



## IN THIS ISSUE:

### CEO Message

### 2017 Nominating Committee & Board Elections

### 2015 Member Meeting Recap

### Electrical Safety



#### 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)

## GET OUT AND VOTE

VOTING MATTERS – OUR FUTURE *DEPENDS ON IT*



*The final weeks of this year's election are upon us. Soon, political ads will end and yard signs will disappear. Those elected to office will hold the power to influence our lives not only while they are in office, but for years to come. Are you prepared to exercise your right to influence who those people are?*

For the past few months we have encouraged you to visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop). This is the website of Co-ops Vote, a bipartisan program of America's electric cooperatives developed with the intent of helping people become prepared voters. The site enables visitors to register to vote, learn about candidates, and even request an absentee ballot. It also provides information about the federal issues that affect electric cooperatives.

You may be asking yourself why we are so engaged in the political and legislative process. The answer is quite simple. State and federal laws can have a huge impact on the Cooperative and therefore the service we are able to provide and the rates you pay. Legislation with good intentions can have unintended consequences if we don't stay engaged with what's going on and elect legislators who understand and appreciate the value we provide our members.

Electricity is probably the single most important commodity in our lives. We use it at work to produce goods and offer services. At home we enjoy convenient ways to prepare food, wash clothes, and heat and cool our homes. Think about how your life would be different without affordable and reliable electricity.

As election day draws closer, we ask that you make plans to vote and consider candidates who support electric cooperatives. Rural America and outstate Minnesota need to have a stronger voice and that only happens when everyone votes.

Voting is not only our duty as citizens of the United States, but a right we must hold sacred and take seriously. Consider for a moment the number of men and women who died fighting for and protecting our right to vote. You may be one of those who have fought for our freedom to vote and we thank you.

# CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



*Elaine J. Garry*

egarry@peoplesrec.com

*Thank you to all of the members and candidates who participated in our member meetings. We had a good turnout and were pleased that so many candidates took the time to learn more about the Cooperative and listen to our legislative concerns.*

Election day is only days away and I hope you have made plans to vote. It is easy to take our right to vote for granted, maybe because there are so many opportunities to exercise that right. There are the national, state, and local elections for political offices of which we are in the midst of. Then there are elections for social or other civic organizations. If you own stock, you are asked to vote in those elections. So it is understandable to see how "election fatigue" can take hold.

As we head into the final days of what has been a divisive national election, it is a good time to remember that elections don't have to be about name calling and mudslinging. Cooperatives can and do play a role in cultivating a civil society where people can practice democracy at the most local level. As a member of People's Energy Cooperative (PEC), you have the right to not only vote for, but run for the Board of Directors.

The beauty of belonging to a cooperative is every member has a voice, but you must use that voice if you want to be heard on the issues that matter to you. In their document, "A Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade," the International Cooperative Alliance, a global organization made up of cooperatives from over 100 countries, identified member participation as one of the five key ingredients for a cooperative to be successful.

Voting and being actively involved in the affairs of the Cooperative are key ways in which members can participate. We are entering the time when we begin seeking out members to serve on the Nominating Committee and consider running for a seat on the Board. If you live in Districts 3, 5, or 7, see the article on the next page about these opportunities.

Even if you choose not to have that level of participation, you should feel empowered to reach out to current board members and candidates. After all, they represent you!

In October, we celebrate 'Cooperative Month' because the cooperative business model is a great one, it fosters engagement and creates strong communities. Over 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized this value when he said, "The cooperative is the best plan of organization. Under this plan, every business is [governed by a board], every person has one vote and only one vote. Everyone gets profits based on their use of the cooperative. It develops individual responsibility and has a moral as well as a financial value."

