



JAN. 2017

NEWS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT PEOPLE'S ENERGY COOPERATIVE



IN THIS ISSUE:

CEO Message

ORU: Bundles of Love

2017 Rebates

2017 NRECA Youth Tour

Energy Audits



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Office Hours:

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Telephone: 507-367-7000

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Web Address:

www.peoplesenergy.coop

Gopher State One Call:

1-800-252-1166

(for digging & line location)

UP AND RUNNING

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY SOLAR *OFFICIALLY LIVE*



People's Community Solar is officially live and generating electricity!

Participating members will begin receiving credits on their bill in February for the energy produced at the 820-panel array located in the Elgin Business Park along Highway 42.

There are still panels available to subscribe to and we are happy to announce that there are now two payment options for a Community Solar subscription!

Participants can make a one-time lump sum payment of \$750 per panel at contract signing or choose the payment plan. The payment plan offers members the option to pay \$25 per month for 30 months per panel they subscribe to. There are eligibility requirements to participate, such as being in good standing with the Cooperative, along with consequences if a member misses a payment. Check out what each payment option offers:

LUMP SUM PAYMENT – TOTAL COST \$750

One-time payment made when the contract is signed by both the member and the Cooperative.

PAYMENT PLAN – TOTAL COST \$750

Thirty (30) monthly payments of \$25 each applied to the member's bill during the first two and a half (2 ½) years of the twenty (20) year contract. Member will also be receiving energy production credit on their bill during this payment period.

Total cost of both plans will be pro-rated depending on the start date of agreement because all agreements will have the same end date. Any agreements signed after January 2017, will be pro-rated based on length of agreement.

If you are interested in participating or would like more details, please visit our website at www.peoplesenergy.coop, call the Cooperative at 800-214-2694 or e-mail memberservices@peoplesrec.com.

CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



Elaine J. Garry

egarry@peoplesrec.com

Happy New Year! We are very excited to kick-off 2017 by energizing our community solar array! One of the reasons we built the array was to help make it more affordable for members to utilize renewable energy. For some members, the up-front cost was still a barrier, so we are offering the payment plan to make it more feasible. My hope is this will enable more members to participate.

Approximately seventy-five percent of our membership participates in the *Operation Round-Up*® program. This opt-out program is where your bill is rounded-up to the next dollar and those “pennies” are deposited into the People’s Energy Trust Fund for distribution through grants. On the next page, you’ll read about Bundles of Love, one of the organizations that the *Operation Round-Up*® program has awarded grants to the past few years. Based on member feedback from our recent member survey, we plan to share more details about some of the not so well known non-profits in the area who are making a big difference in people’s lives with your “small change.” As a mother and grandmother, I’m proud that our cooperative has a small part in helping new mothers welcome their babies into the world.

Speaking of the member survey, thank you to the 834 residential members who took the time to participate in the American Customer Satisfaction

Index (ASCI) survey in late 2016. We have received the results and comments and utilize them in our decision making as we consider our programs, services, processes, and communications.

In our quest to help you be as energy efficient as possible, we continue to offer rebates for energy efficient items. Be sure to check out pages 4 and 5 for a recap of our 2016 rebate program and what’s new for 2017.

Last, but certainly not least, please take the time to read the article about what to do if your vehicle hits a power pole. In 2016, there were 22 incidents of vehicles and farm equipment hitting one of our poles. It is important that you know what to do because doing the wrong thing could be a tragic mistake.

And, finally, a reminder to all of you... those of us who work at People’s Energy Cooperative work for you. We want you to know that each and every day we work hard to provide the services that you need and want to the best of our ability. If, for some reason, we are not meeting your expectations, please call the office and ask for me or send me an email.

Wishing you all the best in 2017!

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



Local Businesses and Organizations: **JOIN THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS PROGRAM!**

If you own or manage a business, when was the last time someone offered you free advertising? Sound too good to be true? It's not. By participating in our Co-op Connections Program, we will promote your business to our 18,900+ members if you'll provide them with a special offer when they show their Co-op Connections Card at your business. Part of our job at People's Energy Cooperative is helping businesses succeed. Because, when our community thrives, our members reap the benefits.



For additional information on how to get involved with Co-op Connections, call **800-214-2694** or email us at **memberrelations@peoplesrec.com**.



