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# CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO

mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

**Here at People's Energy Cooperative, we frequently communicate the importance of member engagement. We talk about serving on the Nominating Committee, participating in Energy Forums, or signing up for outage notifications. We encourage members to enroll in Operation Round Up® which supports local community initiatives. But why? Why do we want to be an organization where its consumers are also actively engaged?**

With the unique business structure of a cooperative, you are not just another consumer we provide power to, you are also an owner and your voice matters. By engaging with the Cooperative, you can influence decisions that directly impact the Cooperative and its future.

One of the most important ways that you can engage is by voting in the annual Board of Director elections. As an electric cooperative, we are governed by members who are elected by the membership. It's important to participate in this process to ensure your voice is heard.

As an engaged member you can also gain valuable knowledge about energy consumption or efficiency, as well as new technologies. Applying this knowledge can lead to cost savings on your bill and contribute to more sustainable community practices. These energy savings also result in lower costs for the Cooperative which helps increase margins which are eventually returned to members in the form of capital credits.

Direct feedback from the membership helps the Cooperative enhance and tailor our services. Our vision is to be our members' trusted energy resource; therefore, we want to make sure we meet

your needs and expectations, fostering a more responsive and personalized energy service. A great example of this is when we launched People's Community Solar. This program was a direct result of members asking for solar opportunities.

Finally, attending Cooperative events or meetings provides opportunities to network with neighbors and community leaders. This can foster community strength and create a supportive network for advancing shared goals and interests.

As an electric cooperative, we are fundamentally centered around member control, equitable services, and community focus. This creates a rewarding, inclusive experience for those involved. There is a mutual benefit from active engagement emphasizing community growth, knowledge sharing, and responsive service improvements.

The need for member engagement never stops. I encourage you to think about how you can engage with the Cooperative and what you could take advantage of in the coming months. Some ideas to think about are shared on Page 6.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Michael J. Henke". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

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

# MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on July 24. During the meeting, the following items were discussed: Heartland Security Systems; quarterly financials and capital budget review; 10-Year Financial Forecast; property tax follow-up; system reliability metrics and tree clearing progress; and EV fast charging statistics and performance in Stewartville area.

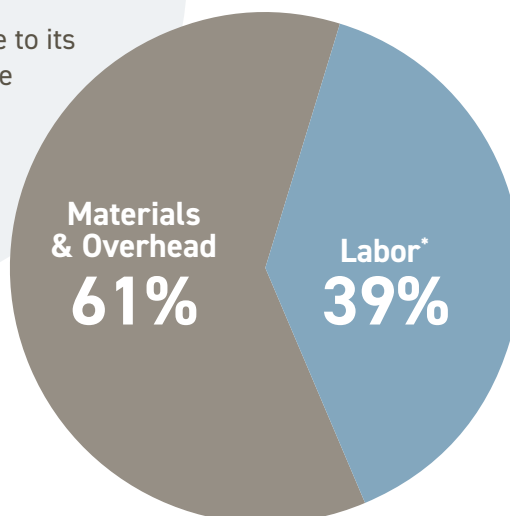
## A quorum of directors was present, and the following actions were taken:

- ▶ Approved a PCA charge of 4.498 mills per kWh for Legacy members for July usage billed in August.
- ▶ Approved a PCA charge of 12.223 mills per kWh for SMEC members for July usage billed in August.
- ▶ Approved edits to Policies 605, 701, 702, and 703.
- ▶ Approved RUS Resolution 2025-006 for a funds transfer.
- ▶ Approved the rate schedules for the provider merge for SMEC members to DPC as their sole power provider.
- ▶ Approved the Conservation Improvement Program adder for SMEC members to July bills.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### It's Not Cheap to Replace a Power Pole

Whether a power pole needs to be replaced due to its age, it was knocked down in a storm, or because it was hit by a car, the costs add up. Power poles play an integral role in our mission to provide members with safe and reliable electric service. Installation of a new pole can cost around \$3,000 depending on the circumstances, involve three to four employees, and can take anywhere from a few hours to an entire workday. When a pole is being replaced due to its age or as part of a construction plan for improving service, the costs are absorbed into the yearly budget. If a pole is hit by a member of the public, that individual is responsible for the cost.



\* Labor costs are affected by after hour, weekend, or holiday response times.