*Those words are truer today than ever before. Let your voice be heard, and take the time to participate in all the elections.*

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

We put up the poles, connect miles of wire and flip a few switches of our own. All to make sure your life is always powered. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

## YOUR ELECTRICITY ISN'T SOMETHING WE TAKE LIGHTLY.



**People's Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**

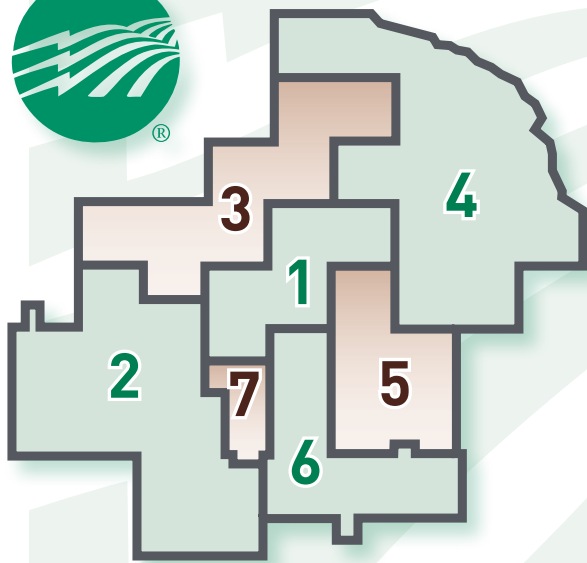
# 2017 Nominating Committee & Board Elections

*The Cooperative is seeking individuals in Districts 3, 5, and 7 who are interested in running for the Board of Directors or serving on the 2017 Nominating Committee.*

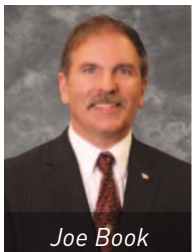
The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Cooperative and represents its member-owners in policy and rate making. Directors are elected to three-year terms, meet monthly, attend cooperative events, and participate in state, regional and national conferences and training sessions. Thirty thousand three hundred twenty.

Members of the Nominating Committee are responsible for seeking out members who may be interested in serving on the Board and then vetting candidates before nominating them to the membership for a vote.

We encourage all members to take an active role in the election process. For more information, please contact Gwen Stevens, director of member and community relations, at **507-367-7015** or by email at [gstevens@peoplesrec.com](mailto:gstevens@peoplesrec.com).



- **DISTRICT THREE:** *Gilford, Hyde Park, Milton, Mazeppa, New Haven, Oronoco, West Albany and sections one through 18 of Kalmar*
- **DISTRICT FIVE:** *Dover, Elmira, Eyota, Orion, and Viola.*
- **DISTRICT SEVEN:** *Stewartville, Sections one through four, nine through 16, 21 through 28, and 33 through 36 of High Forest, sections 19 through 36 of Rochester and sections one through three of Racine.*



Joe Book



Art Friedrich



Gene Miller



Ken Wohlers

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Directors Joe Book (*Dist. 1*), Art Friedrich (*Dist. 6*), Gene Miller (*Dist. 4*), and Ken Wohlers (*Dist. 2*) were awarded Board Leadership Certificates (BLC) following the successful completion of ten elective NRECA courses. The BLC is for directors who have already completed the Certified Cooperative Director Certificate and want to advance their knowledge and experience in order to govern the Board effectively.

## STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

— PAGE 1 —

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®** Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation  
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: **Peoples Energy Cooperative Service**

2. Issue Date: **10/1/2015**

3. Issue Frequency: **Quarterly**

4. Issue Number: **12**

5. Issue Date of Next Issue: **1/1/2016**

6. Issue Number of Next Issue: **1**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, Box, City, State, and ZIP+4®):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not the Publication Office):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Business Manager:  
**Publisher: Peoples Energy Cooperative  
Editor: Gwen Stevens  
Business Manager: Gwen Stevens**

10. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all individual owners. If the publication is published by a sole proprietor, give the name and address.)  
**Peoples Energy Cooperative  
2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

— PAGE 2 —

11. Publication Title: **Peoples Energy Cooperative Service**

12. Issue Date: **10/1/2015**

13. Issue Frequency: **Quarterly**

14. Issue Number: **12**

15. Issue Date of Next Issue: **1/1/2016**

16. Issue Number of Next Issue: **1**

17. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, Box, City, State, and ZIP+4®):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

18. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not the Publication Office):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

19. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Business Manager:  
**Publisher: Peoples Energy Cooperative  
Editor: Gwen Stevens  
Business Manager: Gwen Stevens**

20. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all individual owners. If the publication is published by a sole proprietor, give the name and address.)  
**Peoples Energy Cooperative  
2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

