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MANAGEMENT STAFF

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 Member &
Community Relations

Troy Swancutt,
Director of Operations

GENERAL INFORMATION

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
(for digging & line location)

MEMBERS WHO *REPRESENT YOU* IN 2017

BOARD ELECTIONS



It's that time of year again when you have the opportunity to vote for members to represent you on the People's Energy Cooperative Board of Directors. The following highlights the process and what you can expect.

THE ELECTION PROCESS: Each year, at least two of the seven cooperative board seats are up for election. This year there are three seats including Districts Three (*Mazeppa and Oronoco area*), Five (*Dover-Eyota area*) and Seven (*SW Rochester and Stewartville area*).

A volunteer nominating committee of at least five, but no more than 11 members from the respective districts vets potential candidates (*including incumbents*) and strives to nominate at least two members for each seat.

Ballots are mailed to cooperative members approximately three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Each membership (*whether single or joint*) is allowed one vote for each seat.

While the candidates must live in the districts up for election, all members have the opportunity to vote for each seat up for election.

Once again, you have the option to cast your vote online or by using a paper ballot. Please note that only the first vote cast will be counted. For example, if you vote online and later mail in the ballot or bring it to the Annual Meeting, only the electronic vote will

count because it was received first. The candidate with the most votes in each district is announced at the Annual Meeting and begins their three-year term.

BALLOT MATERIALS: Please look for election materials to arrive in your mail box around March 1. The materials include a brochure with candidate information, the ballot with the Annual Meeting registration card attached, and a postage-paid return envelope.

When mailing a paper ballot, make sure to allow sufficient time to ensure it is received by Tuesday, March 21. Online voting will be available until 10:30 am on that same day.

Whether you vote online or use the paper ballot, be sure to retain the registration card at the top of the ballot to gain access to the Annual Meeting being held on Wednesday, March 22 at 11:00 am at the Rochester International Event Center. Doors will open at 10:00 am.

CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



Elaine J. Garry

egarry@peoplesrec.com

It's hard to believe that it's February already! Our Annual Meeting is next month and spring is just around the corner. However, you know the saying... time flies when you're having fun and I really enjoy working for you, our members.

Looking ahead to the Annual Meeting, please be sure to exercise your right to vote for members to represent you on the Cooperative's Board of Directors. This group of elected volunteers represent you and the best interest of the Cooperative; not only for today, but in the future. They know the decisions they make affect not only you, but future members as well. Their decisions are based on data and information that allows them to analyze the benefits and risks and weight them accordingly.

The beauty of a member-owned cooperative is that the members of the Board of Directors live in our region, know many of the people served by the Cooperative and have a vested interest in doing the "right thing."

This is significant because as I write this, there is a piece of legislation making its way through our state's Capitol to ensure that Cooperatives maintain local control. Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit entities that are self-governed to serve the best interest of its members. Therefore, members can and should reach out to their Board of Directors when they have concerns.

They don't have to get caught-up in the bureaucracy or added expense of the Public Utilities Commission.

Your Board of Directors sets rates and policies to ensure the Cooperative is living out our mission of providing reliable electricity to our members and communities with superior customer service and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices. It's local control at its best!

Not only do I hope you'll vote, but I also hope you'll take the time to attend the Annual Meeting on March 22. It's a great opportunity to learn more about your cooperative, meet some of the employees who work hard to serve you, and explore educational displays about energy efficiency, People's Community Solar, and the programs and services we offer.

I enjoy the Annual Meeting because it provides me the opportunity to meet so many of our members and hear about how well we're doing as well as areas we can improve in. This organic type of feedback is invaluable!

Stay warm and I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting next month!

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

THE COOPERATIVE'S 2017 NOMINATING, CREDENTIALS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE



Thank you to the members from Districts 3, 5 and 7 who are serving on the 2017 Nominating, Credentials and Elections Committee. **District 3 Committee:** Mike Hintz, Dave Kleiber, John Moechnig, and Jennifer Busch. **District 5 Committee:** Ken Monsen, Teresa Bierbaum, and Claryce Bany. **District 7 Committee:** Norm Olson, Pat O'Niell, and Jimmie-John King.