## highline

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### MANAGEMENT

Michael J. Henke,  
*President/CEO*

Michelle Olson,  
*Vice President of  
Information & Services*

Gwen Stevens,  
*Vice President of  
Cooperative Relations*

Dody Wubker, *CFO*

Nicholas Woetzel,  
*Vice President of  
Operations*

Jeff Holley,  
*Vice President of  
Engineering*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**DISTRICT 1:**  
Jon Kroening

**DISTRICT 2:**  
Jodie Tvedt, *Vice Chair*

**DISTRICT 3:**  
John Winter, *Secretary*

**DISTRICT 4:**  
Tracy Lauritzen, *Treasurer  
& MREA Board Director*

**DISTRICT 5:**  
Jerry Wooner, *Board Chair*

**DISTRICT 6:**  
Art Friedrich,  
*Dairyland Director*

**DISTRICT 7:**  
Jeff Orth

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

# \$30 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](mailto:memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop) to receive a \$30 credit on your bill.

**Good luck in finding your account number!**





## Enjoy LABOR DAY

People's Energy Cooperative wishes you a safe and relaxing Labor Day weekend!

We will be closed on Monday, September 1 for our employees to enjoy the holiday weekend with family and friends. If you have a power outage during this time, please call (800) 214-2694 to report the problem.

## National Communications Day

Whatever your preferred methods of communication are, People's Energy Cooperative is committed to making it easy for you to stay up to date on what is happening at the Cooperative. The Highline newsletter, our website, social media accounts, email, and text messages are all used to reach members through the methods most convenient for you.

Behind this effort to keep members informed is a talented team of communications professionals. August 18 is National Communications Day – a perfect time to draw attention to the valuable contributions of our communications staff. Thank you to Gwen and Ashley for their excellent work!



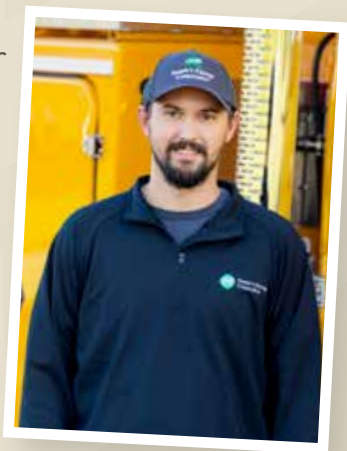
Gwen



Ashley

## Thank You, Nate & Kurt!

For five years, Nate has been a great asset in our organization, bringing a friendly smile and positive attitude as our mechanic. He is talented at diagnosing equipment without having to employ outside services and enthusiastic about learning new skills. He has even taken several classes to improve his ability to repair and diagnose booms and hydraulic systems. We appreciate his hard work!



Nate

Kurt has been with People's Energy as a GIS/Mapping Technician for 10 years. He is always encouraging others to share their feedback about the mapping system not only to improve it for their use, but also his own satisfaction. He is passionate about continuous learning to better and broaden his knowledge base which benefits everyone who works with him. Most importantly, Kurt brings great energy to work every day, being approachable, open to feedback, and always willing to lend a helping hand.



Kurt

# People's Energy Cooperative Trust

## OPERATION ROUND UP

### Grants \$22,150 to Local Organizations



In July, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board granted \$22,150 to the following local organizations:

- ▶ **Ability Building Community** - \$1,500 for the construction of a pergola
- ▶ **Bear Cave Intermediate** - \$3,250 in support of the Pinbox 3000 and Canoemobile curriculum
- ▶ **Bolder Options** - \$1,500 to help purchase youth bikes
- ▶ **Chatfield Center for the Arts** - \$1,000 in support of the Ghost Light Lounge resident musicians
- ▶ **Childhood Cancer Community** - \$2,000 in support of Journey Packs
- ▶ **Elder Network** - \$500 to help expand access to technology
- ▶ **Hiawatha Homes Foundation** - \$1,000 for accessible technology
- ▶ **Immanuel Lutheran School** - \$2,000 for updated math curriculum
- ▶ **Ivan Stringer American Legion Post 164** - \$2,500 to assist with the replacement of a door and ADA compliance
- ▶ **Mediation & Conflict Solutions** - \$1,000 to help purchase a new laptop
- ▶ **Olmsted County 4-H** - \$500 for Fall Festival tickets
- ▶ **Oronoco Gold Rush Days** - \$900 in support of event expenses
- ▶ **Plainview Area History Center** - \$2,000 to lift and level their front walkway
- ▶ **Salt & Light Partners** - \$1,000 in support of their First Responder Family Day
- ▶ **St. Charles Public Library** - \$500 to establish a Library of Things
- ▶ **The Med City Moonshots** - \$1,000 to help with the cost of player insurance

