



IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

The mission of People's Energy Cooperative (PEC) is to bring value to our member-owners and communities by providing reliable electricity, superior customer service, and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices. We do this best when members engage with us to serve the membership and have a positive impact on our communities. As a member-owned and governed organization, we strongly encourage members to consider serving on one of the following cooperative committees or boards. Not only will you be serving in a meaningful way, but you might also make a new friend or two!

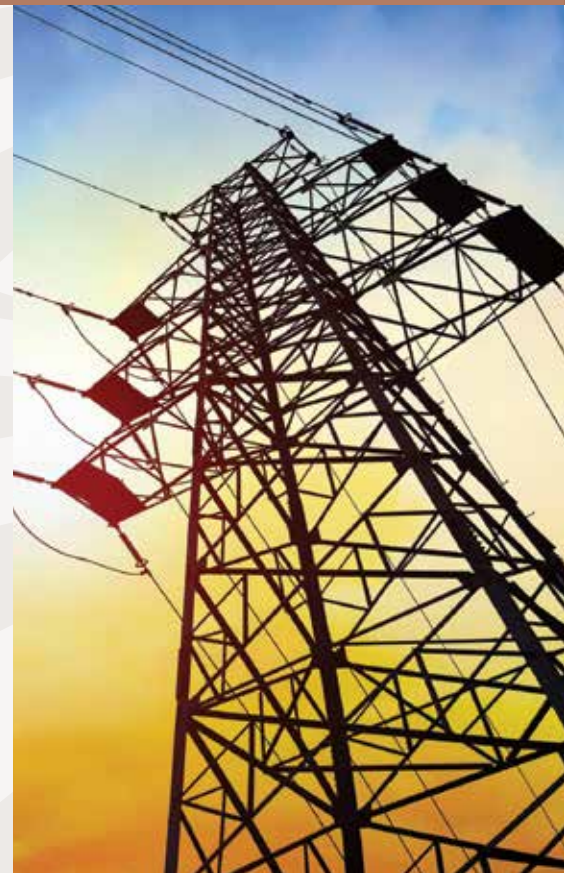
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The PEC Board of Directors is the Cooperative's governing body and is responsible for representing members in policy and ratemaking, approving the Annual Work Plan and Budget, hiring corporate legal assistance and auditing firms, and hiring and managing the President/CEO. Directors are elected to a three-year term 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 2024, the seat for District 2, currently served by Jodie Tvedt, and the seat for District 4, currently served by Tracy Lauritzen, will be up for election. If you believe in the Seven Cooperative Principles, are a proven leader in the community, and value affordable and reliable electricity, the PEC Board of Directors may be a good fit for you.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee seeks out and vets board 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 an informational training meeting and then works to seek out and vet candidates before making its official nominations at a meeting in early January. If you value having a voice in who represents you on the PEC Board of Directors, this committee is for you!

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CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO



mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

I was recently asked about what impacts electricity prices. Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices and residential energy bills.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors we can manage, some of them you, as a member, can impact, and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are three primary charges on your residential monthly electric bill: a basic service charge, an energy charge, and a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack them one at a time.

The first is the basic service charge, which covers the fixed costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor, and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in the Cooperative's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations, and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a tall metal can at the top of a power pole or a green box in your lawn) increased on average 2½ - 3 times since March 2020. Wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 104 weeks. That's two years! Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, these expenses get passed on to members. I should note that the basic service charge is structured to share costs equitably across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the energy charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment runs longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months. If you want to better understand how your home consumes energy, you can have an energy audit performed that may help uncover areas where energy is being wasted. You can also take advantage of using SmartHub to monitor your hourly energy use. We also offer rebates for energy efficiency improvements, so be sure to see if your improvements qualify.

The last component of your bill is the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA), which covers fluctuations in costs without having to continually restructure electricity rates. The PCA can either be a charge or a credit. Three main determinants are adjustments passed down from our power providers, adjustments to ensure we meet our revenue requirements, or unforeseen circumstances such as extreme weather events.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices and your residential electric bill. While we can't control the weather or the rising cost of fuels, please know People's Energy Cooperative is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy.

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

MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

highline

Vol. 87 • Issue 08

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on July 27. During the meeting, the following items were discussed: pending Elgin property sale; quarterly financials; compensation plan; director expense reports; and the video "A Discussion on Board Meeting Minutes" was viewed.