Employee Recognition



Warren



Adam

In January, Line Superintendent Warren Hauger retired following two and a half years of service. He is wished well and will be greatly missed!

.....

We also have several employees marking significant milestones in years of service at the Cooperative. Please join us in congratulating the following employees:



Mike



Tyler



Gwen



Nate

- **Adam Binner, 5 years**
Meter Technician
- **Mike Henke, 5 years**
CFO
- **Tyler Larsen, 5 years**
Staking / Field Engineer
- **Gwen Stevens, 5 years**
Director of Member & Community Relations
- **Nate Cliff, 10 years**
Area Lineworker
- **Kevin McDermott, 20 years**
Lead Area Lineworker
- **Rich Kendall, 20 years**
Crew Leader
- **Keith Dickman, 40 years**
Purchasing Agent
- **Gary Schurhammer, 40 years**
Warehouse Worker



Kevin



Rich



Keith



Gary

COOP CONNECTIONS: Connecting Members with GREAT SAVINGS

Keep a close eye on your mail in April for your Co-op Connections card!

This card will enable you to save money at participating local businesses and gives you access to great deals offered by many national chains and an online marketplace. In the following months, we will share how to maximize the benefit of these cards. In the meantime, we will continue to seek out more local businesses to join the following who have already agreed to participate in the program.

.....

- Byron Pet Clinic*
- C&M Screen Printing & Embroidery*
- Charlie Brown PC Applications*
- Chatfield Lumber Co. Inc.*
- Heartland Security
- Midwest LifeShots Photography
- Prestige Auto & Diesel Care
- Rennings Flowers
- RFour Meats*
- Teigen Paper & Supply, Inc.*
- Warners' Stellian
- Wi-Net*
- Willow Creek Golf Course*

* newly-joined businesses



OPERATION ROUND UP®

Jan. Grants

To be considered for second quarter grants in 2017, applications must be submitted no later than March 20, 2017. Program guidelines and applications for Operation Round Up® donations are available at www.peoplesenergy.coop or by calling the Cooperative at 507-367-7000.

People's Energy Cooperative's Operation Round Up® Trust Board provided \$31,160 in grants to the following area organizations this quarter:

- **\$1,250: Stewartville Middle School** – For 3D printers
- **\$5,000: City of Oronoco Parks and Trails** – For the Garden Park project
- **\$4,000: Schaeffer Academy** – For choral risers
- **\$1,000: Oronoco Fire Department** – For a smoke generator for training
- **\$8,000: Plainview Area Community & Youth Center and PEM Area Senior Dining** – To replace the flooring
- **\$1,000: Plainview Elgin Millville Drama Booster Club** – For musical lighting
- **\$1,000: City of Plainview** – For Great River Ridge Trailhead Park historical markers
- **\$595: Kasson-Mantorville Community Education** – For S.M.A.R.T. equipment
- **\$403: ALC Child Care Center** – For new playground equipment
- **\$1,000: Honors Choirs of Southeast Minnesota** – For website development
- **\$1,350: All Bout Children (ABC) Daycare** – For sidewalk improvements
- **\$1,450: The Rochester Salvation Army** – For a community warming center
- **\$3,100: The Salvation Army** – For their HeatShare program. Thirty one thousand three hundred seventy-three
- **\$463: Stewartville Community Education** – For PreK basketball hoops and Biddy Basketball Program
- **\$1,550: Chatfield Fire Department** – For a rescue saw.

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.



Community Celebration Church in Kasson recently completed a 14,900 square foot expansion project which included a beautiful new sanctuary and gathering area.