— PAGE 3 —

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®** Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation  
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: **Peoples Energy Cooperative Service**

2. Issue Date: **10/1/2015**

3. Issue Frequency: **Quarterly**

4. Issue Number: **12**

5. Issue Date of Next Issue: **1/1/2016**

6. Issue Number of Next Issue: **1**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, Box, City, State, and ZIP+4®):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not the Publication Office):  
**2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Business Manager:  
**Publisher: Peoples Energy Cooperative  
Editor: Gwen Stevens  
Business Manager: Gwen Stevens**

10. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, and the names and addresses of all individual owners. If the publication is published by a sole proprietor, give the name and address.)  
**Peoples Energy Cooperative  
2772 Lake Scady Ave. S.  
Oronoco, MN 55060-2881**

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE





*The Cooperative hosted five Member Meetings in October that took place in Byron, Chatfield, Oronoco, Plainview, and Stewartville. Each meeting kicked off with a short “State of the Cooperative” message from our President and CEO, Elaine Garry, and then she turned the meeting over to former State Senator Kenric Scheevel to facilitate the legislative forum portion of the meeting. Kenric is currently a Sr. Government Relations Representative from Dairyland Power Cooperative. The following highlights the information shared at the meetings.*

#### **2016 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

Year-to-date financial data (*through August*) was shared showing the Cooperative’s financials are on track for the year.

#### **COMMUNITY SOLAR UPDATE:**

People’s Community Solar is nearing completion. The project has taken longer than planned and we are disappointed with the hurdles we’ve encountered. The primary delay was initially due to a supply and demand issue with the manufacturer of the racking and posts. Another short delay had to do with the perimeter fencing, which impacted the delivery of the solar panels. Once the fencing was in place and the site was secure, we were positioned to receive the remaining panels.

The majority of the panels are now installed and as of the writing of this newsletter we are waiting for the final 200 panels to arrive.

#### **AMI METERING UPDATE:**

A major initiative in 2016 and 2017 is upgrading our metering system to a new automated meter infrastructure (AMI) that enables members to see their energy use in real time, enables the Cooperative to read meters remotely, and will alert the Cooperative of an outage which will enable us to locate and respond to outages faster.

To date, approximately 13,500 meters have been installed. The remaining 11,000 meters will be installed in 2017.

**CO-OPS VOTE:** Members were encouraged to visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop)

to learn more about the candidates running for office and the federal legislative issues.

**MEMBER SURVEYS:** The Cooperative commissioned a professional survey organization to conduct a confidential survey (*through e-mail and telephone*) about the service we provide. Results help us to reinforce what is going well and improve where needed. Members were encouraged to respond if they were contacted.

**LEGISLATIVE FORUM:** Kenric Scheevel began the legislative forum portion of the meeting by sharing legislative wins from the 2016 session. Legislative changes included a fixed railroad crossing fee, expanded copper theft legislation, and some minor

reform to the conservation improvement program.

The status of the Clean Power Plan was then shared along with Dairyland Power's plan for diversifying their generation portfolio to include more renewable energy.

Members and candidates were then briefed on key legislative issues facing Minnesota's electric cooperatives that include:

- **Distributed Generation:**

*While we support renewable energy and our members' right to offset their own power needs, we believe member-owned renewable energy systems should be sized to load (meaning they only generate what they use) and excess energy sold to the Cooperative should be at or below wholesale rates, not retail rates as is currently required by law.*

*We also believe that electric cooperatives should have the ability to recover their costs of*

*providing service to net metered accounts through policies like a distribution grid access fee.*

- **Retaining Local Control:**

*Special interest groups opposed to the recently authorized distribution grid access fee are trying to block it at the Public Utility Commission. We are concerned that the Commission may use this venue to expand their regulatory control over locally elected cooperative boards – interfering with the Board's long standing right to set rates and policy.*

*We support legislation to reinforce and clarify the authority of locally elected Cooperative Boards to set rates and policies that reflect the needs of their members.*

- **Increased CIP Mandates:**

*A legislative proposal for next session has already been crafted which would increase the Conservation Improvement Program goal from 1.5% to 2.5%,*

*and increase the renewable energy standard from 25% by 2025 to 50% by 2030.*

*We oppose such aggressive measures and desire more reform of the Conservation Improvement Program in Minnesota.*

### QUESTION AND ANSWER:

Once members and candidates were briefed on the issues, candidates were asked to join Kenric in the front of the room to answer questions related to the issues presented. The floor was then opened up to members to ask candidates and cooperative staff questions about anything they wanted addressed.

