



## NEW *HIGH-POWER EV FAST CHARGER* ALLOWS DRIVERS TO CHARGE IN STEWARTVILLE



*Economic Development and Key Accounts Manager Marty Walsh welcomes everyone to the ribbon cutting on August 24.*

People's Energy Cooperative (PEC) and Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) are proud to unveil the newest electric vehicle (EV) fast charger along the I-90 corridor in Stewartville, Minnesota.



*Representatives from Kwik Trip, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Stewartville Chamber of Commerce, and PEC officially open the charger for business.*

The level 3, 180 kW fast charger is located at the Kwik Trip in Schumann Business Park on the north side of Stewartville. Kwik Trip, a People's Energy Cooperative member, is hosting the new EV fast charger. Dairyland Power Cooperative owns the charger and partnered with ZEF Energy as the vendor for the fast charger. People's Energy Cooperative is the power provider and the EV fast charger operator.

"This partnership of regional companies is working together to ensure Minnesota and the upper Midwest isn't left behind in the transition to electric vehicles," says People's Energy Cooperative President and CEO Mike Henke. "People's Energy Cooperative continues to be committed to providing innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices."



*President & CEO Mike Henke speaks with the media at the ribbon cutting.*

The level 3 fast charger can add up to 150 miles in around 15 minutes depending on the vehicle, giving EV drivers an efficient, convenient "refueling" experience. The location is ideal not only for travelers crossing the state, but also for local drivers looking for a quick top-off. At the end of 2021, MNDOT reported 475 fully electric vehicles registered in Olmsted, Fillmore, and Mower counties, nearly double the number from only a year before. This fast charger will prove to be an essential and safe resource for drivers throughout southeastern Minnesota.

### inside:

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PEC Legislative  
Energy Forums 04.

Expanding  
Electric Vehicle  
Infrastructure 07.

Save Money  
on a Home  
Energy Audit 09.

Take Advantage  
of Our Rebates  
and Incentives 11.

# CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO



*Michael J. Henke*

mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

*Electricity is vital to our modern lifestyle. Work, education, and leisure activities all rely on it to some degree. As a distributor of electricity to 25,000 homes and organizations this reality is not lost on us, and we take great pride in being your electric provider.*

As a cooperative, we also take great pride in being more than your electric provider and do what we can to help the communities we serve thrive. One way we do this is by advocating for you with legislators and regulatory authorities. Statutes, regulations, and the interpretation of them can have a significant impact on cooperative operations and finances. Many times, it translates into additional costs that are ultimately passed on to members through rates which are based on the cost of providing service.

Depending on the topic, we could be in a defensive position trying to protect what is in place, which was the case with the property tax and load control receiver issues last session. These involve state agencies overstepping their bounds and reinterpreting statutes that have been in place for decades. We may also be in an offensive position trying to create or change legislation for the benefit of members.

This is one reason we take an active role in engaging with legislators and regulators on your behalf. Earlier this year, we shared four key issues that we were focused on with state legislators in 2022. They were property tax on cooperative distribution infrastructure; the permitting and inspection of replacement load control receivers; ensuring that federal funding for EV charging infrastructure serves rural Minnesota; and supporting the Border-to-Border

Grant Program to provide broadband funding to unserved and underserved areas in Minnesota.

As we look ahead to the 2023 state legislative session, these issues are being carried forward because they didn't make it to the finish line before session ended. While the issues will remain similar, the legislators representing our service territory may not be. All seats in our area are up for election this year and we could potentially have eight new legislators to work with. Two will be new to the legislature for sure as some candidates did not seek reelection or boundaries changed through redistricting. As such, we are hosting four legislative forums during the month of October.

We host these types of events for multiple reasons. First, they help us educate candidates and our members about legislative and regulatory issues that are important to us. Another is so that members can hear where legislators stand on those topics and energy in general to help them make educated choices when they cast their vote. And finally, to develop relationships with legislators, so they know they have a trusted resource in us when it comes to energy related issues. Legislators vote on all issues and so while they may focus on their specific committee assignments, we want to educate them on energy issues because electricity touches everyone.