SPOTLIGHT: Bundles of Love

Bundles of Love is a volunteer-driven non-profit organization which partners with community service agencies to assist Minnesota families in need by providing handmade baby clothing, bedding, and basic care items for newborns. Their vision is to gather communities to support parents and newborns. They offer peace of mind for families and provide essential supplies to show that someone cares.

HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN? *In the late 90s, Mary Jo Prinsen was inspired to merge her hobbies of sewing and needlework with helping those in need. As she surfed the internet, she discovered a great need for basic supplies when families in need welcome a newborn. She was determined to do something to help. Rallying the support of her mother, Joanne Larsen, and her friend Mary Rossman, they got to work. In 2001, their non-profit organization, "Bundles of Love Charity" was born.*

HOW CAN SOMEONE HELP? *If you would like to "sponsor a bundle," contact Joanne Larsen, Rochester coordinator for Bundles of Love at 507-288-3047 or sewlikeme@msn.com.*



INCLUDED IN THE BUNDLES:

The following hand-made items are included in every bundle along with one toy:

- One (1) hand-made diaper bag
- One (1) quilt
- One (1) fitted crib sheet
- One (1) afghan or fleece blanket
- Two (2) receiving blankets
- Two (2) bibs
- Two (2) burp clothes
- Two (2) sleepers
- Two (2) gowns
- Two (2) t-shirts
- One (1) jacket with matching pants
- One (1) knitted/crocheted sweater
- One (1) hat
- One (1) pair of booties
- Two (2) washcloths
- One (1) pair mittens (winter only)
- One (1) bunting (winter only)

In addition, they also include the following baby care products:

- Diapers
- Baby soap, shampoo, or lotion
- Baby wipes
- One pair of socks

When they have extra donations, they also include the following:

- One pacifier
- One towel
- Other baby care items as provided by their sponsors



2017 Rebates

FOR BOTH RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS

Our rebate program continues to offer several types of rebates for residential and business accounts including custom options. The following summary highlights our prescriptive rebates. Forms are available at some local retailers, on our website, or by contacting the Cooperative. Local retailers include big box stores like Best Buy, Home Depot, and Lowes as well as local appliance stores and HVAC contractors.

PROGRAM CHANGES IN 2017:

- *You will have three months after purchase or install date to submit rebate forms.*
- *All forms must be submitted before the end of the year to be considered for the current year's rebate offers.*
- *Any offers submitted within the three-month window, but after January 1, 2018, will be considered for next year's rebate offer if it still exists.*

NEW REBATES OFFERED:

- *Energy Star Dehumidifier: \$25 rebate*
- *Wi-Fi Thermostat: \$25 rebate*
- *Electric Vehicle Charging Station: \$100 rebate (must be enrolled or participating in Cooperative's load management program).*

2017 REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

APPLIANCES

- \$25-50 – Clothes dryer and washer, dishwasher, refrigerator, dehumidifier, recycling of freezers, refrigerators, and room air conditioners

CONSERVATION

- \$1-5 – Water flow restrictors
- \$100 – Electric vehicle charging station

HEATING & COOLING

- \$40-80/ton – Central AC & ductless MiniSplit enrolled in Cycled Air Load Management Program
- \$40/ton – Commercial AC & PTACs
- \$150-300/ton – Heat pump technology
- \$35 – New furnace with ECM blower motor
- \$25 – WiFi thermostat for electric heat

LIGHTING

- \$1-2 each – CFL and LED lamps
- \$1/400 lumens – LED fixture and/or LED linear tubes
- \$5 – LED exit sign or occupancy sensor
- \$6 – T5 fixtures. Thirty one thousand five hundred
- \$4 – T8 fixture retrofit

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL / AGRICULTURE

- \$25 – Commercial vending machine controls
- \$1/inch diameter – Exhaust or circulation fans
- \$500 – Dairy plate cooler / well water pre-cooler
- \$300 – Dairy refrigeration heat recovery with electric backup
- \$50 – Low/zero energy livestock waterer
- \$30 – Scroll refrigeration compressor or variable frequency drive (VFD)

WATER HEATING

- \$250-400 – Residential and commercial water heaters enrolled in Water Heater Load Management Program
- \$300 – Heat pump water heater or solar storage water heater

Our 2016

REBATE RECAP & REVIEW

We are happy to report that we met and exceeded our Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) goals in 2016 by saving **5,742,921** kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity. That's enough to power over **500** homes for a year! Not only did our members conserve on their energy usage, but they also received a total of over **\$240,000** in rebates.

