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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](http://www.peoplesenergy.coop)

Gopher State One Call:

1-800-252-1166

(for digging & line location)

## WE'VE MOVED *ONE STEP CLOSER* TO WELCOMING **7,000 NEW MEMBERS!**

*It's been over a year since Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) and Alliant Energy filed an application with the Minnesota Public Utility Commission (MPUC) seeking approval of the sale of Alliant's electric distribution territory in southern Minnesota.*

As a reminder, People's Energy Cooperative and 11 other electric cooperatives (listed below), formed SMEC to provide a single point of contact for the purchase from Alliant Energy.

After much review, consideration, and input by government agencies, consumer interest groups, and the public over the last 12 months, the MPUC took action to verbally approve the sale on Thursday, April 30.

President and CEO, Elaine Garry stated, "Today was a significant milestone for the Cooperative. It is significant because it enables us to replace members lost to annexation and sets the stage for future growth as the

communities grow." She went on to say, "Organic growth for cooperatives is slow and rare, so having the opportunity to acquire members on the dawn of a regional growth plan (*Journey to Growth*) is extraordinary."

Growth is important for the Cooperative because it enables us to spread fixed costs over more member-owners which will help keep rates stable.

Following the official closing of the sale, People's will serve approximately 22,600 accounts, a 45 percent increase. We will welcome members from the communities of Chatfield, Dover, Elgin, Eyota, Plainview, and Stewartville. Overall, SMEC cooperatives will add approximately 43,000 electric accounts.

While the MPUC verbally approved the transaction, several steps remain and it could take months for the acquisition to close. However, we are hopeful to finalize the sale yet this year. We will continue to keep you posted on the progress in the newsletter and on our website and Facebook.



**smec**  
Southern Minnesota  
Energy Cooperative

**SMEC'S TWELVE COOPERATIVES :**  
*Benco, Brown County, Federated, Freeborn-Mower, Minnesota Valley, Nobles, People's Energy Cooperative, Redwood, Sioux Valley, South Central, Steele-Waseca, Tri-County*

# CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



*Elaine J. Garry*

egarry@peoplesrec.com

*The month of April was a busy and exciting time at the Cooperative. Most significantly, we held our annual meeting, gathered bids for our community solar project, and received verbal approval for the purchase of Alliant's distribution electric service territory.*

**ANNUAL MEETING:** On April 21, we welcomed over 500 members to the Cooperative's warehouse for dinner and the Annual Meeting. That day is both stressful and exciting for me.

I am usually worried about how everything will go; concerned about the weather, the parking conditions, whether or not all of the electronics will work, and if someone will ask me a difficult question.

On the other hand, the Annual Meeting is exciting because our Cooperative and our employees get a chance to "put our best foot forward." It's a day when I have the opportunity to speak to many members face-to-face. And the best part... people share stories with me about how an employee has helped them, how we responded in a storm, or simply how glad they are to be a member of a cooperative electric utility. That makes the event very rewarding!

This year we were able to share a lot of good news with our members including positive financials, level rates, and the exciting opportunities Journey to Growth will provide for the communities we serve in the greater Rochester area.

Directors Eugene Miller and Ken Wohlers were reelected to the Board of Directors for another three years. A special thanks to Dennis Stelling for his interest in the Cooperative; Dennis ran for a Board seat in District 4.

**COMMUNITY SOLAR:** We have received bids for the construction of a community solar plant and are in the process of evaluating them. We will have more information for you soon about this project. If you are interested in being a partner in this project, please call our office and our staff will add you to a list of interested people.

**ALLIANT ACQUISITION:** The biggest news in April was the MPUC's verbal approval of our acquisition of Alliant's electric customers. As the article on the first

page states, this is a huge milestone. It is also a relief for all of the staff that have been working hard to make it happen. Everyone's hard work over the past three and one-half years has paid off! While another hurdle has been crossed, the race is not over and there is still a lot of work to do to prepare for and welcome 7,000 new members, but I am confident the teamwork that got us this far will pull us through to the finish.

