperative. No matter the circumstances surrounding the storm, we need to know about these situations as soon as possible so we can help mitigate them early in the process. Do not assume that someone else has called it in or that we already know. A single downed distribution line can affect anywhere from one to three hundred households. Knowing where the downed power lines are located can help us in the assessment and restoration process.

*Extreme weather events can be scary and overwhelming. It's important to remember that before, during, and after a storm – safety of our crews and our members is our utmost priority.*

## STAY BACK!

**KNOW THE DIFFERENCE**  
*between types of lines and wires. If you see a downed electric line, be aware that it could be live and dangerous!*



### Electric

*Electric wires are larger and can be easily identified by the three separate twisted wires, one being uniquely silver or uninsulated.*

### Cable

*Cable lines are round and look similar to the coaxial cable that connects to the TV in your home.*

### Phone

*Telephone wires are typically smaller, flat wires.*



## People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

HIGHLINE HI-LITES® January 2022 • Vol. 86 • Issue 01

Highline Hi-Lites (USPS# 244-720) is published monthly. Special Edition issued in March.

Periodical Postage Paid in Rochester, Minnesota.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to:

*Highline Hi-Lites, 1775 Lake Shady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960*

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## 24-HOUR OUTAGE NUMBER

### WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT, SO DO WE

*Call even if you think your neighbors have reported the outage. Leave one light on so you know when power has been restored. Have an emergency kit prepared.*

**(507) 367-7000 or (800) 214-2694**

## SPOT YOUR NUMBER

# \$30

GOOD LUCK IN FINDING YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER!

*Each month, we hide four account numbers (without the last two digits) within the text of the newsletter. If you find your number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at (800) 214-2694 or [memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop) to receive a \$30 credit on your bill.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### MARCH 4: YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS DUE

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is back! We believe that students should see their nation's capital up close, learn about the political process, and interact with their elected officials. For more information, see page 5.

### MARCH 24: PEC'S 85TH ANNUAL MEETING

Plan to attend PEC's Annual Meeting being held in the evening at the Rochester International Event Center. More details will be shared next month.

### MARCH 31: HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

PEC is pleased to offer \$1,000 scholarships for general education and \$2,000 scholarships for lineworker education programs to graduating seniors throughout our service area. See page 5 for more details.

**New Year, New Rebates:** Whether you're thinking about installing a new electric water heater or an electric vehicle charger, remember that we offer rebates for energy-efficient upgrades. Options also include rebates for appliances, lighting, solar, HVAC, and a variety of agriculture, commercial, and industrial equipment. Forms available at [peoplesenergy.coop/rebates](http://peoplesenergy.coop/rebates) or by contacting (800) 214-2694.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Carr's Tree Service and New Age Tree Service work with us to execute our vegetation management program, ensuring trees and other vegetation do not interfere with providing reliable electric service.

**During the month of February,** Carr's Tree Service will be working in portions of Stewartville. New Age Tree Service will be working during this time in the city of Chatfield.



## Power out? Text us!

It's easy, fast, and convenient! Visit [peoplesenergy.coop/outage-texting](http://peoplesenergy.coop/outage-texting) for more information and to register.