

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

# WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • January 2004

## WIND ENERGY BLOWS INTO EASTERN IOWA

If you have traveled through the Cascade area recently you may have noticed the addition of a new 40 KW wind turbine and a 60 KW turbine. Two local businessmen, Cecil Knuth and Carl Kelchen, have joined the ranks of those interested in preserving our natural resources through the use of alternative energy. Both systems are fully operational, allowing them to utilize the energy they are generating as well as sell unused energy back to their Cooperative.

Utilities all across the State are seeing more and more interest in a variety of alternative energy projects. Today's members are entrepreneurial in spirit and are doing their homework before they buy. Most people will agree there is much to learn and it pays to work with your Cooperative from the start. We are here to help you realize the best possible results while ensuring safety and reliability for all members.

If the thought of pursuing your own alternative energy project sounds daunting, you may be interested in simply enrolling in our new alternative energy program (see enrollment form on Page 3). This

newly launched program allows you to make a one-time donation or a monthly contribution to a fund that will be used to invest in a variety of alternative energy projects in Iowa.

A good starting point for alternative energy research is the Iowa Energy Center's web site at [www.energy.iastate.edu](http://www.energy.iastate.edu). Of course, you are always welcome to call the Cooperative for research materials and general information to point you in the right direction.



*Above: Knuth's windmill powering his farm*

*Below: Assembled blades being attached to 120 foot tower at Kelchen's.*



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## **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

### *But Know Who Owns the Buried Wires*

It's the law! Everyone is required by law to contact Iowa One Call at 800-292-8989 before they begin any kind of digging project on their property. Iowa One Call will arrange for the timely locating, and marking, of all underground services according to your detailed instructions.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) contracts with Grain Plains Locating Service (GPLS) to locate all of our underground services each time a member calls Iowa One Call. Our contract with GPLS arranges for them to locate all wires owned by the Cooperative from the transformer to the meter pedestal. MVEC does not pay GPLS to locate wires owned by the member, for example from the meter pedestal to your home or buildings.

Members should be aware that if a digging project is initiated, and wires that are owned by the members are cut, it is the member's responsibility to repair them, not the person who was doing the digging. For everyone's safety, and to follow the law, if you do not know where your own wires are buried, it is suggested that when you make your initial call to Iowa One Call, you request they locate both the Cooperative owned wires and privately owned wires. By doing so, you will be incurring a \$25.00 charge from GPLS for the cost to locate your own wires. A very small price to pay for the potential loss of not locating the wires.

Be sure you let Iowa One Call know at your initial call if you are interested in them locating your own wires. If you fail to ask at the beginning, and then decide later you need them to return to your property, the cost will be \$90.00 rather than \$25.00.

The bottom line? Call Before You Dig! If you don't know where your privately owned wires are buried, ask for a locate up front. It's faster, cheaper and safer to plan ahead.

## **TREES AND ELECTRIC LINES DON'T MIX**

When tree limbs connect with electric lines, through strong winds, ice storms, or falling branches, the result could leave you in the dark. If you believe a tree is too close to the power line (within 10 feet), please notify us at 800-927-6068. A properly trained MVEC lineman will trim trees that are near Cooperative lines leading up to your meter. Electrical lines you own, that lead from the meter to your house or farm, are your responsibility to maintain.

If a Cooperative employee notices a tree in or near an electric line, the tree will be trimmed or cut to remove the hazard. We realize this may not always agree with your home landscaping plans, however safety and uninterrupted power must be our first priorities.

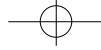
### **Considering a New Heating System? Compare Energy Costs First.**

Before your purchase a new heating system, learn what it will cost to operate it. The type of heating system you select will have an impact on your monthly energy bills. Your Cooperative offers rebates and special rates for members installing energy efficient electric heating systems in homes and businesses the Cooperative serves. This chart allows you to compare the very popular geothermal heat pump to equivalent fuel prices.

#### **Geothermal heat pump compared to fossil fuels**

Geothermal Heat Pump	Propane	Natural Gas
350% High Efficiency	90% High Efficiency	90% High Efficiency
(\$/kWh) - \$0.035	(\$/gal) - \$0.24	(\$/gal) - \$0.26

A geothermal heat pump with an electric rate of \$0.035 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) operates at the same cost as a high efficiency propane furnace using \$0.24 cents per gallon propane. Contact MVEC for additional information and cost comparisons when researching your heating options.



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**All Electric Model Home  
Open House**



January 17, 2004  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Rick and Pat Loes  
4185 County Road D61  
Cascade IA52033

Trade Allies, Refreshments, Door Prizes  
See you there!

## NEW ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PROGRAM

We are now ready to accept your voluntary contributions to the new alternative energy fund established January 1, 2004. All of the money collected will be used for the development of alternate energy production facilities in Iowa; including wind energy, biomass, solar and other non-traditional generation technologies.