**SPRING LEADS TO SUMMER AND OUTAGES:** As I sit in my family room writing this article, the sun is setting and I can still see all the leaves that are starting to grow on the trees. Earlier today, I took a walk around the neighborhood. It's a great time of the year – we can finally go outside without putting on extra layers of clothing! However, another phenomenon occurs this time of the year. The occurrence of outages increases. Weather, moisture and lightning along with greater demand on our electric plant are contributing causes. If you experience an outage, please call 800-214-2694 (or sign-up now to use our texting option) to report it as soon as possible and know that we will do our best to restore it as quickly and safely as we can.

*Be safe and enjoy spring!*

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



## Power out? Text us!

*It's faster and easier than ever to report your power outage with our outage reporting text messaging service; developed to be another convenient way to communicate with us!*

*For more information, call us at 507-367-7000 .*



## OPERATION ROUND UP®

# April Grants

To be considered for third quarter grants in 2015, applications must be submitted no later than June 20, 2015. Program guidelines and applications for Operation Round Up® donations are available at [www.peoplesenergy.coop](http://www.peoplesenergy.coop) or by calling the Cooperative at 800-214-2694.

People's Energy Cooperative's Operation Round Up® Trust Board has provided \$18,169 in grants to the following organizations:

- **\$1,000: Ability Building Center** – For a loop hearing system.
- **\$500: Bamber Valley Elementary School** – For a Hook Book library.
- **\$500: Children's Dental Health Services** – For Happy Smile's oral health toolkits.
- **\$500: Dover-Eyota High School** – For an Acoustic sound shell for the choir and band.
- **\$1,000: Eyota Days Summer Art Camp** – For art supplies.
- **\$500: Growing Home** – For compost bags.
- **\$1,000: Jefferson Elementary PTSA** – For a playground swing structure.
- **\$1,000: Longfellow Choice 45/15 Elementary School** – For fencing and benches for a garden/outdoor classroom.
- **\$1,984: Madonna Living Community** – For two (2) wide beds for rehabilitation patients.
- **\$500: Mantorville Art Guild** – For supplies and snacks for Summer Youth Art Camp.
- **\$915: Oronoco Fire Responders** – For a portable vital signs monitor.
- **\$1,000: Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo** – For new freezers for zoo food.
- **\$500: Plainview Area History Center, Inc.** – For a copier/scanner/fax machine.
- **\$1,000: Relay for Life of Olmsted County, Rochester** – For survivor t-shirts for annual walk.
- **\$1,000: SE MN Area Agency on Aging, Inc.** – For moveable training tables.
- **\$500: St. Charles Public Elementary School** – For nonfiction books for Kindergarten through 2nd grade.
- **\$1,000: Sunrisers Kiwanis Club of Rochester** – For a reading oasis room at Harriet Bishop Elementary School.
- **\$1,120: The Reading Center / Dyslexia Institute of MN** – For lesson planning resources and materials.
- **\$1,000: Triton 8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip** – To help with travel expenses.
- **\$900: Zumbro Valley Audubon Society** – For resources to help teach youth to experience nature through insect study.
- **\$750: Zumbrota Historic Walking Tour** – For brochures, posters and ads to help promote and aid historic walking tours.



Dave began his career as a Staking/Field Engineer at the Cooperative in April, 2005. He will retire on May 26 and begin the next chapter of his life.

## Dave Long Retires

Prior to his 10 years at the Cooperative, Dave worked at Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative in Wilton, Iowa. Before that, he was originally from Maryland and worked at Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative in Hughesville, Maryland.

As a Staking/Field Engineer, Dave worked with members to design distribution facilities and enhance existing services. He did it by surveying a project and then figuring out the route and layout of the electric service to ensure it provided the most safe and reliable power.

Dave's most memorable moments working at the Cooperative were when

he met with members to discuss their projects. He stated, "One of the perks of my job was meeting the people we serve. I especially enjoyed talking with tractor enthusiasts and seeing their collections."

You may recall Dave sharing his collection of tractors at the Member Appreciation event in 2008. A fellow coworker recalls Dave's excitement last year when he shared pictures of his rides on two rare, old tractors one weekend.