People's Energy Cooperative's Operation Round Up® Trust is funded by members who allow the Cooperative to simply "round up" their electric bills to the next highest dollar. That monthly contribution is put into a trust fund that is later granted to charitable, educational, community, and youth-related programs and events. To set up your account to round up, reach out to our Member Services Department at [memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop).

## Vegetation Management 2025

As summer comes to a close, we continue to work with Carr's Tree Service and New Age Tree Service to execute our vegetation management plan for 2025. They will continue working in areas throughout our service territory during the month of September.

Our mission is built around providing reliable electric service to our members. An important part of making that possible is utilizing vegetation management. The work we do with vegetation management helps keep outages and blinks to a minimum, reduces the potential for the public to come in contact with electric lines, and helps line crews access the lines for maintenance and outage restoration. We thank Carr's and New Age for being part of making this happen.





# WE NEED YOU!

## Member engagement at People's Energy Cooperative never stops.

Check out some of the many options below:

### PROGRAMS

PEC offers a variety of programs for members based on their energy interests and needs. Members looking to take advantage of incentive rates can consider energy management programs. Members who have recently purchased an electric vehicle should review our Energize Your Drive program. Members can also set up their account to receive alerts from our Outage Notification



Service. To explore your options, we recommend visiting our website by scanning the QR code here.



### EVENTS

#### Annual Meeting

Every year, usually in March, we gather as a cooperative to review the highlights of the previous year. The meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the annual Board of Director elections which also happen during the first quarter of the year. PEC's Annual Meeting is a great opportunity for members to have their voice heard and to learn more about their cooperative. Thirty-three thousand one hundred one.



#### Energy Forums

The Cooperative's Energy Forums are a unique opportunity for members to learn more about the complexities behind bringing power to our local homes and businesses, as well as hear from local legislative candidates during election seasons. We enjoy the opportunity to connect with members in this way every year.



#### Workshops and Trainings

We recognize not all members have the same interests or concerns when it comes to cooperative matters. Throughout the year, we hold smaller events such as workshops or trainings to dive into specific topics that may only be relevant to a smaller number of members. For example, every spring we hold a Key Accounts Summit to help our largest business and agricultural members take advantage of everything a cooperative membership has to offer.



# BOARDS & COMMITTEES

**Operation Round Up® Trust** is a philanthropic arm of the Cooperative funded by members who have chosen to round their bill up to the next dollar. The Operation Round Up® Trust Board reviews grant applications on a quarterly basis and determines the grant amounts awarded. Currently, we are looking for a member from District 5 (the Eyota, Dover, and Viola area) and a member from District 6 (the Chatfield and Marion area) to serve on this board. The term starts October 1 and is a three-year term with the option for a second term.



**The Nominating Committee** plays an important role in the board election process by seeking out and vetting candidates to run for the PEC Board of Directors each year. Members from any district may serve on the Committee, regardless of which district is up for election. The Committee starts meeting in October with informational training and then works to seek out and vet candidates before making its official nominations at a meeting in early January. Two thousand twenty-six.

**The Board of Directors** is the governing body of the Cooperative and represents the members in policy and ratemaking, approving the Annual Work Plan and Budget, hiring corporate legal assistance and auditing firms, along with hiring and managing the President/CEO. Directors are elected to three-year terms by the members of the Cooperative, hold monthly board meetings, attend Cooperative events, take part in training sessions, and participate in state, regional, and national conferences. In 2026, the seats for District 3 (currently served by John Winter), District 5 (currently served by Jerry Wooner), and District 7 (currently served by Jeff Orth) will be up for election. District 3 covers Oronoco and the surrounding areas in the northern part of our service territory. District 5 covers Dover, Eyota, Viola, and the surrounding areas. District 7 covers Stewartville and the surrounding area directly south of Rochester.

