



AUG. 2019

NEWS FROM YOUR PARTNERS AT PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE



CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS

THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF OUR *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*



A strong, effective cooperative depends largely on engaged consumer-members. That's why the Board of Directors plays such a critical role in the oversight and success of the Cooperative.

As the governing body of the Cooperative, the PEC Board of Directors (BOD) is elected by their fellow members to represent them in selecting and managing the CEO; approving the annual work plan and budget; setting and reviewing policies; approving electric rates; authorizing loan requests; approving all significant capital expenditures; and hiring corporate legal assistance and an auditing firm.

It is important that the directors work in harmony for the good of all members of the Cooperative and act collectively as the BOD. Directors have no authority outside of board meetings, except and unless they are specifically authorized or assigned a project with authority to act or speak for the Board.

RUNNING FOR THE BOARD:

If you are a proven leader with integrity, have the respect of residents in your community, and can exercise sound judgement and logical reasoning you may be a good fit for the BOD. As we begin to look ahead at next year's board election for seats in District 3 (northern portion including Oronoco), District 5 (eastern portion including Dover, Eyota, and northern Chatfield), and District 7 (Stewartville area) now is the time for eligible members to consider running for these seats.

ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENT:

Directors are elected to three-year terms and during that time they

actively participate in monthly board meetings, attend cooperative events, and participate in state, regional, and national conferences and training sessions.

Based on the Cooperative's Bylaws, residential members are eligible to serve on the BOD if they:

- Are a member of and receive electrical service from the Cooperative at their homestead (for tax purposes) located within the Cooperative's service territory.
- Are not employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative.
- Have not been employed by the Cooperative in the five years prior to being elected.
- Are not a close relative of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative at the time of election.

Board of Directors 101
See page 7 for class details!



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CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



Elaine J. Garry

egarry@peoplesrec.com

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo observed that, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community." To a large degree, this reflects People's Energy Cooperative's philosophy toward our consumer-members and the broader service territory we serve.

As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe electricity, there is another equally important part of this equation. Your well-being and that of the larger community that we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a customer; you are a member of our cooperative and without you, we would not exist.

In 1936, People's Cooperative Power Association of Olmsted County (*as we were then known*) was founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. Concerned local leaders came together to build this cooperative and bring electricity where there was none and where no one else was willing to provide it.

At that time, members of the community understood we were different because they likely knew someone who helped to create People's Cooperative Power Association of Olmsted County. For most people, our founding and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, people may have come to think of us as simply another electric utility. But we are not. We are a cooperative that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we can do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from our members and that of the larger community to guide our long-term plans and decisions. This is why we have a Member Advisory Committee and hold annual meetings and other member meetings throughout the year. We host events like this to engage with you, share information with you, and obtain your feedback. People's Community Solar and our efforts in the area of renewable energy are great examples of a direct outcome of these types of engagement.

We strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently. We're always exploring options that

will help you manage your energy use such as the SmartHub application, Power Down, and other energy efficiency programs. We also strive to help members with flexible payment options such as the MyChoice prepayment program or budget billing. In short, we are always seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment, evolving technology, and shifting consumer expectations.

Through member participation in member meetings and the Board of Directors, People's Energy members help guide important cooperative decisions that improve and enrich the community. We value the perspective of our board members, who are members of the Cooperative and community we serve – just like you. They know that their decisions will affect their friends, neighbors, and family, so they don't take them lightly and look to do the greatest good for all members.

As a local business and employer, we have a stake in the community. That's why we support area businesses, schools, emergency services, and the chambers of commerce in the communities we serve. We also support our communities through programs like Operation Roundup and Blue Jean Fridays that provide much needed funds for local charitable organizations. When you and our employees support these efforts, we are supporting the community and making it a better place for everyone.

While the times and technology may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. We view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and in the future.

If you want to serve your community in a meaningful way, please consider serving on our Member Advisory Committee, the Operation Round Up Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee, or running for a seat on the Cooperative's Board of Directors. By doing so you will see that People's Energy Cooperative is a vital part of this region.