Monthly contributions or one-time donations will be accepted. Monthly contributions will require pre-notification so a separate line-item may be added to your energy bill to differentiate these funds.

Clip the form below and return it with your next energy payment and join the ranks of those interested in alternative energy opportunities.

## ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

The Board of Directors recently took action to make a change to the date and location of the Cooperative Annual Meeting you have come to know for more than 30 years.

The 2004 Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 9, 2004 at the Palace Ballroom in Farley, right along the south side of Highway 20. There were many factors that entered into this decision, but we are confident the facilities will accommodate us equally well and hope you will continue to join us in our new location.

### Alternate Energy Program Participation

Yes, I want to be a part of the new Alternate Energy Program.

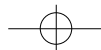
\_\_\_\_\_ I will make a one-time contribution. My check is enclosed. (If the amount is included with your electric bill payment, please tell us how much is designated for alternate energy.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month to the Alternate Energy Program. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill, on a separate line-item and will continue at this rate until I notify you to change it.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, PO Box 370, Anamosa, Iowa 52205 or include with your energy bill.





## ????BEE BOARDS, YOU SAY????

*Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa*

There's a knock at my front door. The smilin' fella' says, "We're here to pick up our Bee Boards and put up some new ones. My response, "Huh? What do you mean?" He proceeds to inform me that last year when my son was mowing lawn, he assured him that he could go ahead. The year before my husband said it was o.k. and watched him nail them up. I still have that dumbfounded look on my face so he asks me if I want to go look at them. I nod my head in agreement and follow him out to our old hog house, now used for storage. He points upward and there are large boards nailed up above the door. You have to believe I've been out there many times and I never noticed the boards! He gets a ladder out of his truck and proceeds to take down the bee board, showing me all the small holes drilled into the boards which, he explains, are filled with "bee eggs".

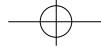
"I'm John Wolfe from Bellevue and this is kinda' a week-end family affair," as he hands son, Jacob (Jake), age seven the board to put into the pick-up. Meanwhile, his daughter, Madison, age nine, pulls a fresh board out of the back of the topper pick-up and hands it to Dad, to replace the one which he has just removed. As he explains more, it doesn't take Gracie very long to realize that, right at my door, I have the material for an article which would be of interest to REC "Watts Current" readers. I get out my camera and take pictures and make an appointment to get the real lowdown on the business of "Bee Boards".

After driving the God's Country roads to 35109 370th Street, Bellevue, Iowa, I discover that John and his folks, Phil and Marilyn Wolfe, learned about bee boards, in much the same way as I did. After selling a farm north of Bellevue, and then getting it back at a Sheriff's Sale, a guy drove into their yard and inquired about his bee boards. It turned out that the Wolfe's had inadvertently taken them down when they painted the garage, not realizing what they were. "In the fall, when that guy lost his job with the company, a man was sent out from Oregon and asked us about taking over the job. We met him at Green Island where we

own a home. I had just retired from John Deere and Marilyn retired from nursing. This was in 1998. We were handed a plat book marked with red dots showing where bee boards were placed, not even giving names", relates Phil.

John adds, "in the first year, we only shipped out 268 bee boards and this year we sent out 656 and we're not done yet. We have bee boards out from Clayton County south to Lee County in Iowa and we also have a route in Illinois. A truck comes out from Dubuque to pick them up. Trucks from Geerston Seed Farms in Adrian, Oregon bring seeds and empty bee boards out to Iowa and return to Oregon with "filled" bee boards. Geerston Seed Farms have seed fields in Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. The bee boards are shipped out next summer. When arriving in Oregon, they'll either put them in a little bee house or in semi-trailers before they are put out in the fields to pollinate the alfalfa. These are not honey bees. They are cutter bees, more like a sweat bee, and do not sting. The bees only live 6 to 8 weeks, during which time they are pollinating. Without bees, 300 lbs. of seed is produced per acre and with the bees, the yield is 1000 to 1600 lbs. per acre. This is all done on irrigated ground. The fields are drained before combining the seed. Once their pollination is done, the ranch has to spray to kill any destructive insects and the bees can't live through this."





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really into it as he described it so well to you. It's a job that I can do and take my kids along. It makes a nicer Christmas for my kids and helps pay for a two-week stay at the Iowa State Fair." The entire family agrees,

John also explains more about the actual boards. "The boards are made out of ponderosa pine, 5 1/2 to 6 ft. long and 4 to 5 inches thick. Machines drill about 1000 holes in each board. There can be as many as 7 eggs in each hole so 7000 bees could be hatched. The males hatch out a week before the females with the males staying around the hole. When the females hatch, they lay the eggs for the males to fertilize. The female does all the work!" Whereupon Marilyn adds, "Last year the bees worked so hard that the females wore their wings out."

John continues, "The bees do not like freshly drilled holes probably because they're rough inside. The old boards are re-drilled and then get 'cooked' which means they're baked twice to get any disease out, cooked in an oven, hot as possible, without burning the boards."