**KASSON COMMUNITY
CELEBRATION CHURCH
SAVES BIG
IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES**

To save money and energy, Brandon Johnson, the Cooperative's energy advisor and key account specialist, encouraged them to install many energy efficiency upgrades throughout the building. Both the sanctuary and gathering area are lit with LED lighting. LED technology was also utilized for new security lights, exit signs, and parking lot lighting. In addition, they installed energy efficient roof-top commercial air conditioning equipment. In total, they received **\$3,919** in rebates including: **\$2,000** for roof top air conditioners, **\$40** for LED exit signs, **\$1,871** for LED indoor and outdoor lighting, and **\$8** for water faucet aerators.

The church should save around **\$4,500** in annual electrical energy savings per year. With this project, People's Energy Cooperative claimed 72,061 kWh towards our conservation goal. We would like to thank Community Celebration Church for their conservation efforts, and helping us move closer to meeting our conservation goals.



PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

One of our seven cooperative principles is “Care for Community.”

We are committed to engaging with events and organizations which work to make our communities a better place to live. In January, we participated in two special events that support our region in very different ways.

Every year, People's Energy Cooperative, Rochester Public Utilities, and Minnesota Energy Resources gather with commercial customers and trade allies to discuss changes in the industry and rebate opportunities. This year's unexpected snowstorm on January 24th didn't keep away people from gathering! During the well-attended lunch, Brandon Johnson, energy advisor and key accounts specialist, presented a recap of our 2016 rebates program along with changes implemented for 2017. Our President & CEO, Elaine Garry joined Steve Nyhus from Rochester Public Utilities and Rory Lenton from Minnesota Energy Resources to discuss the impact of renewable energy on the industry and how our region is adjusting to the changing future.

This year, President & CEO Elaine Garry served as the Corporate Chair for United Way's Live United campaign, and on January 26, had the opportunity to recognize companies and organizations in our region for supporting their annual fundraising campaign. The campaign helps United Way support organizations

throughout southeast Minnesota who work hard to support families in need. People's Energy Cooperative was recognized with a Corporate Giving Award for their commitment of over \$2,500 in support from the Cooperative, its Board members and employees.

A special thank you to those who showed us their commitment to our communities runs deep!



President & CEO Elaine Garry (left), with Mike Beck, Ashley Kincaid, and Gretchen Pozanc, PEC's United Way Campaign Committee.

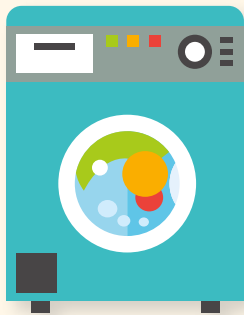
CAPITAL CREDIT REFUND CHECKS are mailed to former members at their last address on file with the Cooperative. And with every mailing, the U.S. Postal Service returns some of those checks as undeliverable. A list of former members we have lost touch with was mailed along with February bills and is available on our website. You can find the list under Capital Credits by clicking on “Unclaimed Capital Credits.” Twenty-one thousand seven hundred twenty-four.

People on the list can claim their capital credit refund by contacting our office at 507.367.7000 or 800.214.2694 or by emailing memberservices@peoplesrec.com.



ENERGY STAR BUYER'S GUIDE

Purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances and electronics is a great way to save energy in your home. But how do you choose the right product? It depends on your energy-saving goals *and* how you use energy in your home.



DO YOU WASH MULTIPLE LOADS OF LAUNDRY EACH WEEK?

Investing in an ENERGY STAR-certified washer could save you around \$45 on your utility bill each year. Some of the top-rated ENERGY STAR-certified large washers come from LG and Samsung. Visit ENERGY STAR's "Most Efficient 2016" page to learn more. Twelve thousand one hundred eighteen.



HOME COMPUTERS CAN USE A SHOCKING AMOUNT OF ENERGY EACH YEAR.

If all computers in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR certified, we would save more than \$1 billion in energy costs per year. If you can't buy an ENERGY STAR certified computer, consider updating the power management setting on your computer. Visit energystar.gov/products/office_equipment/computers.



THE LARGER TVS GET, THE MORE ENERGY THEY USE.