I really hope you can join us at our legislative forums in October! We have held very few live member events since the pandemic hit and I became President and CEO, so I'd really like to be able to meet with members and hear about what's important to you.

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



## READY TO GET SOCIAL?

We utilize Facebook and Twitter to share information about topics such as electrical safety, energy efficiency, cooperative events, and peak energy alerts. We also provide information when major outages occur.



# MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

highline

Vol. 86 • Issue 09

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on August 25. During the meeting, the following items were discussed:

*Inflation Reduction Act (IRA); power cost volatility; positive outage metrics; transformer availability and supply chain issues; Member Advisory Committee member terms; two lines of credit were paid off in August; property tax appeal hearing and settlement options; union negotiations; and meetings attended by Board members.*

A quorum of directors was present, and the following actions were taken:

- ▶ Approved the application of a 26.4337 mill PCA adjustment for SMEC members for August usage billed in September.
- ▶ Approved the application of a 0.800 mill PCA adjustment for Legacy members for August usage billed in September.
- ▶ Approved the retirement of capital credits in the amount of \$1,151,686 through the general retirement process.
- ▶ Approved the resolution for the transfer of \$9,755,011 from the Construction Fund account to the General Fund account.
- ▶ Approved Rate Schedule 267/267t (On-Peak), 268 (Off-Peak), 269 (Overnight): Optional General Service Time-of-Use.
- ▶ Approved edits to a Memorandum of Understanding for corporate legal services.
- ▶ Approved changing the September Member Advisory Committee meeting from September 12 to September 19.

## TAKING A LOOK BACK AT OUR COOPERATIVE HISTORY



IN LATE SEPTEMBER 2010, heavy rainfall ranging from three to more than 10 inches caused severe flooding across southern Minnesota.

*There were record or near record crests all along the Zumbro River. Oronoco and many other communities along the river were hard hit. Restoring power during this historic event required some creativity as seen in the picture here. Twenty-eight thousand four hundred ten.*

### 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:

Jon Kroening  
(507) 884-0160, jkroening@  
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](http://peoplesenergy.coop)  
for a listing of the areas  
covered by each district.

#### Business Hours:

7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M–F



# PEC'S LEGISLATIVE ENERGY FORUMS

*Energy issues have taken a front seat in recent years with the adoption of electric vehicles, the push for renewable energy development, and the increased need for cybersecurity.*

This summer, electric grid reliability and the MISO network have also entered the conversation. We will be having conversations around these topics with your local candidates for the Minnesota State Legislature. We would love to have you join us!

*Please RSVP by emailing [rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop) or calling (507) 367-7054. Please indicate which event you plan to attend and how many people will be in attendance.*

**ORONOCO**  
TUES., OCT. 11, 6 – 7 PM  
*PEC Headquarters, Conference Center*  
Senate Seat 25 and House Seat 25A Candidates

**CHATFIELD**  
THUR., OCT. 13, 12 – 1 PM  
*Chatfield Center for the Arts*  
Senate Seat 26 and House Seat 26B Candidates

**PLAINVIEW**  
MON. OCT. 17, 6 – 7 PM  
*American Legion*  
Senate Seat 20 and House Seat 20B Candidates

**STEWARTVILLE**  
TUES. OCT. 25, 6 – 7 PM  
*Stewartville Civic Center*  
Senate Seat 24 and House Seat 24A Candidates

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 101

If you are interested in learning more about the role of the **Board of Directors** or have interest in possibly running for the board seat in your district someday, we will be hosting an on-line informational meeting **Thurs., Nov. 10** from **12:00 to 1:00 pm.**

**Please RSVP no later than 4:00 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 28,** so login information can be sent out in advance. Email [rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop) or call (507) 367-7054.



**Now more than ever, high speed internet is necessary for streaming, browsing, and more**

Upgrade to an improved level of broadband satellite service! Mention you are a People's Energy Cooperative member and ask about any current promotions offered.



