



PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE'S *RESTATED 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 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!

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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.

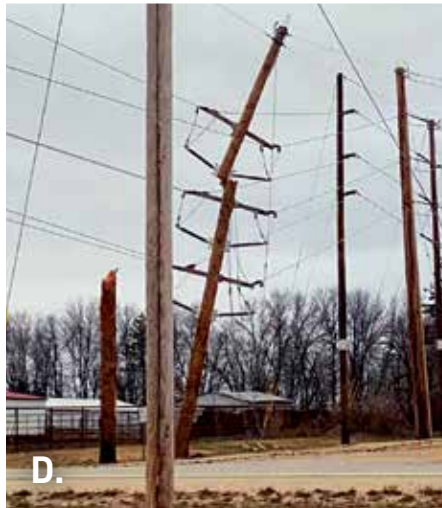
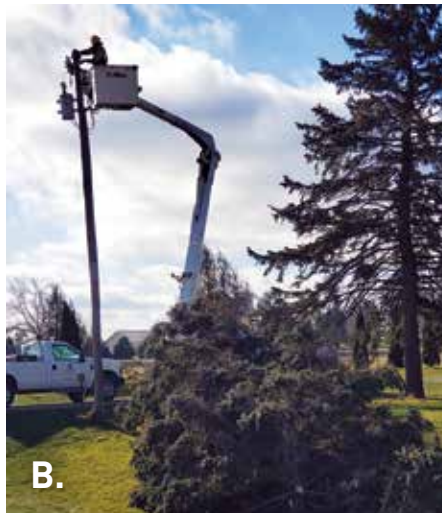
Once we anticipate that we'll need help to restore power, we start calling other cooperatives in our area to see if they can provide crews to help if we need them. In this case, we welcomed two crews from Dakota Electric Association and two from Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative to help within 24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

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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.



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, 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.



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.

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
Sarath 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. Gardinier
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. Mc Bride
 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. Ziemann
 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



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.



SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Pay online safely and securely.

- ▶ Account management at your fingertips.
- ▶ Pay online using a bank account or credit card.
- ▶ View detailed account info and energy usage.

Register today! Visit: peoplesenergy.coop/smarthub for more information.

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

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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

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** to receive a \$30 credit on your bill.

GOOD LUCK IN FINDING YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER!

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 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 for more information and to register.