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CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO

mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

Because of the nature of our industry, many of our employees work outside. This includes lineworkers, meter technicians, staking engineers, and our electrician. They also claim what I argue are even more important roles as parents, children, siblings, neighbors, farmers, coaches, volunteer firefighters, community leaders, and more

The Cooperative's employees are just as important 'off the field' as they are when they are staking a new service or setting a new pole. This is why I am asking you to pay extra attention when driving past work zones. Help us send our employees home safely every night.

In April each year, we recognize Work Zone Awareness Month with dozens of other industries that have employees who work on the side of the road. Whether it's road construction, law enforcement, or utility trucks, it is Minnesota state law that motorists slow down and move over when approaching anyone on the side of the road with their lights on. The Ted Foss Move Over Law specifically states that:

- On a road with two or more lanes going the same direction, drivers must move over one full lane from stopped vehicles that have their flashing lights activated.
- In situations where it's not safe to move over (like heavy traffic), drivers should slow down.

It may seem simple enough, but when surveyed, our employees who work in these roadside work zones shared with me on more than one occasion that many drivers either don't slow down, don't move over, or both. Recently, a lineworker shared that they were set up on the side of Highway 14 with signage, strobe lights, and cones for a short job, they were there for less than fifteen minutes. More than one car passed by them going highway speeds within a foot of the cones.

This year, when you pass a roadside work zone, whether it is one of our crews, road construction, law enforcement, or others – please slow down and move over. Treat the work zone as if it were your loved ones there working. Help us bring them safely home to continue serving you and their communities.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Michael J. Henke". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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

Vegetation Management 2024

During the month of May, Carr's Tree Service will be working in portions of Farmington, Oronoco, Haverhill, and Cascade townships. New Age Tree Service will be working during this time in portions of Hyde Park, Zumbro, Farmington, Oronoco, Ashland, Canisteo, Hayfield, and Vernon townships.



MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

highline

Vol. 88 • Issue 4

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on March 28. During the meeting, the following items were discussed: Tracy Lauritzen recognized for achieving a Certificate of Achievement for completing the NRECA Director Gold Program; Work Zone Safety Awareness; EPA/MPCA visit in March; IIJA and PACE grant status updates; 2023 Safety Metrics; results from 2023 Employee Survey; connection to the new Oronoco wastewater system; and REPAC Trustee Committee update.

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

- ▶ Accepted the 2023 People's Energy Cooperative financial audit.
- ▶ Accepted the 2023 People's Energy Cooperative Trust financial audit.
- ▶ Elected Jerry Wooner as Board Chair, Jodie Tvedt as Vice Chair, Jon Kroening as Secretary, Tracy Lauritzen as Treasurer, Art Friedrich as Dairyland Director, and Tracy Lauritzen as the Alternate Dairyland Director.
- ▶ Approved a 6.081 mill PCA for March usage billed in April.
- ▶ Changed the August board meeting date to August 23, the November meeting date to November 25, and the December meeting date to December 17.

MANAGEMENT

Michael J. Henke,
President/CEO

Michelle Olson,
*Director of
Member Services*

Gwen Stevens,
*Director of Cooperative
Relations*

Dody Wubker, *CFO*

Cody Black,
Director of Engineering

Nicholas Woetzel,
Director of Operations

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1:
Jon Kroening, *Secretary*

DISTRICT 2:
Jodie Tvedt, *Vice Chair*

DISTRICT 3:
John Winter

DISTRICT 4:
Tracy Lauritzen, *Treasurer*

DISTRICT 5:
Jerry Wooner, *Board Chair*

DISTRICT 6:
Art Friedrich,
Dairyland Director

DISTRICT 7:
Jeff Orth

Visit peoplesenergy.coop for a listing of the areas covered by each district.

Business Hours:
7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M–F

CONGRATULATIONS



PETE REESE METER TECHNICIAN

Thank you for your 25 years of service at the Cooperative!



TRACY LAURITZEN

Congratulations to Tracy Lauritzen for earning the Director Gold Certificate from NRECA. The Director Gold credential recognizes directors committed to continuing their education beyond the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and Board Leadership Certificate to advance their knowledge and perform their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability. We also congratulate Tracy for being elected to the Minnesota Rural Electric Cooperative (MREA) Board of Directors along with Shelly Peterson from Connexus Energy. Tracy is the first People's Energy Cooperative Board member to be elected to the MREA Board.

SPOT YOUR 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 15th of the next month at **(800) 214-2694** or memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop to receive a \$30 credit on your bill.
Good luck in finding your account number!