**Call (888) 559-9120 or [peoplesenergy.coop/viasat-internet](https://peoplesenergy.coop/viasat-internet)**

# PEC Members Sought

## FOR 2023 NOMINATING COMMITTEE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*When you purchase electricity from People's Energy Cooperative (PEC), the Cooperative is more than just your power provider. As a member-owned cooperative, PEC is committed to providing reliable electricity, superior customer service, and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices.*

Rural electric cooperative members are owners, who have a vote and the ability to influence the direction of the Cooperative. This responsibility is outlined in the second principle of the Seven Cooperative Principles which guides PEC and other cooperatives. The principle of Democratic Member Control states how members have a role in actively participating in setting policies and making decisions. Fifteen thousand three hundred ninety-five.

Governing the Cooperative is PEC's Board of Directors who represent the members in policy and rate-making decisions. These directors are elected from among the membership to serve three-year terms. They hold monthly board meetings, attend cooperative events, take part in training sessions,

and participate in state, regional, and national conferences. Director seats in Districts 3, 5, and 7 are up for election in 2023.

Director candidates are sought out and vetted by PEC's Nominating Committee. The Cooperative is currently looking for members willing to serve on the Committee for the 2023 election. A Bylaw change approved last spring allows members from any district to serve on the Committee which meets, as a whole, in the months of December, January, and March.

People's Energy Cooperative was founded by local residents who wanted to improve the quality of life for their neighbors. That same mission is evident today in the many individuals who offer their time and talents to serve the Cooperative.

*If you are interested in serving on PEC's Nominating Committee or running for the Board of Directors, please email [memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop) or call (800) 214-2694.*

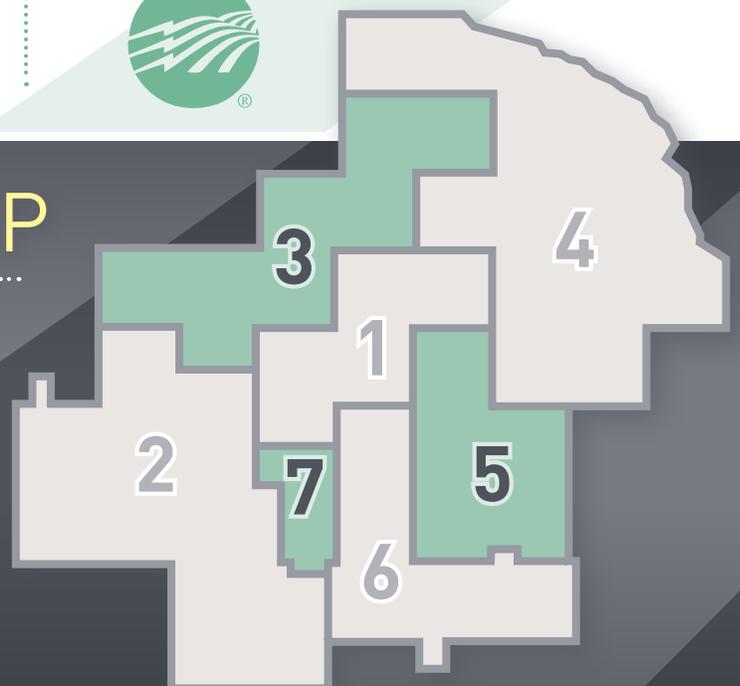


## 2023 DISTRICT MAP

**DISTRICT 3:** *Gilford, Hyde Park, Milton, Mazeppa, New Haven, Oronoco, West Albany, and sections 1-18 of Kalmar.*

**DISTRICT 5:** *Dover, Elmira, Eyota, Orion, and Viola.*

**DISTRICT 7:** *Stewartville, and sections of High Forest, Rochester, and Racine.*





OPERATION ROUND UP® SPOTLIGHT:

# Chamber Extension

## THE STEWARTVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**When area businesses and organizations plan an event or meeting, it can sometimes be a challenge or a significant expense to procure the necessary equipment. With this in mind, the Stewartville Chamber of Commerce started an equipment lending program called Chamber Extension.**

The Chamber Extension program has a goal of helping to build community by providing equipment for local events, activities, meetings, and forums. To support this mission, People's Energy Cooperative's Operation Round Up program recently provided the Chamber with a \$3,000 grant. Nineteen thousand two hundred twenty-eight.