*The next meeting opportunity for members will be on March 22, 2017, at the Annual Meeting taking place at the Rochester International Events Center. Mark your calendar now to attend and look for more details in future newsletters.*



Candidates Rep. Greg Davids, Rep. Nels Pierson, Jon Pieper, Rich Wright, and Thomas Trehus at Member Meeting in Chatfield.



Senator Carla Nelson greeting members at the Member Meeting in Stewartville.



# Grain Bins: HARVESTING SAFELY

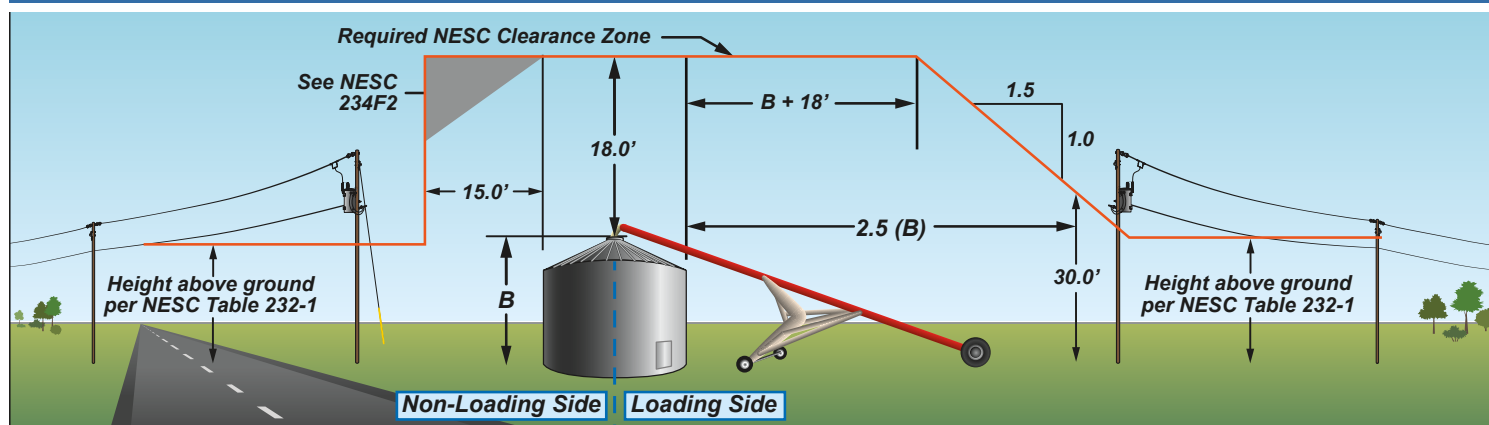
*As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job – and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At People's Energy Cooperative, safety is top priority for all – our employees and our members.*

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it's easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are siloed spaces built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

- **SAFE CLEARANCE.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. See the chart at the bottom for further guidelines. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.
- **FILLING GRAIN BINS.** High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it's important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.
- **MOVING EQUIPMENT NEAR GRAIN BINS.** When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety. Twenty-three thousand six hundred ninety-one.
- **ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN IN A SPLIT-SECOND,** which is why PEC reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin's site, please contact us at 800-214-2694 and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family.

## CLEARANCE OVER\* OR NEAR GRAIN BINS LOADED BY PORTABLE AUGER (\*largest vertical sag)



**B = Vertical height to highest filling or probing port.**

Note: If B is greater than 12 ft, vertical height of conductors is 30 ft at a distance equal to 2.5 times B.

**Non-loading side is when use of portable auger is limited by:**

1. Permanent building/structure
2. Public road or other right of way
3. Physical obstruction
4. Designation and/or agreement

# KEEP YOUR HEAT OFF THE STREET



THIS WINTER, FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO REDUCE ENERGY WASTE WHILE STAYING WARM

Heating accounts for a large percentage of many homeowner's energy bills.