-\$30

87TH ANNUAL MEETING PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE



Results of People's Energy Cooperative's (PEC) director elections were announced during the Annual Meeting on Thursday, March 21. Over 400 members and guests gathered at the Rochester International Event Center, Plainview's American Legion, and Events by Saker in Kasson. Members at the Plainview and Kasson locations watched a live broadcast of the meeting from the Rochester International Event Center.

In District 2, incumbent Jodie Tvedt of rural Byron ran unopposed and received 1,576 votes.

District 4 incumbent Tracy Lauritzen of Elba defeated challenger Eugene "Brent" McNallan of Elgin. Lauritzen won with 931 votes and McNallan received 743 votes.

During the meeting, Secretary/Treasurer Tracy Lauritzen shared the 2023 financial report and assured members the Cooperative is in good financial standing.

In his annual remarks Board Chair Jerome Wooner shared how as a member-owned organization there are many ways for members to engage with the Cooperative to learn about important issues and provide feedback. Members can learn about important information and issues by reading our newsletter, following our social media channels, and participating on the Member Advisory Committee. Members can provide feedback by participating in surveys when asked as well as joining committees such as the Member Advisory Committee. Either way, he reminded members that "no matter how you choose to engage with the Cooperative, I simply hope that you do. Engaged members help retain local control of our Cooperative and make it better."

President and CEO Mike Henke talked about what "the cooperative difference" means and why it matters. Through the cooperative principle of 'Democratic Member Control', those who purchase electricity from the Cooperative oversee the business by electing the Board of Directors from the membership. The principle of 'Cooperation Among Cooperatives' happens in many ways, both formal and informal. Either way, it makes our cooperative stronger and demonstrates the cooperative spirit. While many businesses can say they have 'Concern for Community' and do their part to help out, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

Questions asked by members that were not answered at the meeting have been responded to and some will be shared in future issues of the newsletter so others can benefit from the response. If you missed the meeting, you can still watch it on the Cooperative's YouTube channel or Facebook page.



ONE ACTION, LARGE IMPACT

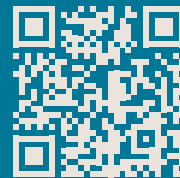
You may look at that statement and think, "There's no way I can make an impact on something with just one action." For years, members from across our service territory have been doing just that. By switching to paperless billing or ACH bank draft payments (or both), members have not only benefitted from the ease of paying their bill, but they've also helped the Cooperative control fixed costs.

The Cooperative spends thousands of dollars each year on printing bills and mailing them along with credit card processing fees. Those members who made the switch not only helped avoid costs that one month, but every month after that! As time goes on, that one small action makes a large difference in the Cooperative's ability to control fixed costs.

Those who are registered for paperless billing or ACH bank draft payments will be entered to win a prize in June! Prizes include tickets to a Rochester Honkers game, bill credits, and rechargeable, battery-operated yard tools. Join other members who have already made the switch and set up your account with paperless billing or ACH bank draft payments today.



PAPERLESS
BILLING



ACH BANK
DRAFT PAYMENTS



Congratulations to our **2024 Youth Tour Winner!**



Congratulations to McKenna O'Neill of Stewartville for being selected to represent People's Energy Cooperative at the 2024 NRECA Electric Cooperative Youth Tour! Eight thousand two hundred forty-eight.

McKenna is a senior at Stewartville High School and the daughter of Nichol Ramaker. What interested her most about this experience was the opportunity to meet new people, learn more about our nation's history, and gain valuable lifetime leadership skills. In fact, she was supposed to go to Washington, D.C. in 2020, but the trip was cancelled due to COVID. She's looking forward to finally making it there!

We look forward to hearing more about her trip when she returns.

W O R K Z O N E

AWARENESS



Work Zones can be BIG

Multiple trucks, lots of flashing lights, signs, and cones might be what you think of when you think work zones. And yes, you're right. But, just because this work zone takes up a lot of space, it doesn't mean you shouldn't slow down or move over.

It's important to keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment, and workers. You don't know what they may be doing and when they may need to access the side of the truck facing the traffic.

Work Zones can be SMALL

Not all work zones will involve a large contingent of trucks and people. Some work zones will involve only a single truck with a bucket in the air. The footprint might not be as big, but it's still just as important to slow down and move over. Thirty thousand seventy-three.

Everyone working on the side of the road wears high-visibility clothing. This helps keep them safe in any weather condition and visible both day and night.