"Our businesses and organizations may not have the means to own all the equipment they need to do business or hold events and activities due to storage space issues or budgetary limitations. We feel our new program, Chamber Extension, will help ease the storage and financial burden of hosting community gatherings," says Chamber Administrator Gwen Ravenhorst.

"We can't thank you enough for helping our dreams come true for the community," she continues. "When we can help a small business by lending them an expensive piece of equipment, that allows for them to use their budget wisely. If we can make our events more efficient with signage or extra equipment, it helps our volunteers and community members have a more enjoyable time."

The Chamber hopes to start ordering equipment for the lending program this fall. Grant funds will be used to purchase banquet tables, folding chairs, canopies, awning tents, coffee pots, projectors, a screen, a PA system, signage, flagging and stakes, lighting, lawn games, and more as requests come in. Equipment will be purchased locally when possible.

"We currently own a few tables and décor items that we lend to others, but we would like to add to this collection of items that would be useful to many community partners. We plan to keep track of items with an inventory check-out system and require a deposit (or a credit card on file) should the items be returned defective," Ravenhorst explains. "We want this to be a benefit, so the program will be free to community partners and Chamber members as long as items are returned in the shape they left our storage space."

Equipment will also get used at several large community events held by the Stewartville Area Chamber of Commerce throughout the year. The Chamber plans to continue to grow its lending program as more local needs are identified.

*"Operation Round Up is a fantastic program that really helps a lot of nonprofit organizations fund their needs to operate successfully. We truly appreciate the members of People's Energy Cooperative – they do so many wonderful deeds for each community they reach. Thank you!"*

Gwen Ravenhorst, Chamber Administrator

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT 2022

**Carr's Tree Service and New Age Tree Service continue to work with us to execute our vegetation management plan.**

*During the month of October, Carr's Tree Service will be working in Haverhill township. New Age Tree Service will be working during this time in Mazeppa, Zumbro, and Hyde Park townships. All crews will be working to clear trees and other vegetation from power lines and equipment. Our vegetation management policy is available online by visiting [peoplesenergy.coop/vegetation-management](http://peoplesenergy.coop/vegetation-management).*





# AUTO PAY YOUR MONTHLY BILL

**AT PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE,** we offer several ways to pay your bill, giving you the opportunity to choose the one that works best for you. One of these options is the Automatic Bill Payment Program. When you join, funds are automatically deducted from your checking, savings, or credit card account each month. No more writing checks, paying for postage, or mailing your electric bill. It's all taken care of, and there's never a late payment.

## AUTO PAY PROGRAM DETAILS:

- ▶ **YOUR ELECTRIC BILL DEDUCTS** from your bank account or credit card (MasterCard, VISA, Discover, or American Express) automatically.
- ▶ **PAYMENTS WILL BE DEDUCTED** on the due date, as stated on your bill. If this date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deduction will take place the following business day.
- ▶ **YOU WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE** your monthly electric bill(s), electronically or by mail. Your bank or credit card statement will also reflect your payment.
- ▶ **THERE IS NO CHARGE** to use your credit card, although the processing fees are higher for the Cooperative. Twenty-eight thousand seven hundred thirty-nine.

Visit us online to get set up with automatic bill payments, for the Auto Pay Enrollment Form, or directions on how to sign up using SmartHub or our Pay-By-Phone system.