Sincerely,
Elaine J. Garry,
President & CEO,
507-367-7000

MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

highline

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PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on Thursday, July 25. Discussions included: *information about line loss history; recent outage restorations; board governance; Youth Tour reports; a report on second quarter financials; as well as updates on the FEMA process for recovering costs from April storm damage, easements for our transmission system, the installation of our new radio system, and a solar project.*

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

- ▶ **Approval of prepayment of debt.**
- ▶ **Approval of materials to be shared with board candidates to better acquaint them with board responsibilities and duties.**
- ▶ **Reviewed and approved policy edits related to employee relations.**

MANAGEMENT

Elaine J. Garry,
President/CEO

Gary Fitterer,
Director of Engineering

Mike Henke,
Chief Financial Officer

Michelle Olson,
*Director of
Member Services*

Gwen Stevens,
*Director of Cooperative
Relations*

Troy Swancutt,
Director of Operations

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1:
Joe Book

DISTRICT 2:
Ken Wohlers,
Secretary/Treasurer

DISTRICT 3:
Robert Hoefs,
Vice Chair

DISTRICT 4:
Tracy Lauritzen

DISTRICT 5:
Jerry Wooner,
Board Chair

DISTRICT 6:
Art Friedrich

DISTRICT 7:
Jeff Orth

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

GENERAL INFO

Office Hours:

7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M–F

Telephone: 507-367-7000

Toll-Free: 800-214-2694

Web Address:

www.peoplesenergy.coop

Gopher State One Call:

1-800-252-1166

(digging & line location)



Mike Beck, our master electrician, shares our safety display with students.



Gwen Stevens, director of cooperative relations, talks with Chatfield third graders about wind energy.

BRINGING PEOPLE'S ENERGY INTO THE CLASSROOM

With summer winding down, it will soon be time to start thinking about plans for the school year. If you are a teacher starting to think about your lesson plans, we may be able to help!

We are always happy to visit classrooms throughout our service territory 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. In understanding the resources around us, we hope today's students will help us solve the energy challenges of tomorrow.

Interested in bringing one of our presentations to your school or youth group? Contact the Cooperative at 800-214-2694 or memberrelations@peoplesrec.com.



GRAB SOME FRESH PRODUCE AT YOUR FARMER'S MARKET

.....
VISIT WITH FRIENDS & SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL GROWERS

Farmer's Markets are a great place to get fresh produce. Before the leaves start to fall, make sure to visit one of these local markets in our region.

► **CHATFIELD**

THURSDAYS, 3:00-6:00 PM
Chatfield City Park (through Oct.)

► **DODGE CENTER**

FRIDAYS, 2:00-7:00 PM
*Old School Parking Lot
(through Oct.)*

► **EYOTA**

TUESDAYS, 4:00-7:00 PM
West Side Park (through Oct. 15)

► **KASSON**

WEDNESDAYS, 3:00-6:00 PM
*Prairie Meadows Senior Living
(through Sept.)*

► **LAKE CITY**

THURSDAYS, 5:00-8:00 PM
Ohuta Beach, (through Sept. 19)

► **LAKE CITY**

SATURDAYS, 9:00-12:00 PM
*Century Link Parking Lot
(through Oct. 5)*

► **MANTORVILLE**

TUESDAYS, 11:00-5:00 PM
*Riverside Park Parking Lot
(through Oct.)*

► **PINE ISLAND**

FRIDAYS, 3:00-7:00 PM
Trailhead Park (through Oct.)

► **PLAINVIEW:**

WEDNESDAYS, 4:00-7:00 PM
*Bennett's Food Center
(through Sept.)*

► **ROCHESTER:**

SATURDAYS, 7:30-12:00 PM
*401 1st St. SE (through Oct.)
Twenty-two thousand seven
hundred ninety-five.*

► **ROCHESTER**

WEDNESDAYS, 2:00-6:00 PM
Graham Park (through Sept. 25)

NEED NEW BULBS?



Electric\$ense

No need to mess with rebate forms and copies of receipts. If you purchase your LEDs through our online store, the rebate is automatically calculated and applied at checkout!

1 STEP ONE:

First, visit us online at peoplesenergy.coop to find Electric\$ense under the "Member Center" pull-down menu.

2 STEP TWO:

You'll find the link to the [Electric\\$ense](#) store on the right side of the screen. Simply click on "Start Shopping" to get started.

3 STEP THREE:

Once on the [Electric\\$ense](#) site, click on "Shop" to see the various categories of energy efficient products available.

SmartHub

THE BENEFITS OF OUR INNOVATIVE WEB & MOBILE APP

Have you ever wondered how your electric bill compares to past bills? Do you ever wonder how much electricity you're using? If you've ever had questions about your account, our innovative web and mobile app, SmartHub, can help provide the answers.