One of our greatest assets are the people who work tirelessly every day to ensure our members have reliable electricity. Often times, our employees work on the side of the road. As you can see below, these work zones take on many different shapes and sizes. Unfortunately, one thing in common with each of them is the presence of drivers going too fast in a work zone.

Work Zones can INVOLVE TREES

As part of our vegetation management program, our tree contractors work on the side of the road to clear vegetation from rights-of-way. This ensures trees don't grow into power lines and invasive plants are removed before they become a problem.

It's just as important to allow these crews space to work. Their work zone is set up to give them the ability to work with tree debris. You wouldn't want to get in the way of a falling tree!



Work Zones can INVOLVE VEHICLES

Not all work zones involve bucket trucks and signs. Sometimes, a work zone will only be a pickup truck or SUV doing work for a short period of time. These will have lights flashing on top of their vehicles while they are stopped.

Flashing lights are installed on the top of every vehicle that could work on the side of the road to draw attention to the work site giving fellow motorists time to slow down and move over.

No matter the type of work zone, it's important to remember that it's state law to move over when you see any vehicle with flashing lights on the side of the road. We are asking you to slow down, move over, and minimize distractions. Help us bring all of our employees home safe every night.



ORU SPOTLIGHT: PEM Marching Band



This past summer, a marching band returned to Plainview-Elgin-Millville (PEM) Schools. “As a consolidated school district, we had over 60 students from all three communities who marched this inaugural season,” says Ashley Carlson, 5th-8th grade band director with PEM Schools and co-director of the high school marching band.

“Participating in all three community parades has built community and school unity,” she continues. “The students participating in the marching band grew as musicians and leaders, and benefitted from the physical activity, teamwork, and dedication required to succeed in band.”

According to Carlson, the last time PEM Schools had an official marching band with uniforms was before the consolidation in the early 2000s. “People living in the Plainview-Elgin-Millville area have enjoyed seeing and hearing the hard work of our excellent student musicians,” she comments. “Just as having a pep band perform for sporting events adds to the excitement and enthusiasm for players and spectators, adding a hometown marching band to our parades will bring joy to the many visitors and residents who turn out for the celebrations. From toddlers dancing in the street, to parents and family cheering for their musicians, marching bands are a quintessential part of the heart and charm of smalltown parades.”

Last summer, 6th-12th graders in the new, revived PEM Marching Band marched in t-shirts and shorts. In order to continue growth and success of the program, PEM Marching Band submitted an Operation Round Up® (ORU) grant application to People’s Energy Cooperative to help fund the purchase of uniforms and storage equipment. They were awarded a \$2,000 grant to help cover some of these costs.

“A People’s Energy Cooperative member who participates in the Operation Round Up® program was the one who suggested we apply for the grant,” Carlson says. “We are so appreciative of this community support and thankful for everyone who chooses to take part in something that gives back to the community in this way.”

Grant funds will be used to purchase full marching uniforms (including pants, jackets, and hats). In addition to the custom band uniforms, garment bags and hat boxes for storage will also be purchased. The new uniforms have already been designed and should be ready for students to wear by the summer of 2025.

Are you considering installing a solar or wind system?

Installing a solar or wind system is becoming more feasible for many of our members, and we are here to help navigate the process of interconnecting to the grid. Before moving forward with signing an agreement to have a solar or wind system installed, we encourage you to contact us to better understand interconnection options/requirements, rates, and possible rebates that you may qualify for. This will ensure you have information to make an informed decision.



Cogeneration & Small Power Production Rate Change

In January 2024, the Board approved the following change for the Cogeneration & Small Power Production rate schedule, effective with May 2024 energy usage. Note that there will be no change to the distribution grid access fee. Thirty-one thousand seven hundred seventy-nine.

Rate Option	Type of Service	Current Rate	Rate Effective May 1
Average Retail Cooperative Energy Rate PG-1 & 901R	Residential Service	\$0.11178/kWh	\$0.10873/kWh
Average Retail Cooperative Energy Rate PG-1B & 901F	Small General Service	\$0.10204/kWh	\$0.09885/kWh
Average Retail Cooperative Energy Rate PG-1C & 901	Medium General Service with Demand	\$0.06889/kWh	\$0.06248/kWh
Simultaneous Purchase and Sale Billing PG-1X		\$0.05948/kWh	\$0.03104/kWh
Time-of-Day Purchase Rate PG-1TOD		Energy Furnished On-Peak (Summer 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Winter 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.) \$0.06740/kWh Energy Furnished Off-Peak \$0.04359/kWh	Energy Furnished On-Peak (Summer 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Winter 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.) \$0.03564/kWh Energy Furnished Off-Peak \$0.02184/kWh

People's Energy Cooperative Distributed Energy Resources Compliance Statement

In compliance with People's Energy Cooperative's (PEC) adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, PEC is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. PEC is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases is subject to resolution by the PEC Board. Interested members should contact the Cooperative by emailing DERInterconnect@peoplesenergy.coop or calling (800) 214-2694.