[peoplesenergy.coop/payment-options](https://peoplesenergy.coop/payment-options)

## CHOOSE PAPERLESS!

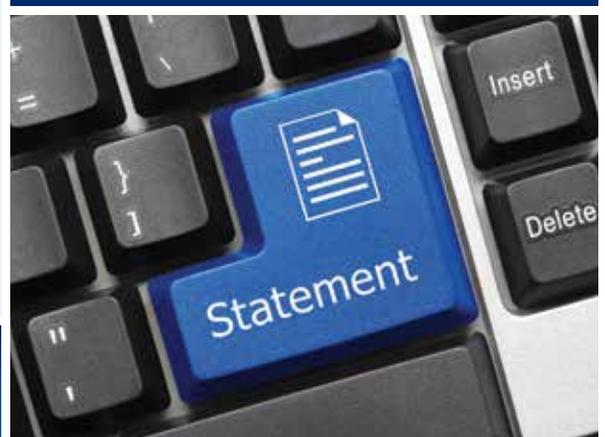
As we come to the end of the year, there are still two more chances to win a \$50 gift card in the "Choose Paperless" drawing! If you want to be part of either drawing, make sure your account is set up for paperless billing.

## ENROLLING IS EASY!

- ▶ Log in to SmartHub and click "My Profile" in the top menu bar.
- ▶ Next, click on "Update My Paperless Settings" and toggle the switch to "on" under the paperless column.

That's it! Moving forward, you will receive an email notification when your bill is available, as well as a friendly email reminder three days before the due date to ensure you pay your bill on time. We will announce third quarter gift card winners in next month's newsletter!

*If you are not signed up for SmartHub, you can get started by visiting [peoplesenergy.coop/smarthub](https://peoplesenergy.coop/smarthub).*



# LOOKING TO SAVE MONEY ON A HOME ENERGY AUDIT?



MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES & PEC HAVE A DEAL FOR YOU!

*Are you a Minnesota Energy Resources customer AND a People's Energy Cooperative member? If so, check out this great opportunity!*

Minnesota Energy Resources and People's Energy Cooperative have partnered together and are scheduling appointments in Chatfield, Dover, Elgin, Eyota, Oronoco, Plainview, and Stewartville from October 4-6 for in-home, energy-saving audits.

Energy efficiency can be confusing and expensive. This audit can help you figure out what makes sense for your home. This service is valued at over \$300, but you pay only \$50, and People's Energy Cooperative and Minnesota Energy Resources pay the rest!

**PLEASE NOTE:** To be eligible for this joint natural gas and electric residential audit, your home **MUST** be served by both Minnesota Energy Resources AND People's Energy Cooperative.

## YOUR \$50 INVESTMENT INCLUDES:

- ▶ A **COMPREHENSIVE AUDIT** of your home's energy use of both natural gas and electricity.
- ▶ **INFORMATION** on what energy-efficient improvements make the most sense for your home.
- ▶ A **BLOWER DOOR TEST** to determine where leaks are in your home.
- ▶ **SAFETY TESTS** that include combustion safety, depressurization, and carbon monoxide detection.
- ▶ A **COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW** of all relevant rebate opportunities.

Schedule an audit by calling (800) 376-0517, or online at [minnesotaenergyresources.com/audits](http://minnesotaenergyresources.com/audits).

*NOTE: Minnesota Energy Resources and People's Energy Cooperative are committed to your health and safety. Our auditors follow CDC guidelines on COVID-19 to ensure safety for both you and the auditor.*



## Schedule a home ENERGY AUDIT

**AND FIND OUT HOW ENERGY EFFICIENT YOUR HOME IS.**

*Implement recommendations and receive a rebate for half the cost up to \$500!*

**(800) 214-2694 or visit [peoplesenergy.coop/energy-audits](http://peoplesenergy.coop/energy-audits)**



# Rebates & Incentives

*As we get closer to the end of the calendar year, remember there are still plenty of rebates to take advantage of. Check out the list below for common seasonal rebates.*

- **AIR CONDITIONER TUNE-UP:** \$25 when completed by a certified technician (*only one per service address every two years; window units not eligible*).
- **APPLIANCES:** \$50 for a heat pump clothes dryer; \$25 for electric clothes driers, clothes washers, dehumidifiers, dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, and inductive ranges.
- **HEAT PUMPS:** \$300-\$500 per ton depending on the size of the unit.
- **HOME ENERGY AUDITS:** Implement energy efficient recommendations made during the audit and receive a rebate for **up to \$500** of the costs of the improvements.
- **WATER HEATERS:** Replace your electric water heater and receive **\$150-\$500** depending on the size and whether you're enrolled in an energy management program. If you're installing a new electric water heater, receive **\$250-\$800**

depending on the size and whether you're enrolled in an energy management program.