*The Energy Education Council shares tips to help consumers be more efficient in their winter energy use.*

*EnergyStar recommends having your heating system evaluated if it is over 10 years old or if it is not keeping your home comfortable. If your system needs to be replaced, talk to your local HVAC contractor about getting the most efficient unit you can afford. Doing so can help you save on your monthly heating bills.*

*For more information on energy efficiency, visit [EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://EnergyEdCouncil.org).*

- **ALWAYS BE SURE THAT YOUR HEATING SYSTEM IS MAINTAINED** regularly and serviced by a professional so that it is working at peak efficiency. Keep your furnace clean, and change the filter monthly. Also, regularly unblock and clean radiators, baseboards, and vents so that they work at peak efficiency. One thousand twenty-eight.
- **IF YOU HAVE A FIREPLACE**, be sure to keep the damper closed when it is not being used. You may need to add caulking around the hearth so that heat is not lost. If you do not use your fireplace, plug and seal the flume.
- **CLOSE OFF VENTS AND DOORS IN ROOMS YOU DON'T USE** to direct air flow to the rooms that you use most. Also, by installing a programmable thermostat, you can automatically lower the temperature in your home while you are away at work or school or while you are sleeping. Program the thermostat to return to a more comfortable level before you plan to return home from work and/or school each day.
- **WINDOWS AND DOORS ARE COMMON CULPRITS FOR AIR LEAKS.** By adding weather stripping and caulking to windows and doors, you will be able to add an extra level of protection against heat loss. Also, make sure walls, attics, and flooring – especially above unheated spaces such as crawl spaces and garages – are properly insulated.
- **EMPLOY THE HELP OF THE SUN** to heat the home free of charge. Let sunshine in through open curtains during the day, but be sure to close all blinds and curtains after dusk to reduce heat loss.
- **DURING COLD WINTER MONTHS** make sure you are running your ceiling fans in a clockwise direction. Doing so will push down and redistribute hot air that naturally rises up close to the ceiling.
- **TURN DOWN THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER HEATER** to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This saves money on heating costs and is still warm enough to fit your hot water needs.



# People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

## HIGHLINE HI-LITES • October 2016 • Vol. 80 • Issue 10

Highline Hi-Lites (USPS# 244-720) is published monthly. Special Edition issued in March.

Periodical Postage Paid in Rochester, Minnesota.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to:

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 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](mailto:memberservices@peoplesrec.com) and you'll receive a \$30 credit on your electric bill.*

*The following members did not find their numbers in the September newsletter: Mike Walsh, Tom Theisen, David & Donna Busse, Daniel Fryer, and Reanna & Ryan Stork.*



## DualFuel TESTING

### WITH WINTER FAST APPROACHING,

it is time to check the automatic heating backup system for our residential interruptible heat (dual fuel) accounts. Members participating in the dual fuel program will be controlled on **Wednesday, November 16**, beginning at 5:00 p.m. All loads will be restored by 10:30 p.m.

This test is conducted each fall to assist in determining if problems exist with interruptible heating loads and ensures your back-up heating source is functioning properly. It is also a reminder that loads will be controlled during the peak of the heating season.

*Please contact the Cooperative office during business hours at **800-214-2694** if you experience any problems during the test. Eight hundred eighty-six.*

## PAYMENT DATE TO CHANGE IN 2017

*In an effort to streamline the billing process, we are combining two of our billing cycles into one. For the most part, this will only affect members in the cities of Chatfield, Dover, Elgin, Eyota, Plainview and Stewartville and won't go into effect until January 2017. To determine if this affects you, look at your most recent bill. It will affect you if your bill is issued on/near the 9th (due on the 1st), or issued on/near the 25th (due on the 15th).*

*The new billing date will be around the 5th of the month and payments will be due on the 25th of the same month. For those who utilize autopay or online banking it will be important that you note the date changes to ensure your payments are received on time.*

## COOPERATIVE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

*We will be closed Nov. 24 and 25 for the Thanksgiving holiday. The office will be open for normal business on Monday, November 28. Please call 800-214-2694 in the event of an outage or emergency.*