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

- ▶ Approved a 1.560 mill PCA credit for Legacy members for July usage billed in August.
- ▶ Approved a 1.400 mill PCA charge for SMEC members for July usage billed in August.
- ▶ Approved EV Subscription Rate.
- ▶ Approved September 21 MAC meeting date.

MANAGEMENT

Michael J. Henke,
President/CEO

Patrick Nelson,
*Director of Engineering
and Operations*

Michelle Olson,
*Director of
Member Services*

Gwen Stevens,
*Director of Cooperative
Relations*

Dody Wubker,
CFO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1:

Jon Kroening
(507) 884-0160, jkroening@
peoplesenergy.coop

DISTRICT 2:

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

DISTRICT 3:

John Winter
(507) 990-5648, jwinter@
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
Dairyland Director
(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

DID YOU KNOW?

Member service representatives **CANNOT ACCEPT PAYMENT** information **OVER THE PHONE.**

*People's Energy
Cooperative is
committed to keeping
our members' banking
and personal
information secure.*

*As a security measure,
our member service
representatives are
not able to accept
payment information
over the phone.*

If you wish to make a payment via telephone, there is a phone number designated to accept secure payments. Call (855) 730-8709 to pay your bill 24 hours a day with a major credit card (MasterCard, VISA, Discover, or American Express) or by providing your checking or savings account information.

Members who have a stored payment method in the system (set up through SmartHub or the phone system), can have a member service representative process a payment on their behalf after first verifying their identity. The only information representatives can verify is the last four digits of a social security number, the last four digits of a stored credit card number and expiration date, and the last four digits of a bank account number.

ENERGY FORUMS

Taking a Look Behind the Switch

Electricity is a resource all of us rely on for life's comforts and conveniences. In recent years, the reliability and affordability of energy while transitioning to more renewable energy has become a big conversation. Twenty-two thousand one hundred twenty-nine.

Join us for this opportunity to dive deeper into how electricity is generated and delivered to your home or business, how technological advancements in beneficial electrification help you, the member, and the impact of legislative actions on the future of the energy industry.

Kasson – Wednesday, October 11

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 p.m. Presentation and discussion

Events by Saker

401 8th St. SE, Kasson, MN 55944

Chatfield – Tuesday, October 17

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 p.m. Presentation and discussion

Chatfield Center for the Arts

405 Main St. S, Chatfield, MN 55923

Plainview – Tuesday, October 24

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 p.m. Presentation and discussion

Tarasco's

25188 534th St., Plainview, MN 55964

Please RSVP before September 29 by calling (800) 214-2694 or emailing RSVP@peoplesenergy.coop.

You can also RSVP by scanning the QR code here. Please indicate how many people will be attending when you RSVP.



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!



Thank you to **Rich Gustafson**,
purchasing agent,
for his five years of
service at the
Cooperative



Congratulations, Rich!

IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

Continued from page 1

MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Member Advisory Committee (MAC) serves as a sounding board for PEC's Board of Directors and management staff on proposals, ideas, and evaluations of programs and services. MAC members, as community leaders and interested members, are expected to express their personal opinions and reactions, as well as communicate the opinions and reactions of other members of the Cooperative. The group meets quarterly and represents all seven districts in our service territory. Currently, we are looking for members to serve from Districts One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six. The term starts November 1 and is a three-year term with the option for a second term

OPERATION ROUNDUP (ORU) BOARD

This charitable grant program distributes nearly \$100,000 annually to local charities, schools, and service organizations throughout our region. The ORU Board of Directors reviews applications on a quarterly basis and determines the grant amounts awarded. This seven-member board is appointed by PEC's Board of Directors and serves a three-year term, which begins in October. Board members have the option for a second term. There are currently no open seats on the ORU Board, but if you would like to be considered in the future, please let us know and we can put you on the list.

We encourage you to consider serving your fellow members in some way. If you don't know what district you are in, visit peoplesenergy.coop/service-territory-and-board-districts. If you have any questions or are interested in serving in any of these roles, please email memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop or call (800) 214-2694.



Beneficial Electrification Part 3: APPLIANCES

Over the past few months, People's Energy Cooperative has provided members with an in-depth look at the concept of beneficial electrification. As a reminder, beneficial electrification includes innovations in energy technologies that aim to use electricity instead of on-site fossil fuels, such as propane, natural gas, and fuel oil, in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs.