John goes on to explain, "This is a weekend job for me and my family because I work weekdays on the second shift at Barnstead International. Mom keeps the records so that we know where and how many boards are located at each stop. You can tell that Dad's

the people we meet'. Of course, the friendly attitude of the Wolfe's has much to do with the success of their unusual business.

The family also raises longhorn cows on their farm and quarter horses. With great pride, they tell me about "Charged by Silver", a stallion purchased from George Strait, a real show quarterhorse. That will make another unusual article for readers.

In appreciation of having boards placed, the Wolfe's will arrive delivering a large bag of sweet onions, the size of grapefruit. These onions are raised on a special 45 acre plot at Geerston Seed Farms. If that gift doesn't appeal to bee board placers, a jar of honey replaces the onions.

The Wolfe's will be glad to add your name for a bee board location and put your name in their plat book. Just get on the phone and call 563-872-4792, providing your name and address. You'll enjoy the friendship with the Wolfe family of Bellevue.

### WATTS THE ANSWER?

Who should you call if you are planning to dig?

What will you find inside a "BeeBoard"?

In what city will the 2004 Cooperative Annual Meeting be held?

Mail your answers in with your energy bill or email them to pmanuel@mvec.com

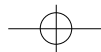
Two winners will each receive a \$10.00 credit on their energy bill.

Name:

Address:

#### November Winners

Lynn Feye, Maquoketa  
Lowell Tiedt, Anamosa





## **WATTS HEALTHY**

*Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist*

### **Weight Control in the Real World**

Fighting the battle of the bulge has become an All-American pastime. Unfortunately, it's hard to win at the weight loss game. As a nation, we are dieting more and getting heavier and heavier.

Nutrition experts agree that fad diets and rapid weight loss schemes are bound to fail over the long haul. The key to a healthy weight is combining an active lifestyle with delicious nutrition. By making healthy choices, you can successfully manage your weight for a lifetime and have energy for all the things you want to do.

The following ten tips are most definitely not a diet. They are suggestions for healthy ways to approach the issue of weight management. You can use them to create an individualized plan tailored to your lifestyle on your own or with the help of your health care provider. If you need more help in creating a personal plan, make an appointment with a registered dietitian as your link to nutrition and health.

The 'Eat Right Montana' program has the following suggestions for aiming for a healthy weight:

1. Not everyone can have a model-perfect body. Even

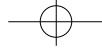
without buns of steel, you can reap big health benefits from just maintaining your current weight or losing as little as five to ten pounds.

2. Make small changes in what you eat and the activity you do. Forget short-term diet and exercise programs. Make changes that you are willing to stick with forever rather than just a few weeks.
3. Over time, small increases in physical activity can lead to major improvements in your fitness level and your weight. Walk more, drive less; dance more, sit less. Remember, every step counts.
4. Expand your usual meals and snacks to enjoy a wide variety of deliciously different tastes, textures, colors and smells. Focus on the quality of food, rather than on the quantity.
5. Balance what you eat and the activity you do. There's no need to worry about a fancy dinner, big party, or any one meal. Just look for ways to fit in a bit more activity like a walk with friends.
6. A healthy lifestyle is not about being 'good' or 'bad.' Switch off the negative self-talk and accept that mistakes are a part of life. Begin to congratulate yourself on every positive step you take.
7. Enjoy all foods, just don't overdo it. You can eat healthfully, manage your weight, and enjoy all your favorite foods. The secret is to

indulge in smaller portions and to savor every bite.

8. If you want to join a gym or walk on a treadmill, that's great. If you hate to exercise, get fit by finding activities you love to do; yoga, dance, gardening, or playing in the park with children.
9. Instant results and magical weight loss are complete fantasies. The truth is that a healthy weight comes from healthy choices that you make over and over again every day of your life.
10. It takes time to ditch old habits for new ones. Set yourself up for success by setting realistic goals and patting yourself on the back every time you succeed.

Take a sensible approach to weight management. Forget the fads and expensive miracle cures. Aim for a personal plan based on healthy choices that work for a lifetime.

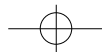
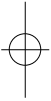


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PDF AD  
TO GO  
HERE



## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Congratulations to Cooperative members, Bill Johl, Dubuque and Paul Benischek, Anamosa, for their winning entries in the Iowa REC News Energy-Saving Idea Contest. It is rewarding to know our members are going the extra mile to save energy.

### *Visit our Web Site*

at [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop) or  
Email direct to the following departments:

- Billing questions: [billing@mvec.com](mailto:billing@mvec.com)
- Product or service questions: [memberservice@mvec.com](mailto:memberservice@mvec.com)
- Maintenance issues: [maintenance@mvec.com](mailto:maintenance@mvec.com)



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## *After Hours Call Center*

800-582-8998

After hours you may also call the service person  
in your area to report outages or trouble on the  
line.

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Cascade, Pete Boffeli .....	563-852-3180
Dubuque, Rick Olsem.....	563-582-3668
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