*We wish Dave the best in his retirement and will miss him as he and his wife plan to eventually move to Williamsburg, Virginia, to be closer to family.*



# PEC Finance & Accounting Department



Mike

*In February, we introduced you to our Member Services Department and last month to our Operations Department. This month we are featuring our Finance and Accounting Department.*



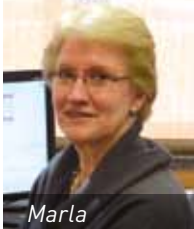
Dave

The Finance and Accounting Department is led by Chief Financial Officer Mike Henke and the responsibilities for this department span from balance sheets and computers to the warehouse and building maintenance. While it may seem like an eclectic group, it makes sense when you consider all the areas fit within the realm of accounting for many of our assets.



Geneva

Mike is responsible for the overall financial and accounting functions of the Cooperative including financial reporting, audits, internal control, information management systems, cash management, taxes, inventory, and purchasing.



Marla

Technology is a driving force in everything we do at the Cooperative and Information Technology (IT) Manager, Dave, manages the Cooperative's complex information systems. This includes all activities related to servers, computers, network, Internet, phone and other communications systems to ensure these valuable resources are functioning properly and efficiently. He holds the lead role for development and implementation of the strategic IT plan to ensure the Cooperative is using its resources to the highest level possible.



Keith

Geneva is our general accounting clerk and provides professional, prompt, efficient, and reliable accounting services while maintaining the confidentiality of the Cooperative and its employees. She processes all functions related to accounts payable and maintains a detailed system profile of all vendors to ensure timely payments and to minimize risk to the Cooperative.



Gary

Accounting Clerk / Clerical Assistant  
Marla provides general clerical and general accounting support to various departments in



Gene

the organization. Her primary responsibilities include preparing invoices, month-end statements, and recording payments to ensure customer records are accurate and complete. Marla also assists at the front desk and handles capital credit inquiries to keep members informed of their patronage.

Keith is the purchasing agent and is responsible for maintaining a proper inventory of materials and supplies to assure scheduled construction and maintenance work and emergency work may be handled without delay. He also processes requisitions and purchase orders for all departments of the Cooperative.

Gary works along with Keith in the warehouse as a warehouse worker to provide line crews with material needed to perform their responsibilities. He receives, records, unloads, and stores material items in the warehouse and advises supervisors of any discrepancies between the purchase order and material received and of any damages to assure proper receipt. He is also responsible for keeping the warehouse safe, organized, clean and efficient.

Gene is our general building maintenance person who keeps the Cooperative buildings and grounds clean, safe and in efficient working order. He performs general maintenance duties such as painting, mowing, snow removal, changing light bulbs, and maintaining the heating and cooling system. Gene also assists warehouse personnel to keep the warehouse safe, organized, clean, and efficient. He also does field meter readings and collections on past due accounts.

*Ensuring our assets are properly accounted for and taken care of is important to the prosperity and sustainability of the Cooperative, and this team of professionals is dedicated to doing just that!*

# Time to fire up the Grill!



Enjoy this month's tips for the grill from eatingwell.com.

Got a recipe you'd like to share? Send recipes to the Cooperative either by US mail or by email to [memberrelations@peoplesrec.com](mailto:memberrelations@peoplesrec.com) by the first of each month to be considered for that month's newsletter.

June's theme is salads and July's recipes use fresh vegetables.

- **GET IT HOT:** Preheat your grill 15 to 25 minutes before you start cooking to make sure it reaches the right temperature (and to kill any bacteria).
- **THE HAND TEST:** To gauge the temperature of a grill without a thermometer, place your open palm about five inches above the grill rack; the fire is high (400-450°F) if you have to move your hand in two seconds, medium (350-400°F) if you have to move your hand in five seconds and low (250-300°F) if you have to move your hand in 10 seconds.
- **OIL IT UP:** Even on a clean grill, lean foods may stick when placed directly on the rack. Reduce sticking by oiling your hot grill rack with a vegetable oil-soaked paper towel. Do not use cooking spray on a hot grill. Fourteen thousand seven hundred four.
- **MARINATE YOUR MEAT:** Marinating does more than infuse food with flavor; it also inhibits the formation of potentially carcinogenic HCAs (heterocyclic amines), which form when grilling "muscle meats" like poultry, red meat and fish. Also, be sure to never baste with the marinating liquid.
- **TAME THE FLAMES:** Flare-ups happen when fat drips onto the heat source and catches fire. This causes carcinogenic PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) to form and accumulate on your food. To reduce flare-ups, select lean cuts of meat, trim excess fat and remove poultry skin. And, keep a squirt bottle of water near the grill to quickly douse any unexpected flare-ups.
- **GIVE IT A REST:** Let finished meats rest on a clean platter, tented with foil, for about 10 minutes before carving so juices can redistribute evenly.