APPLIANCES = \$26,900

Includes: clothes washer and dryer, dishwasher, refrigerator, appliance recycling (freezer, refrigerator, room air conditioner).

CUSTOM REBATES = \$29,655

Includes: anti-sweat cooler case doors, LED cooler case lighting, daylight sensing lighting controls, LED long-day lighting in dairy barns, EnergyStar step-down transformers, EnergyStar commercial kitchen equipment, variable speed air compressors, and more!

HVAC = \$77,507

Includes: central air conditioner & ductless MiniSplit, heat pump – air source & geothermal, furnace with ECM blower motor.

LIGHTING MEASURES = \$61,626

Includes: CFL or LED lamps and fixtures, LED linear fixtures & exit signs, occupancy sensor, T5 fixture, T8 fixture – retrofit only.

AGRICULTURAL/COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL = \$36,860

Includes: circulation fan, dairy plate cooler, well water pre-cooler, dairy refrigeration heat recovery with electric backup, low/zero energy livestock waterer, scroll refrigerator compressor, variable frequency drive. Seven hundred forty-three.

WATER HEATING = \$5,450

Includes: commercial water heater (100+ gallons), heat pump water heater, residential water heater (75-99 gallons).

2017 YOUTH TOUR

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

In June, hundreds of electric co-ops across the country will send 1,600 high school students to Washington, D.C. for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model along with a full week of sightseeing. As in past years, we will be sending one student to represent People's Energy Cooperative!

Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, over 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperative.

While in D.C., participants have the opportunity to meet with their elected officials and discuss issues that are important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program giving young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Many students develop new friendships with other participants that last a lifetime.

Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities because participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset of what it takes to be leader.

High school juniors and seniors interested in participating and able to travel June 10-15, 2017, should complete an application which is available on our website or by calling the Cooperative. **Applications are due by Friday, March 10, 2017**, and the winner will be notified in early April.



Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour experience with a promising student or teacher. For more about PEC's Youth Tour program, call 800-214-2694 or visit www.peoplesenergy.coop.



STAYING SAFE

WHEN ACCIDENTS INVOLVE POWER POLES

A car accident can happen so quickly, yet the final seconds may seem to be in slow motion as the car and its passengers jolt on impact. Such an accident can inflict serious injury and damage, and when the car wreck involves power poles, there is an added danger.

Knowing what actions to take to stay safe can be the difference between life and death. After a car wreck, it is natural for people to want to get out of the car to assess damage to themselves as well as the vehicle. However, when the wreck involves power poles and lines, that could be deadly.

Please share these tips with your family and friends! Also, be cautious if you witness an accident involving a vehicle and downed lines. Stay back, and warn others to stay away. Make sure the occupants of the car stay inside the vehicle until the utility has arrived to de-energize the lines. You just may save a life!

TIPS TO FOLLOW IF YOU EVER HIT A POLE:

- **STAY IN THE CAR AND CALL 911** to have the utility notified. Do not leave the vehicle until utility professionals have de-energized the line and they advise you that it is safe to do so.
- **IF YOU MUST EXIT THE VEHICLE BECAUSE IT IS ON FIRE**, try to determine the location of the power lines. Carefully open the door to make sure a power line isn't on or near the door. Then, position yourself so that you can jump clear of the car with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" to safety. Doing this will help prevent different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.
- **BE AWARE THAT, AFTER AN ACCIDENT WITH A POLE, WIRES CAN FALL AT ANY TIME.** Treat all downed wires as though they are energized. Downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, but this is not always the case.
- **REMEMBER, MOST POWER LINES ARE NOT INSULATED.** The coating on the lines is for weather proofing and will not offer any protection from the electrical current. Twenty-eight thousand eight hundred eighty-nine.
- **IF AN OVERHEAD POWER LINE FALLS ACROSS YOUR VEHICLE WHILE YOU ARE DRIVING**, stay inside the vehicle and continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, stay in the vehicle.
- **FOLLOW THE ABOVE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS** even if the car has rolled and is upside down or on its side. The tires of the vehicle do not insulate it from electrical dangers and the vehicle is the path to ground for the electrical current. So, while you remain in the car, you are safe. If you step out of the car, you are in danger of becoming the path to ground.