SmartHub has several features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, your smartphone, or tablet (iOS and Android friendly), you can pay your bill, view your usage, contact Member Services, report an outage, and get the latest updates.

Many things in life are complicated. Managing your People's Energy Cooperative account can be simple, quick, and easy with SmartHub.

- ◆ **PAYMENTS MADE SIMPLE.** Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment, either through the web or through your mobile device, you'll be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks. Twenty-four thousand six hundred thirty-eight.
- ◆ **IMMEDIATE INFORMATION AND ALERTS DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO YOUR DEVICE.** Through SmartHub you can receive important news and information immediately using your email and/or text messaging. For example, you can elect to receive notifications when your bill is available, set-up a payment reminder, or be notified when your credit card is about to expire. You can also view how your use is trending over time, which will allow you to take steps to lower your bill.
- ◆ **ONLINE OUTAGE REPORTING IS EASIER THAN EVER.** Reporting a service issue or outage is quick and easy from the SmartHub mobile app. There's no need to call the office, just notify us about the issue with a few clicks. You can also contact PEC for customer service requests or with any questions you may have. SmartHub's contact feature makes it quick and easy.

Access SmartHub today, by visiting peoplesenergy.coop or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices).



SmartHub.
Smart Management. Smart Life.



OPERATION ROUND UP®

July Grants

To be considered for fourth quarter grants in 2019, applications must be submitted no later than Sept. 20, 2019. Program guidelines and applications for Operation Round Up® donations are available at www.peoplesenergy.coop or by calling the Cooperative at 800-214-2694.

People's Energy Cooperative Operation Round Up® Trust Board provided \$25,064.71 in grants to the following area organizations in the third quarter of 2019:

- **\$2,500: Chatfield United Methodist Church and Chatfield Center for the Arts** – In support of Caregiver and Loved-Ones with Health Concerns of Memory Loss Interactive Experiences in Community.
- **\$600: Stewartville Community Band** – In support of their 40th anniversary celebration.
- **\$2,542.64: Eyota Fire Department** – To help purchase grain bin rescue equipment.
- **\$3,416.59: Hiawathaland Transit** – To help purchase equipment for the Plainview Operations and Training Facility.
- **\$647.18: Plainview Elgin Area Food Shelf** – To help purchase a new upright freezer.
- **\$1,000: Chatfield Public Schools** – In support of the preschool expansion. Seventy-one thousand seventy.
- **\$1,000: St. Charles Public Library** – To help purchase a speaker system.
- **\$1,708.30: Plainview Area History Center** – In support of building upgrades.
- **\$2,000: Arbor Gardens Senior Living (Eyota)** – In support of training and technology upgrades.
- **\$1,000: Dover-Eyota Theater Dept.** – To help purchase a wireless headphone microphone system.
- **\$1,500: City of Stewartville Park Board** – To support the development of the Bear Cave Park Amphitheater.
- **\$1,650: Family Services Rochester** – In support of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
- **\$500: Chatfield Center for the Arts** – In support of the 2019-2020 Chosen Bean Concert Series production.
- **\$1,500: Hiawatha Homes Foundation (Rochester)** – To assist in the purchase of a barrier free lift system.
- **\$500: St. Charles Elementary School** – To support the summer art camp.
- **\$700: Stewartville Community Education** – To support Youth Embracing Stewartville.
- **\$1,200: Bear Creek Services** – To support the installation of an electronic lock system.
- **\$500: FRC Robotics Team 2530 (Rochester)** – In support of equipment purchases.
- **\$600: The Mantorville Art Guild, Inc.** – In support of 2019 youth projects.

Operation Round Up® funds are collected from members who have had their bill rounded up to the next dollar.

Applications for funding are considered on a quarterly basis. The funds are held separately from the People's Energy Cooperative operating accounts and are administered through the Board of Trustees comprised of seven People's Energy Cooperative member volunteers.

IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER: HIGH SPEED INTERNET



Viasat, the company that brought our members Exede, has launched an even better satellite for high-speed internet. The new satellite has more broadband capacity than any satellite in history – and that's good news for you!

An opportunity to upgrade to an improved level of broadband service!

To learn more or sign-up, please call 888-559-9120. Be sure to mention you are a People's Energy Cooperative member and ask about any current promotions.