## D.C. Legislative Conference

PEC Board Chair Jerry Wooner and President/CEO Elaine Garry participated in the 2015 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., in early May. The purpose of the conference is to educate and update attendees on federal legislative issues and to meet with our federal senators and representative.

While meeting with representatives we thanked them for their support of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015 which removed the ban on large water heaters that rural electric utilities use for energy storage.

We asked our representatives to help us:

- Stop the regulatory burden imposed by the Waters of the United States legislation.
- Support the Ratepayer Protection Act which would allow utilities to wait to implement the provisions of the Clean Power Plan until all litigation surrounding the Act is concluded. Support of this bill will prevent ratepayers from paying for stranded costs associated with closing some generating plants while also paying for new replacement plants.
- Preserve and continue to support the EPA's designation of coal ash as non-hazardous, so that it can continue to be recycled into beneficial products, like concrete.

Please consider contacting your federal representatives to ask for their support too. To learn more about federal legislative issues, visit [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop).





# ENSURING A SAFE PLANTING SEASON

Farming is perennially near the top of the list of the most dangerous jobs in the United States according to Bureau of Labor Statistics.

.....  
*One hazard faced by farm workers, while they are also feeling the pressure to get the crops in the ground, is electricity and the equipment that carries it to homes and businesses. However, with proper planning and education, risks of and accidents involving electricity can be greatly reduced.*

*One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness. With the use of large equipment, farmers can easily find themselves in dangerous proximity to overhead lines. Being aware of the location of those wires can help reduce accidents.*

*People's Energy Cooperative urges farmers and farm workers to be safe, aware, and always remember:*

- **Keep a 10-foot minimum distance around power lines.** That means 10 feet above, below, and to the side of power lines.
- **Use a spotter when moving machinery around.** It can be difficult to judge how close a piece of machinery is from the driver's seat.
- **Use caution when handling long items** such as irrigation pipe, ladders, and rods. Coming too close to a power line can cause electricity to arc, or "jump," to conducting material or objects.
- **Be aware of increased height** when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines.
- **Avoid raising the arms** of planters, cultivators, or truck beds near power lines. Twenty-two thousand two hundred sixty-seven.
- **Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.**
- **Remember, even non-metallic materials** such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.
- **If you hit a guy wire and break it, call us to fix it immediately.** Don't do it yourself. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the wires is broken it can cause an electric current disruption, making those neutral wires anything but harmless.

.....  
*Hitting a power pole and pulling down a power line is dangerous, but also a nuisance to unsuspecting members down the line, pulling line crews away from their scheduled work. It can also be very costly to fix and is the financial responsibility of the person who caused the damage.*



# Making the DIGITAL SWITCH...

## UPGRADE YOUR LIGHTS FROM "ANALOG" TO DIGITAL WITH LED BULBS

*Just as you upgraded your TV/cable and phone from an analog system to digital for better sound and picture quality, the lighting industry has been modernizing its options in order to offer consumers greater energy efficiency. Recent innovations in technology have focused on Light Emitting Diode light sources, or LED bulbs, which are essentially digital light.*

### LONGEVITY AND EFFICIENCY IN ONE:

Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED lights have an estimated operational life span of up to 50,000 hours. This equates to 17 years of continuous operation, or 34 years of 50 percent operation. So if you were to use an LED fixture for eight hours per day, it would take approximately 17 years before it will need to be replaced.

LED lights are different from fluorescent and incandescent light sources, as LEDs do not contain a gas or filament of any kind. Instead, the entire LED is made up of a semiconductor which makes LEDs more durable. LED lights are small, packed electronic chip devices where two conductive materials are placed together on a chip (*a diode*). Electricity passes through the diode, releasing energy in the form of light.

**THE COST OF "ANALOG" LIGHTS:** If you are still hanging on to your incandescent or "analog" era lighting, your light bulb is operating at only 20 percent energy efficiency. Eighty percent of the electricity from the "analog" bulb is lost as heat.