If you are interested in any of the opportunities above, please email [memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop) or call (800) 214-2694.

## Watts & Wits Trivia Night



Meredith Tuntland, local trivia trailblazer, will be joining us to explore energy facts, PEC history, important energy issues, and local SE Minnesota lore. We are excited to enjoy a night of competition, fun, and snacks with our members.



**Thursday, September 4, 2025**

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

The Blacktop Bar & Grill  
30 Main St. E, Elgin

**Thursday, September 18, 2025**

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

2 Brothers Bar & Grill  
101 10th St. NW, Stewartville

## 2025 Energy Forums



Two years ago, we took a look behind the switch at some of the important issues surrounding energy. This year, we're taking another look behind the switch to understand the complexities of how energy reaches our homes and businesses.

**Monday, October 27, 2025**

5:30 p.m. – Light Meal

6:00 p.m. – Presentation

Stewartville American Legion  
1100 2nd Ave. NW, Stewartville

**Wednesday, November 5, 2025**

5:30 p.m. – Light Meal

6:00 p.m. – Presentation

Plainview Area Community  
& Youth Center  
346 W Broadway, Plainview

To RSVP for one of the forums, please email [rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop) or call (800) 214-2694

# We're Working on Something New

Over the last few months, we've been working on a refreshed design for our billing statements. Our objective is to improve the clarity of the information presented on the statement, making it easier for members to understand and utilize. You can expect to see these updates rolled out in the coming months. We'll keep you informed and share more details as we get closer to the launch!



## Unclaimed Capital Credits

People's Energy Cooperative allocates operating margins to members as capital credits, which operate like a savings account. Each year, the Board of Directors determines if capital credits will be retired (returned to the members).

Occasionally, after capital credit checks are sent out, they are returned to the Cooperative as 'undeliverable'. After we work to find the rightful owners, these unclaimed checks become unclaimed property. Twenty-three thousand eight hundred fifty-two.

We use these unclaimed capital credits to fund scholarships for graduating seniors whose parents or guardians are PEC members. Per Minnesota state statute, these funds would otherwise revert to the State.

Visit [peoplesenergy.coop/capital-credits](https://peoplesenergy.coop/capital-credits) for a list of unclaimed credits and claim instructions.

## POWER OUTAGE INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

These days, we seem to be able to do everything from our phones. Why not receive information about power outages? With PEC's Outage Notification Service, you'll know when there's a power outage in your area and when power is restored.

How does it work? When our system experiences a power outage, our automated outage management system sends out notifications to members who may be affected and are registered for the Outage Notification Service. When power is restored, another notification is sent out. You can register to receive these notifications by setting up your account in SmartHub for both the Power Outage Notification and Outage Restoral Notification.

If you have already set up your account to receive the outage notification, don't forget to set up the restoral notification as well!

More details, including step-by-step instructions, can be found here on our website.





# WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN Building a New Home

Are you thinking of building a new house? If so, now is the time to connect with the Cooperative. We are happy to work with you throughout the homebuilding process to ensure you can take advantage of the many programs and rebates offered through People's Energy Cooperative.

**1** Start by determining if you want to enroll in an Energy Management program or install a solar array. It is helpful to think about which programs will work best based on the plans you have for your new build. For example, Dual Fuel is a popular option for homeowners installing an air-source or geothermal heat pump and back-up fossil fuel source; Off-Peak for those installing in-floor heat; Time-of-Use for members looking to install programmable appliances and thermostats; and Water Heating for people installing electric water heaters.

Feel free to reach out to People's Energy with questions or find out more about the programs we offer at [peoplesenergy.coop/energy-management-programs](http://peoplesenergy.coop/energy-management-programs).

**2** When working with your electrician, consider future beneficial electrification needs into your plan. An electric vehicle, solar array, electric heat pump, or other major electric appliances could all be considered during this step to ensure enough additional capacity in the electrical panel.

**3** To start electric service with People's Energy Cooperative, complete the New Service Form on our website: [peoplesenergy.coop/construction-modification](http://peoplesenergy.coop/construction-modification).

**4** Once the Cooperative receives your completed form, a staking engineer will contact you. The engineer will go over plans for your new home and guide you to all of the information needed to move forward.