FAMILY SERVICE ROCHESTER:

Volunteers who make a difference every day.

Family Service Rochester was founded in 1965 as a nonprofit organization *with a staff of three and the mission to support and enhance the dignity and quality of life for individuals and families in the community. In 1990, Sunrise Youth and Family Counseling joined with Family Counseling and Home Services to form Family Service Rochester.*

For the past 15 years, Family Service Rochester has sharpened its focus to working with families with serious child welfare and/or family violence concerns. Today the agency provides more than 30 programs to meet ever-changing community needs that reach beyond Rochester into communities like Stewartville and Byron. Their staff of over 85 provides a wide range of human services that educate, strengthen, support, protect, and empower individuals and families in our region.

In the fall of 2013, Neighbors Helping Neighbors was launched to help older adults and their caregivers by linking them with community support services. "Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a program of Family Service Rochester intended to help older adults in Olmsted County continue living independently in their homes," stated Community Research Specialist, Dave Beal. "Volunteers from the community provide everyday services such as minor home repairs and upkeep, seasonal chores, check-ins, transportation, etc. that enables seniors to remain safe and secure in the residence of their choice, for as long as they are able," continued Beal.

To assist Family Service Rochester's Program, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, to purchase and replace equipment used by volunteers for outdoor chores, the People's Energy Cooperative Operation Round-Up Board awarded Family Services Rochester \$1,650.

Family Service Rochester volunteers make a difference every day. Volunteers help older adults remain living in their homes by helping with things such as: lawn mowing, housekeeping, minor carpentry, lawn work, and much more.

If you are interested in volunteering with Family Service Rochester or know someone who could benefit from their services, visit familyservicerochester.org for information.



! What it takes to serve: Board of Directors 101 Class

*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 informational meeting on **Monday, September 23** at 5:30 pm in the Cooperative's Conference Center in Oronoco.*

Please RSVP **no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, September 20** by emailing rsvp@peoplesrec.com or calling 507-367-7054.

Fun Times Were Had By All! *Our Member Family Picnic!*



2019 MEMBER APPRECIATION

Although the weather was hot and sticky, we enjoyed gathering with our members at Camp Victory for the annual member appreciation family picnic.

The success of such a great event is due to our fantastic partnerships with the following organizations:

- Camp Victory
- Carroll's Corn
- Majestic Tents
- Olmsted County 4-H Shooting Sports Wildlife Project
- Olmsted County American Dairy Association
- Parties Made Simple
- Miner's Outdoor

Through our partnership with the Olmsted County American Dairy Association and with donations received at the event, we are proud to announce that we will be working with the Olmsted County American Dairy Association to donate over \$3,300 in local milk products to Channel One Foodbank. Thank you for helping us support not only those in need, but also our local economy.





Know Your DEHUMIDIFIER

MINIMIZE COST AND MAXIMIZE ABILITY



Excess moisture in the air can leave people and rooms feeling uncomfortable. It can also encourage the growth of unwanted bacteria and germs. Dehumidifiers are designed to eliminate this extra moisture, keeping the room clean and comfortable. While you may find it necessary to use a dehumidifier, it must be noted that dehumidifiers can significantly increase your energy bill, if not used correctly or if they aren't Energy Star rated.

EMPTY YOUR DEHUMIDIFIER REGULARLY:

Emptying the water out after every use and before relocating it to another room can help the unit work longer and more efficiently.

THINK OF POSITION: Remember to keep your dehumidifier away from furniture, curtains, and walls. Keeping doors and windows closed and centrally placing the unit in your home will help remove the most moisture from the atmosphere.

GET THE HUMIDITY RIGHT: Check the optimal humidity level before usage to protect valuables in your home from retaining too much moisture.

BE COST-EFFECTIVE: Dehumidifiers typically take several hours to reduce humidity. Strategically run your dehumidifier to cut down on excess costs associated with using energy during peak times.

VACUUM FIRST: It is recommended to vacuum your floors before using your dehumidifier to prevent the spread of dust particles. If you have allergies, it is recommended that you look for a humidifier with a dust filter.

GET FROST CONTROL: If your dehumidifier is working in a cool room, such as a basement, confirm that your dehumidifier has frost control. If used in too cold of an environment, the dehumidifier will stop working if it gets too cold which will impact efficiency. Thirty thousand one hundred eight.