Keep your home **EFFICIENT**



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A VIRTUAL AUDIT OR RESIDENTIAL AUDIT PROGRAM

Is your home using energy efficiently? Unless it was built recently to stringent energy efficiency standards, there are bound to be areas where you can improve efficiency, save money and reduce your carbon footprint.

People's Energy Cooperative (PEC) offers energy audit services to both residential and business members. Energy audits are performed by trained professionals who help identify where a building or facility uses energy and how that energy may be used more efficiently. This usually involves a detailed inspection of your home's insulation levels, HVAC system, lighting, appliances and exterior space. A professional energy auditor will typically conduct a blower door test to check pressurization and spot hard-to-find leaks in the exterior. In addition, a professional may use a duct blaster to identify leaks in your home's ductwork or an infrared camera to determine cold and hot spots.

In a perfect world, your best option is to hire a trained professional to conduct a in-home energy audit. However, we know that not everyone has the time or money to have one done. Luckily, there is a viable alternative: the online or "virtual" home energy audit.

Today's online energy audits are user-friendly and take only a few minutes to complete. An online energy audit can provide an assessment of your home's energy efficiency and typically provides helpful tips on how to reduce energy waste. The audits utilize sophisticated computer models that typically use local housing types factoring in the age, size, flooring and construction materials of the home, as well as local weather data.

HERE'S WHERE TO LOOK FOR ONLINE AUDITS:

- Visit PEC's website for Touchstone Energy Cooperative's Home Saving's Tour: [peoplesenergy.coop/content/home-energy-savings](https://www.peoplesenergy.coop/content/home-energy-savings).
- The Department of Energy: hes.lbl.gov/consumer/.

If an interactive, online energy audit doesn't interest you, fear not. The Department of Energy offers a DIY energy audit section on their website: energy.gov/energysaver/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits.

The bottom line? Choose the energy audit that works for you, then implement as many of the recommendations as you can. Even small steps can add up to significant results and you'll see the benefits in your utility bills for years to come.

INFORMATION YOU'LL NEED TO HAVE ON HAND PRIOR TO DOING AN ONLINE AUDIT:

Each audit is a little different, and the information required may vary – below is a basic list. Be as accurate as possible without creating so much work for yourself that you regret taking the audit.

- Home zip code (for weather and housing data)
- Average monthly electric bill
- Your electric rate
- Average monthly fossil fuel bill(s), as well as rate(s) for oil, propane and gas
- Age of your home and general characteristics (size, floors, exterior materials)
- Age and number of appliances
- Type and age of heating and cooling systems
- Any incandescent, CFL and LED lights you have

A WORD OF CAUTION: Be careful when using online energy audit software provided by organizations other than utilities, government agencies or universities. Unfortunately, some companies may try to obtain information to sell their own products and services. If you see phrases like, "Learn what your power company does not want you to know" or the site looks like a marketing page, we'd suggest moving on. Unless you are dealing with your co-op or trusted fuel provider, do not provide any personal information outside of your physical address (for data accuracy) or an email address for receiving a full report.



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.

Nobody found their number in the December newsletter.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

March 10: YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS DUE:

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C. every June since the late 1950s. We believe that students should see their nation's capital up close, learn about the political process and interact with their elected officials. *For more information, please visit our website or call Gwen Stevens at 507-367-7015 or e-mail memberrelations@peoplesrec.com.*

March 20: APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR OPERATION

ROUND-UP®: The ORU Trust Board meets each quarter to review applications and grant funds for local non-profits that meets the qualifications according to the Bylaws of the Trust. *Complete details and applications can be found online at www.peoplesenergy.coop.*

March 22: ANNUAL MEETING: Mark your calendar and plan to attend PEC's annual meeting being held mid-day at the Rochester International Event Center. Eleven thousand one hundred twenty-one. *More details will be shared next month.*



Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District

TREE & SHRUB TRANSPLANT SALE

Orders are now being accepted for mid-April delivery. Supplies are limited, so order early.

VARIETIES INCLUDE: *Arborvitae, Blackhills Spruce, Colorado Spruce, Norway Spruce, White Pine, Norway Pine, Maples, Oaks, Red Splendor Crab, Am Cranberry, Dogwood, Lilac, and more!*

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