- **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY HOME PROGRAM:**

Meet one of three program/code requirements on your new home and receive **\$500**.

- **IMPORTANT REBATE GUIDELINES:**

- *Incentives will not exceed the cost of the equipment.*
- *Rebates must be submitted within three months of purchase or install date depending on the measure.*
- *All appropriate documentation must be submitted per the rebate form.*
- *Eligibility criteria may vary for individual rebate offerings and is subject to change without notice. View individual forms for additional details.*

*Additional requirements will apply. Learn more about these rebates and others available by visiting [peoplesenergy.coop/rebates](https://www.peoplesenergy.coop/rebates).*

**#EnergyEfficiency** benefits help us all.

That's why we celebrate #EEday2022 on October 5

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY SAVES MONEY**  
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY CUTS POLLUTION**  
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY CREATES JOBS**

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY DAY**  
Save Money. Cut Pollution. Create Jobs.



# plan ahead

## DURING NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

**Each September, our nation observes National Preparedness Month to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies.**

*Planning for these types of events before they happen can help keep you and your family safe. The 2022 theme for National Preparedness Month is “A Lasting Legacy: The life you’ve built is worth protecting. Prepare for disasters to create a lasting legacy for you and your family.”*



**A GREAT PLACE TO START** is by making an emergency plan for your family. Consider any special needs your family might have and incorporate them into your individualized plan. Spring and summer storms, tornados, fires, and winter storms should each be covered. Designate a family meeting place where you can gather in the event of an emergency and make sure children know important phone numbers.

**YOUR FAMILY SHOULD ALSO HAVE AN EMERGENCY KIT** that includes everything you need to survive for several days. Having necessities like non-perishable food, water, cash, medicine, and a first aid kit in a place you can quickly access during an emergency is critically important. Make sure to periodically refresh these items so they do not spoil or expire.

**IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO CONSIDER THAT,** in some cases, power may not be available for an extended period of time. Include flashlights, radios, and extra batteries in your kit. If you plan to use a generator, remember to only use it outside and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow deadly carbon monoxide into your house or garage.

**PETS SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED** when preparing for an emergency. Pack an emergency pet bag you can grab in case a sudden evacuation is necessary. The bag should include a selfie with your pet in case you get separated, medicine and grooming items, and a collar with an ID and leash.

*Take part in National Preparedness Month this September by making sure your family has an emergency kit packed and an emergency plan ready to go. Your family's needs change over time, so it is a good idea to update your plan regularly. Stay safe and stay prepared!*



# People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

## HIGHLINE HI-LITES • September 2022 • Vol. 86 • Issue 09

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Periodical Postage Paid in Rochester, Minnesota.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to:

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

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



## 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!**

# MN Cold Weather Rule

On October 1, Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule will go into effect and remain through April 30. Please note this rule does not prevent the Cooperative from shutting off your power for non-payment during winter months.

**IF YOU RECEIVE A DISCONNECTION NOTICE** *this winter, you must act promptly. Contact the Cooperative to make a payment arrangement and/or to apply for cold weather protection (appropriate paperwork is required for verifying household income). The Cooperative will gladly work with you to set up an agreeable payment plan and provide information about the Energy Assistance Program.*

**THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)** *is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs.*

**If you find yourself in need of energy assistance, please contact one of the following energy assistance providers in Southeast Minnesota:**

- ▶ **SEMCAC** *serves the counties of Dodge, Fillmore, Mower, Winona, Freeborn, Houston and Steele. Call Toll Free: (800) 944-3281*
- ▶ **Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.** *serves Olmsted and Wabasha counties. Call Toll Free: (800) 277-8418*

**These organizations may also be able to help:**

- ▶ **Rochester Salvation Army HeatShare** (507) 288-3663 *Toll Free: (800) 842-7279*
- ▶ **First Call for Help at 211**