Member Satisfaction Survey

Every other year, People's conducts an American Customer Satisfaction Index survey (ACSI) to measure member satisfaction and to better understand members' priorities, pain points, and preferences. We have partnered with NRECA Market Research to conduct this survey through e-mail starting the week of April 29. If you receive an e-mail from NRECA Market Research, we hope you will participate. The survey asks questions to rate your satisfaction with various aspects of the Cooperative including general performance, electric service performance, as well as rates and fees. It only takes about 10 minutes on average and provides valuable information for us to best serve you.

2024 RATE INCREASE

A friendly reminder that members will see a rate increase, effective with May 1 energy use, on their June billing statements. We've been doing our best to communicate the rate increase through multiple channels to help members understand what the changes are and why they were made.

For a listing of the most common rate changes, frequently asked questions, and information on the 2024 Rate Increase we encourage members to visit peoplesenergy.coop/rates.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Cold Weather Rule Ends April 30

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule helps protect residential members whose primary heating source is electric from October 1 through April 30. Those affected by the Cold Weather Rule must work with the Cooperative to arrange energy assistance or set up a payment plan. If you are concerned about your ability to pay your bill, please contact the Cooperative by calling (800) 214-2694 or emailing memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop.



BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR TODAY!

**LEARN TO SAVE, SPEND, & SHARE
THROUGH THIS FUN, FREE PROGRAM**



Lemonade Day![®]

ROCHESTER, MN

**JUNE 8
2024**

**REGISTER
TODAY!**

LEMONADEDAY.ORG/ROCHESTER-MN



Lemonade Day is an experiential program that teaches kids how to start, own and operate their very own business – a lemonade stand.

Start Thinking About Weatherization This Spring

When you think about weatherizing your home, sealing up cracks and adding insulation in the fall before winter hits is probably what first comes to mind. However, homeowners can also save money and energy by undertaking springtime home weatherization measures before the hot days of summer arrive.

Weatherization involves measures you can take to protect your residence from outside weather and improve its energy efficiency. Some of the goals of weatherization include reducing the energy costs of a household and improving the comfort level of a home.

This spring, start by inspecting the exterior of your home to make sure shingles are intact, gutters and downspouts are clear, and the foundation is in good condition. Where necessary, apply caulk around window and door frames to prevent air and water infiltration. Replace any damaged weatherstripping.

Spring is also a good time to schedule a tune-up for your air conditioner to ensure it is operating at maximum efficiency. People's Energy Cooperative members who have a certified technician complete their central air conditioner tune-up are eligible for a \$25 rebate once every two years. To make the most of their energy dollars, members should also consider installing a programmable thermostat to help with energy conservation.

For those who qualify, weatherization assistance is available through Three Rivers Community Action (threeriverscap.org/energy/weatherization) and SEMCAC Community Action Agency (semcac.org/energy-programs/weatherization-program). Both of these weatherization programs are available year-round for income-eligible households. Twenty-five thousand one hundred forty-six.

The Department of Energy also has a helpful page for homeowners looking to undertake various weatherization projects. Visit energy.gov/energysaver/weatherization to learn more about air sealing your home, insulation, moisture control, ventilation, and the value of energy audits. The website features a link to Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Energy Savers Projects offering easy, step-by-step instructions for home energy efficiency improvements.

Now is the time to start thinking ahead to summer. By taking steps to weatherize your home before summer, you can save energy and money, while making sure you keep your household healthy and safe.





People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

highline

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Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

THANK A LINEWORKER

Since 2015, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has recognized the second Monday in April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day. Every day, these hardworking men and women risk their lives to keep the power running to our homes and businesses. Often in the wake of Mother Nature's worst when their communities are at their most vulnerable.

On April 8, we joined the rest of the nation in celebrating National Lineworker Appreciation Day. Being a lineworker takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. Lineworkers work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions, to restore power and keep their communities safe.

Their dedication and service to the community deserves recognition not just this month, but year-round. Thank you to our lineworkers for everything you do!



**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.

(800) 214-2694