Last month, we focused on how beneficial electrification shows up in HVAC systems, specifically air source heat pumps. We are now going to look at how beneficial electrification can be applied to appliances.

Many common household appliances, such as refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and clothes washers, are already powered by electricity. Although rebates are available for updating these appliances, upgrading them isn't necessarily beneficial electrification. On the other hand, making the switch from natural gas to electric with an oven range or switching to a heat pump clothes dryer can serve as an illustration of beneficial electrification.

Let's take a closer look at how these two upgrades meet the conditions of beneficial electrification. Induction cooking is becoming increasingly popular in the United States as consumers learn more about this highly-efficient cooking technology. According to the Induction Cooking Technology Design and Assessment by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), induction cooking allows up to 90% of the energy consumed to be transferred to the food, compared to approximately 74% for traditional electric systems and 40% for gas.

Electric induction stoves can boil water twice as fast as a gas stove, using energy in a more efficient manner. Induction and electric cooktops also work without the use of a flame, which reduces indoor air pollution and benefits the environment.

Purchasing a heat pump clothes dryer is another way



consumers can save energy, money, and help protect the environment. Heat pump dryers work as closed loop systems, using heated air to dry clothes and then utilizing an evaporator to remove the moisture without losing too much heat. In this way, the heat can be reused in the drying process. Four thousand four hundred sixteen.

According to ENERGY STAR, certified heat pump dryers can reduce energy use by at least 28% compared to standard dryers. This significant reduction means less energy is needed every time a load of clothes is dried and each dry cycle costs less money. Heat pump dryers are also easy to install since they don't require ventilation. Laundry is dried at low temperatures, which is gentler on clothes.

If you are considering replacing your stove/oven or clothes dryer, consider how electric and induction cooktops and heat pump dryers support beneficial electrification. Home energy rebate programs deployed nationwide and administered through state energy offices will soon offer income-based incentives (for households below 150% area median income) for induction cooktops, ENERGY STAR electric stoves or ovens, and ENERGY STAR heat pump clothes dryers. Visit the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savings Hub (www.energy.gov/save) to learn more about potential savings.



sound the alarm

OPERATION ROUND UP® SPOTLIGHT:

AMERICAN RED CROSS' HOME FIRE PROGRAM

***"We get called about once a week for a house fire somewhere in Southeast Minnesota,"** explains Melanie Tschida, Executive Director with the American Red Cross serving Southeast Minnesota. In the last 12 months alone, she says the organization has opened over 100 cases to assist local individuals and families who have experienced a fire in their home.*

When a home fire occurs, the American Red Cross is often one of the first on scene to assist those affected with immediate needs like food, clothing, and shelter. They work with local fire department partners to verify the damage and then provide financial assistance and emotional support to help individuals and families recover. In the days and weeks that follow, caseworkers conduct follow-up conversations that lead to long-term recovery plans.

Over the last two years, the American Red Cross' Home Fire Program has increased the amount of financial assistance provided to fire clients by 10%, with an average of \$650 per family. This disaster assistance is completely free to the recipients.

A \$1,300 grant was recently awarded to the Home Fire Program through People's Energy

Cooperative's Operation Round Up program to help fund this critical assistance. This financial support enables the American Red Cross to continue helping local residents who have experienced a home fire.

***"The first reaction we get from people is typically surprise that volunteers would show up on scene to help anyone affected by a house fire.** Sometimes it's 2 o'clock in the morning in the dead of winter, and our volunteers still respond in person," Tschida says. "That reaction is followed immediately by gratitude. People are so thankful that there is someone there to help them through such a difficult time."*

"By participating in programs like Operation Round Up, you are allowing us to respond to these needs in our community,"** Tschida comments. **"We get to hear the thanks from people, but they're not just thanking us, they're thanking the volunteers and people who are financially supporting this program. In some ways, it may seem like a passive way to contribute, but it adds up. That average of 50¢ a month each person donates to Operation Round Up makes a big difference to us."

PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE TRUST

OPERATION ROUND UP® GRANTS \$25,195 TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The People's Energy Cooperative Operation Round Up® Trust Board provided \$25,195 in grants this quarter to the following area organizations:

Ability Building Community (Rochester)
\$1,395 to purchase standing and lift assist equipment

Benedictine Living Communities (Byron)
\$2,000 to help replace a piano

Byron High School
\$1,500 for a student learning environment project

Care Portal / Global Orphan Project (Rochester)
\$2,000 to help fund needs for vulnerable kids

Chatfield Lions Club
\$1,000 to help refurbish city park

City of Eyota / Boy Scout Troop
\$1,000 to help install solar phone charging stations

Elder Network (Rochester)
\$500 to support the Aging Mastery program

Eyota Farmer's Market
\$1,300 to help with marketing and signage

Friends of Oxbow (Byron)
\$1,500 to help purchase supplies for ZooDazzle

Gamehaven Council #299 (Rochester)
\$1,300 to help purchase a robotic pool cleaner

Grand Meadow Area Ambulance
\$2,500 to help purchase new computers for ambulances

Happy Ramblers 4-H Club (Plainview)
\$500 to help with building benches at Carley State Park

Kasson-Mantorville Community Education
\$500 to help with purchasing playground equipment

Lake City Public Schools
\$1,200 to help purchase TI-Nspire graphing calculators

PEM Bulldog Wrestling Program
\$1,200 to help purchase a new awards stand

Viola Gopher Count
\$1,800 to help purchase an AED

Wabasha Ambulance Service
\$4,000 to help upgrade to advance life support equipment

To be considered for fourth quarter grants in 2023, applications must be submitted no later than September 20, 2023. Program guidelines and applications for Operation Round Up® donations are available at peoplesenergy.coop/operation-round-up or by calling the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694.

DO YOU OWN A RENTAL PROPERTY?

If you own residential property within the Cooperative's service territory and you have a tenant who pays the electric bill, please ensure you have a landlord agreement and third-party notice on file. We can only contact the property owner/manager when accounts are up for disconnection because of nonpayment if they have the appropriate documentation on file.

If you do not have either of these forms on file, they are available on our website. Visit www.peoplesenergy.coop and click on "Account Management Forms" under the Member Resources tabs on the front page. There, you will find downloadable PDFs which you can complete and return to the Cooperative.

Do you have your account set up with paperless billing or ACH bank draft payments?

THANK YOU!

Whether you recently made the switch or continued to participate, you joined approximately 25% of the membership in making a big impact. Over the past year, the Cooperative saved over \$100,000 in mailing fees and processing costs because of your choice to set up your account with paperless billing and/or automatic bank draft payments

from either your checking or savings account versus a credit card.

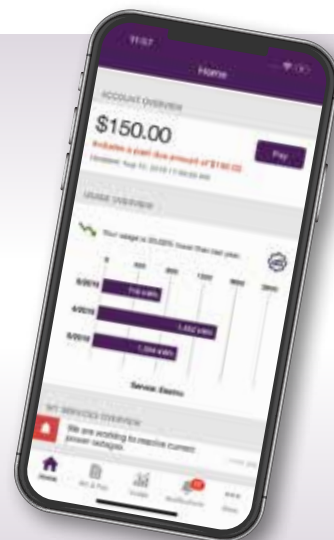
It's not too late to help us manage our fixed costs. You can do this through our secure online account management tool, SmartHub, or by calling the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694.



Simplify your life.

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

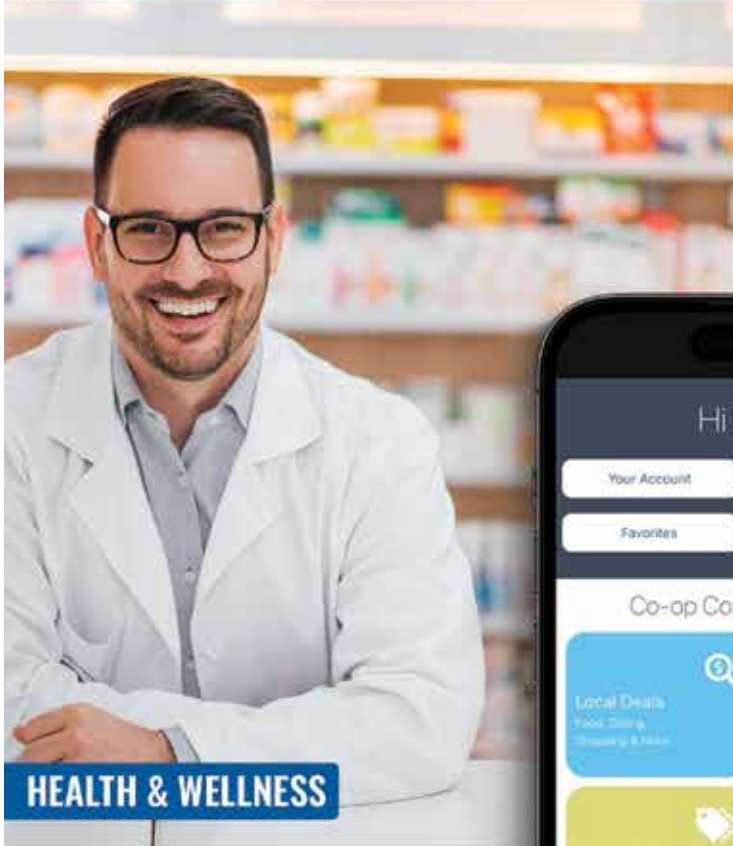
Available in both Apple App and Google Play Stores!