**5** Before you begin purchasing products for your new home, review our available rebates to see where you can save. People's Energy currently offers appliance, lighting, HVAC, new home, and water heating rebates members can take advantage of when building. Make sure to complete and return rebate forms when purchasing products.



Visit [peoplesenergy.coop/rebates](http://peoplesenergy.coop/rebates) for an updated list of available rebates or call Member Services at (800) 214-2694 for more information.

# Low-Cost Weatherization Improvements



Weatherization is a term that refers to the things you can do to make your home, business, or industrial building use less energy to operate. This can involve everything from weather stripping to replacing or upgrading equipment.

Here are two projects you can take on this weekend with some tips to get you started.

## AIR SEALING

Air sealing involves identifying and sealing air leaks around windows, doors, plumbing, and electrical fixtures. This prevents conditioned air from escaping and unconditioned air from entering your home.

- ▶ Check areas where air leaks commonly occur, such as around windows, doors, electrical outlets, and light fixtures. Look for gaps or cracks and feel for drafts.
- ▶ Observe around closed doors and windows during daytime. If you can see daylight shining through cracks and gaps, they need sealing.
- ▶ Use silicone or acrylic latex caulk to seal small gaps and cracks around window frames and door jambs. This is ideal for gaps less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch.

## WEATHER STRIPPING

Weather stripping involves materials that can be applied around windows and doors to ensure tight seals that block drafts.

- ▶ Weather stripping materials can degrade over time due to use and environmental exposure. Regular inspections should be made, and old or worn weather stripping should be replaced immediately. Twenty-five thousand three hundred nineteen.
- ▶ Consider installing or replacing weather stripping around windows or doors before the onset of cold winters or hot summers.
- ▶ Always use the type of weather stripping best suited for specific gaps and openings for optimal results.

Investing in weatherization can be a smart move for both your wallet and your comfort, particularly in areas like Southeast Minnesota where temperatures fluctuate significantly between seasons.

## Smart Thermostat Rebate

Another easy energy efficient upgrade you can do this weekend is install a programmable or smart thermostat. Directions are included in whichever model you purchase, and you don't need a professional to do it.

Before purchasing, remember that if you invest in a smart thermostat (not a programmable one), you may be eligible for a \$25 rebate. People's Energy offers rebates for Honeywell or Emerson brand thermostats that are enrolled in an energy management program. To learn more about the program, email [programs@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:programs@peoplesenergy.coop).





# Make Time for Safety this Harvest Season

Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. Here are some important safety reminders:

## Start with Preparation

- ▶ Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins.
- ▶ Have a safety plan, and make sure that farm workers and family members are aware of the procedures in it.
- ▶ Be sure you can see well in the areas where you are working. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

## Stay Alert

- ▶ In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.
- ▶ Slow down, always stay alert, and take all recommended precautions. To help you do so, recognize when you need to take breaks so you can be active and engaged in the farm work.

## Look Up and Look Out

- ▶ Always be aware of where power lines are in relation to your equipment. Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment.
- ▶ If you see a power line that is sagging or low, contact the Cooperative. Also keep an eye out for guy wires. Although these wires are not energized, they can bring down live lines.

## Accidents Happen

- ▶ If the machinery you are operating does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.
- ▶ Only on the rare occasions where machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, keeping your feet together, shuffle to safety as you leave the area. Never touch anything that is in contact with a power line.

**Remember, while harvest is a busy season on the farm, it's still important to take the time to keep safety first and look out for and stay safely away from potential hazards like overhead power lines.**







**People's Energy Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

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Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

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

## Hunting Safety

Spending a gorgeous fall day in pursuit of prey might seem like the perfect day. However, it's important to remember that a great hunt can't happen without making safety a priority – including electrical safety.

**People's Energy Cooperative encourages all hunters to follow these five guidelines to stay safe this season:**

- 1** Familiarize yourself with the area before heading out to hunt. Take note of power lines and equipment, especially when hunting in densely wooded areas.
- 2** Observe all signs or postings that advise electrical safety.
- 3** Look up and out for power lines and do not come within 10 feet of an overhead line or pole when setting up or taking down a stand.
- 4** Do not climb or place deer stands, decoys, or signs on utility poles. Anything attached to a pole, except for utility equipment, is an obstruction and poses a serious safety hazard.
- 5** Never shoot near or toward power lines, utility poles, transformers, or substations.



# 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**