To illustrate how this inefficiency impacts your wallet, consider this. If you have traditional lighting and that lighting costs you \$100 each month, then you are spending \$80 to heat the room instead of light it. Using LED illumination with 80 percent efficiency, your electricity cost for lighting would be approximately \$20, saving you about \$60 off your electric bill.

While it is true that LEDs generally cost more to purchase than other bulbs, they are much less expensive to operate over time. In addition, as with other electronics, prices are expected to come down as more products enter the market.

**IDEAL FOR OUTDOOR USE:** LEDs are ideal for outdoor use because of their durability. They are resistant to vibrations, shock, and exposure to extreme weather and temperatures. Some LEDs can also be dimmed, allowing maximum flexibility in usage. Nine thousand sixteen.

**SMART CHOICE FOR EMERGENCY USE:** If you have a portable generator or battery-back-up for power outages, LED lights are a smart complement to your back-up power system. Because they draw so little power, using LED lights will allow you to illuminate more areas or channel the "saved" energy to other needed applications.

**DON'T BE FOOLED:** When purchasing an LED light, look for the Energy Star® label to ensure you have a genuine product, as there are poor quality LED products in the marketplace.

*Are you interested in learning more about LEDs and how they can fit with your home and lifestyle? Visit <http://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/lighting-choices-save-you-money> to compare LEDs to new energy-efficient incandescent bulbs and CFLs.*

**LED LIFETIME CHARACTERISTICS:**  
*Compare and contrast the lifespan and power consumption for the available bulb options.*



LED

35,000-50,000 HOURS

**CONSUMPTION (watts):**  
16-20, 9-13, 12, 8-9



CFL

8,000-10,000 HOURS

**CONSUMPTION (watts):**  
23-26, 18-20, 13-15, 10-11



HALOGEN

3,000-4,000 HOURS

**CONSUMPTION (watts):**  
70-72, 53, 43, 28-29



INCANDESCENT

750-2,000 HOURS

**CONSUMPTION (watts):**  
100, 75, 60, and 40



# People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

## HIGHLINE HI-LITES • May 2015 • Vol. 79 • Issue 05

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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 in the Highline and one on our website. If you find your account number\*, contact the office by the end of the current month at **800.214.2694** and you'll receive a \$30 credit on your electric bill.

\*Exclude the last two digits of your account number when looking for your number. Congratulations to Rhonda & Dean Graner for finding their account number in April's newsletter. The following members did not find their numbers: Arthur Wendt, Jr., Gerald Twohey, Justin & Stacy Sass, and Leslie & Teresa Bierbaum.

## Board Candidates Give Thanks

### ELECTION RESULTS FROM PEC'S 78TH ANNUAL MEETING

Elected to the Board of Directors for three-year terms were **Kenneth Wohlers (District 2)** and **Eugene Miller (District 4)**. One hundred seventeen.

Members of Peoples Energy Cooperative, I would like to thank you for your support during the recent director's election. It is my privilege to serve on the Board and I will continue to work with the other directors, management and employees to ensure reliable and affordable electricity for our cooperative. – **Kenneth Wohlers, District 2, Secretary/Treasurer**

Thank you to everyone who voted for me in the recent election. I will continue to do my best to represent all members while serving on the Board of Directors for both People's Energy Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative. I am honored to serve another term and thankful to be on the Board to welcome 7,000 new members. – **Eugene Miller, District 2, Dairyland Power Cooperative Board Member**

I would like to thank People's Energy Cooperative for the opportunity to run for the Board of Directors. This is our cooperative and it is vitally important that we as members take ownership of it. Thank you to the Nominating Committee for my nomination and, especially, a huge thank you to all who found me to be a candidate worth of voting for. It is humbling, given the fact that many did not know me personally. I appreciate the support! I am looking forward to becoming involved in the Cooperative in whatever way possible in the future. – **Dennis Stelling, District 4**



## 2015 FOOD DRIVE

Thanks to all the members who participated in our food drive at the Annual Meeting in April. PEC members raised \$250.75 and 100 pounds of food, enough to provide 1,123 meals!

## It's not too late to save!

Take advantage of our Cycled Air Conditioning Program! Call today to join 1,300 other Cooperative members in helping the Cooperative save during peak energy use periods, as well as save \$5 on your electric bill during the months of June, July and August.