In the market for a new dehumidifier?
Be sure to purchase one that is Energy Star rated and don't forget to take advantage of the \$25 rebate offered to members of People's Energy Cooperative!



ENERGY EFFICIENCY: YOUR AIR CONDITIONER

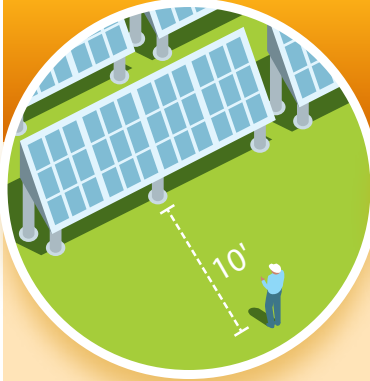
tip:

ROUTINELY REPLACE OR CLEAN

your air conditioner's filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent, saving you money over time.

Safety Near SOLAR

Like any other source of electricity, solar panels can pose potential hazards. Keep these safety tips in mind when you're near solar panels.



Stay at least 10 feet away from the installation.



Never walk on or across solar panels.



Never cut any of the wiring to the solar panels.



Never touch any broken/damaged solar panels.

Harnessing the power of the sun to provide electricity to a home or business has become an increasingly popular trend. With this solar influx, we encourage you to keep safety in mind whether you already own or plan to install a solar array and be sure to contact the Cooperative before you start your installation to discuss the interconnection process and requirements.

ROOF-MOUNTED SOLAR PANELS should have easy and safe access provided in order to allow for effective inspection, maintenance, and repair of the system.

A PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR should always do the installation to make sure your system is correctly sized, sited, installed, and maintained to maximize performance and minimize the chance of injury. Improperly installed PV systems increase the chance of a faulty unit, which could cause shock or fire.

THE EXPOSURE TO WEATHER increases the aging process of solar panels. According to the Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF), heavy wind can stress the panel, hail can cause cracking, and snow and debris can affect the energy performance.

PERFORM PERIODIC MAINTENANCE on your solar panels. The FPRF suggests the following maintenance procedures to help prevent fire or damage.

- Visually inspect the equipment and connections for signs of damage or degradation. Also inspect electrical junction boxes to see if conductors are damaged and need to be repaired or replaced.
- Visually inspect string conductors to identify physical damage that is in need of repair.

NEVER ATTEMPT TO WORK ON OR REPAIR A PV SYSTEM YOURSELF. This could do more harm than good, and it exposes you to electrical currents. If a solar panel needs service, call a certified professional. Other tips include:

- Never step on, set items on, or drop anything on the solar panels or wiring.
- If you have a roof-mounted solar panel, do not go onto your roof unless absolutely necessary to do so. If you must, watch out for overhead power lines, solar panels, and other wiring.
- Read the manual to know how to shut down the PV system in case of an emergency, such as a fire. Remember to call 911 and turn off the system only if you can do so safely.



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



1775 Lake Shady Avenue South
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

HIGHLINE HI-LITES • August 2019 • Vol. 83 • 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, one on our website, and one on our Facebook page. If you find your number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at **800.214.2694** or **memberservices@peoplesrec.com** to receive a \$30 credit on your electric bill.*

GOOD LUCK IN FINDING YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER!

Back-to-School REMINDERS FOR CHILD SAFETY

As our mini-members head back to school, it is important to refresh our memories with safety reminders

MANY KIDS BEGIN AND END THEIR DAY WITH A RIDE ON A SCHOOL BUS.

While this may be an exciting time in a child's life, it can also be an extremely dangerous time if motorists are not alert. If you are following behind a bus, allow a larger following distance than if you were following behind a car. This allows more time to stop once the yellow hazard lights start flashing. Once the bus driver starts flashing the yellow or red lights and extends the stop arm, traffic must stop.

Just as it is crucial to move over for crews who are working along

roadsides, it is equally as important to move over for children and pedestrians who are walking, bicycling, and entering or exiting buses. Use extreme caution to avoid colliding with pedestrians, no matter who has the right-of-way.

These few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe. By practicing a little extra care and awareness, parents can de-stress knowing that their children will be safe.

People's Energy Cooperative wishes both parents and children a safe and happy back to school season!

ENJOY YOUR LABOR DAY!

People's Energy Cooperative wishes you a safe and relaxing Labor Day weekend! Our office will be closed on Monday, September 2.

*If you have an outage or emergency, please call **800-214-2694** to report the problem.*