But ENERGY STAR-certified TVs are, on average, 25% more efficient than conventional models. LG, Samsung, and Vizio make the list of ENERGY STAR's most efficient 2016 TVs.

There are many different types of ENERGY STAR-certified products, including:
*Air Purifiers • Roof Products • Set-Top Boxes & Cable Boxes • Decorative Light Strands
Data Center Storage • Pool Pumps • Vending Machines • Dehumidifiers • And More!*

Learn more about ENERGY STAR products.
visit: energystar.gov/products



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

COUNTERFEIT or LEGIT?

10 TIPS TO HELP YOU BUY THE REAL DEAL



They say every man has his price and when it comes to counterfeit electrical products that is, essentially, true.

Purchasing counterfeits may save a buck, but it puts your safety, and potentially the safety of your loved ones and your home, at risk.

Use these helpful tips to help avoid the purchase of counterfeit electrical products and ensure you get a real deal.

For more information, visit: www.esfi.org.



- 01. ONLY A MOUSETRAP OFFERS FREE CHEESE:** If the price looks to good to be true, it probably is. Compare prices of similar products and avoid any that are drastically cheaper than the average.
- 02. JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER:** Avoid products being sold without packaging or with packaging of poor quality.
- 03. BE A GRAMMAR GURU:** Read through the labels and packaging text. If you notice typos, misspelled words, poor grammar, or blurry text, it may indicate a counterfeit product.
- 04. PUT IT TO THE TEST:** look for products that have been certified by a nationally recognized independent testing lab (*i.e. Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek (ETL), or Canadian Standards Association (CSA)*). The certification mark should be on both the packaging and the product.
- 05. NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS:** Do a search to see if any product recalls, which include counterfeiting alerts, have been issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (*CPSC*) or by independent testing labs (*i.e. UL, ETL, or CSA*).
- 06. BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY:** Avoid unknown brands and products that do not display any brand affiliation or the name and contact information of its manufacturer.
- 07. AVOID THE POINT OF NO RETURN:** Be wary of establishments that have a “no returns or refunds” policy.
- 08. THE BEST ADVERTISEMENT IS A GOOD PRODUCT:** Use established vendors who purchase their goods from legitimate distributors and genuine manufacturers.
- 09. NOTHING IS CERTAIN BUT DEATH AND TAXES:** Counterfeit operations often do not report their sales to financial authorities, so be suspicious if the purchase price does not reflect the required sales tax.
- 10. WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S FIRE:** If in doubt, trust your instincts. No bargain is worth risking your safety.



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

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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 Highline newsletter and one on our website. If you find your number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at **800.214.2694** or **memberservices@peoplesrec.com** and you'll receive a \$30 credit on your electric bill.*

Congratulations to Richard & Janice Ostrom, who found their account number in the January newsletter.

UPCOMING PROJECTS? CONTACT THE COOPERATIVE AND START PLANNING AHEAD FOR SPRING



If you have a significant project planned for 2017 that may require a line extension, service improvement or new service, we encourage you to start planning now.

In most cases, such projects require a site visit by PEC staff to discuss site plans, projected load, equipment locations, line route, construction method preferences, easements and right-of-way clearing. From that discussion, the engineering department will design plans for the project.

Once plans are agreed upon, a construction agreement is created outlining the project and fees associated with the work to be completed. This must be signed, the fees must be paid and necessary easements must be submitted to PEC before work can begin. Thirty thousand one hundred eighty-four.

We strongly encourage anyone thinking about projects that may require new or modified electrical service to contact the Cooperative and begin the planning process as early as possible because they are handled on a first come, first served basis.

WINONA COUNTY SALES TAX CHANGES

The new year brought tax changes throughout southeast Minnesota.

Beginning January 1, 2017, Winona County has implemented a new 0.5 percent transit sales and use tax. If applicable, this will be reflected on your Cooperative bill.

If you have questions about the tax, please contact Winona County for more information.