Register today! Visit: peoplesenergy.coop/smarthub

SAVE WITH THE NEW CO-OP CONNECTIONS APP!

VISIT WWW.CONNECTIONS.COOP FOR MORE INFORMATION.



HEALTH & WELLNESS



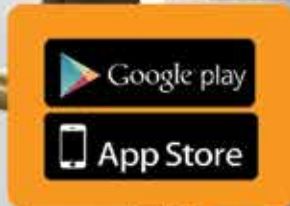
TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT



SAFETY & SECURITY



LOCAL DEALS



Back to School

ENERGY SAVING CHECKLIST

Thousands of kids around our service territory are heading back to school over the next few weeks. Parents have been preparing by arranging fresh haircuts, purchasing new school clothes, and shopping for school supplies. Believe it or not – there are three things you can do at home to save energy during this change in season.

▶ THINK ENERGY STAR

When looking into purchasing new laptops, tablets, computer monitors, TVs, and other electronics, remember the blue ENERGY STAR label. These products meet strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the U.S. EPA, helping you save energy and money. Twenty-six thousand eight hundred thirty-two.

▶ ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT

During the summer months, when kids are home during the day, there is often little adjustment to the thermostat. As everyone gets back into regularly scheduled programming, don't forget to readjust your thermostat. By simply resetting your thermostat to run 7-10° higher or lower (depending on the season) for 8 hours during the day, you can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling costs.

▶ START ON WEATHERIZATION

It's never too early to think about weatherizing your home for winter. A quick and easy way to get started is with caulking and weatherstripping. Caulk is generally used for cracks and openings between stationary house components such as around door and window frames, and weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and operable windows.

Rebates and INCENTIVES



PURCHASING A NEW APPLIANCE?

Our rebate programs offer several types of rebates for residential and business accounts.



To learn more, visit: peoplesenergy.coop/rebates



Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.

need to report **AN OUTAGE?**

JUST SEND US A TEXT.

.....
*One of the easiest, fastest,
and most convenient ways to
let us know when the power
goes out is to text us!*



Register at: [peoplesenergy.coop/outage-texting](https://www.peoplesenergy.coop/outage-texting)



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

HIGHLINE HI-LITES • August 2023 • Vol. 87 • Issue 08

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*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 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!

ENJOY YOUR LABOR DAY

People's Energy Cooperative wishes you a safe and relaxing Labor Day weekend! We will be closed on Monday, September 4 for our employees to enjoy the holiday weekend with family and friends. If you have a power outage or electrical emergency, please call (800) 214-2694 to report the problem.



ATTENTION TEACHERS!

The school year is right around the corner, and we know we aren't the only ones getting excited. If you are a teacher or someone who leads a youth group, please keep us in mind when thinking about special guest opportunities. We love connecting with the next generation of members!

Here at PEC, we are always happy to talk about electricity – how it's generated, how it gets to our homes and businesses, what we can do to conserve, and how we can practice safety while using it. We also love talking to kids about career opportunities at rural electric cooperatives. In understanding the resources around us, we hope today's students will help us solve the energy challenges of tomorrow. Twenty-nine thousand eight hundred twenty-one.

For more information on how we can help, contact the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694 or memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT 2023



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

During the month of September, **Carr's Tree Service** will be working in portions of Jordan, Orion, Pleasant Grove, and Sumner townships. **New Age Tree Service** will be working during this time in portions of High Forest, Pleasant Valley, Racine, Elgin, Oakwood, and Highland townships. All crews will be working to clear trees and other vegetation from power lines and electrical equipment.