

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • March 2005

SPRING MEMBER NIGHT[™]

Join Us for Pizza and Pop!

The Board of Directors and Staff of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative are once again hosting Spring Member Nights. Your family is invited to join us for a short presentation on current Cooperative issues, meet your Board members and staff, and ask questions on matters relating to your Cooperative or the service we provide you.

This is an evening just for you. Enjoy pizza with your friends and neighbors and get a quick update on the cooperative you own.

We always look forward to this opportunity to visit with you and hear feedback on how we are doing.

Attend the location nearest you!

Thursday, March 24
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Delaware County Community Center
Manchester

Thursday, April 7
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Cascade American Legion
Cascade



Watts Inside:

- Have You Visited Our Website Lately? Page 2
- Youth Tour Contest Deadline Nears Page 3
- Employee Spotlight Page 3
- Reality Show Produces Shocking Episode Page 4
- Electric Safety Checklist for your Home Page 4
- Nutrition and Health Page 6
- Stray Voltage? We can help Page 7
- Watts the Answer Page 7



Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

Our Energy Working For You

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE LATELY?

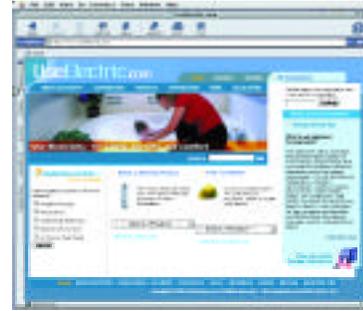
Everywhere we go we learn more and more business is conducted over the worldwide web. At Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative we strive to keep our website up-to-date with the latest information on electric usage, saving money with our rebates, education or safety programs and much more.

* Visit "Beyond the Wires" and click on Education to learn about our Youth Tour program, or have your child learn about how electricity works through a variety of links.

* Check out "Money Savers" and select Meter Monitor to determine your daily kWh usage or choose Rebates and complete a rebate application online.

* Under "Electric Service" you can find such things as a description of our fees and charges or details of our alternative energy program.

Now, a new feature of our website links you to www.UseElectric.com. This new informational site, launched in January by Iowa's electric cooperatives, promotes the efficiencies and benefits of electric power, products and technology. This site can help you calculate electric heating costs as compared to propane or natural gas. Information on energy saving appliances or products can help you make wise purchases, and a list of contractors will help you find a local



professional for your next energy-related project.

Our mission is to help make your life easier by giving you a wealth of information with a few simple mouse clicks. Of course, our employees are still only a phone call away for more personalized information or for those who don't have the time or the desire to surf the web.

Visit www.mvec.coop today and see how much information we have at your fingertips.



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Featuring: [Farmers' Political Organization](#)
Farmers' Political Organization
Farmers' Political Organization



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COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

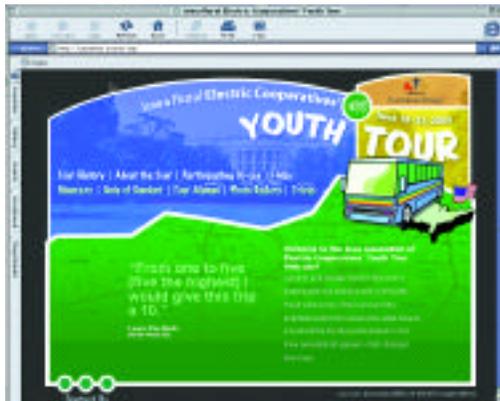
The Iowa Utilities Board issued an order adopting a rule requiring electric cooperatives to inform members of an address and telephone number where a cooperative representative, qualified to assist in resolving a complaint, can be reached. If you have a complaint you can reach a representative by writing to:

Member Advocate
Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative
109 North Huber Street, P.O. Box 370
Anamosa, Iowa 52205-0370
Or telephone toll free 800-927-6068

If your complaint is related to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative service rather than its rates and Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines IA 50319-0069, Toll Free 877-565-4450 or E-mail: iubcustomer@max.state.ia.us.

YOUTH TOUR CONTEST DEADLINE NEARS

High School Juniors wishing to enter our Youth Tour essay contest for a chance to win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. are reminded the entry deadline is March 15, 2005. For more information or to request a packet of materials visit our website at www.mvec.coop or call Gary at 800-927-6068.



Visit <http://youthtour.iowarec.org>

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Rick Olsem



Rick began employment with MVEC on May 31, 1989, originally working as a Farley area lineman. Today Rick is a familiar face to Dubuque area members as a Maintenance Lineman working out of the Dubuque outpost located on Hwy 20 at Three Rivers FS.

Rick and his wife, Nancy, live in the Peosta area with their children. Rick's hobbies include skiing, scuba diving, golfing and fishing. He is also a volunteer coach for his daughter's T-ball team.

Pete Boffeli



Cascade area members recognize Pete as their lineman as he has filled those shoes since March, 1989. The Cascade area outpost serves members in an area covering portions of Jones, Dubuque and Jackson counties.

Pete and his wife, Deb, live in Cascade. They have three grown children. Pete enjoys farming, fishing and hunting.





REALITY SHOW PRODUCES SHOCKING EPISODE

As reality television shows continue to grow in popularity, it's important to remember that although they are "real", the outcome of some stunts could have much different results.

In a recent episode of NBC's "Fear Factor", contestants received electric shocks against a backdrop of an electric utility substation. In real life, this type of behavior or stunt is extremely dangerous and could have fatal consequences. In shows where stunts like this are performed, they are monitored closely by medical and network staff, and should never be tried at home.

"Substations, which handle power for thousands of households and businesses, are not designed for public access," says Jim Lauzon, CEO of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. "Substations are restricted access areas for one key reason – safety. Only well-trained, properly equipped professionals should enter a substation."

Substations and other electric facilities produce tens of

thousands of volts, much more than household current, making them all that much more dangerous. In the real world, electricity is a uniquely unforgiving force that can be fatal at even "low levels" of current. Indeed, a fraction of an amp can stop the heart.

"Substations are not a playground, nor an appropriate backdrop for a reality TV show," says Michael G. Clendenin, executive director of Electrical Safety Foundation International. If you see a gate opened or someone inside a substation call 911 immediately so authorities can relay information to the proper utility.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative is concerned about the message this reality show may give children. "Safety is a key element of our mission. Educating children and adults alike about the potential dangers of the improper use of electricity is a priority for us," says Lauzon.

For more information about safety and electricity call MVEC at 319-462-3541 or 800-927-6068.

ELECTRIC SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR YOUR HOME

Ensure electrical safety throughout your home by following the suggestions listed here.

Outlets

Check for outlets that have loose-



Never plug an extension cord into another outlet extender or plug in more items than the outlet is designed for.

fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. Replace any missing or broken wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.

Cords

Make sure cords are in good condition—not frayed or cracked. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard or to another object. Do

not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them.

Extension Cords

Check to see that cords are not overloaded. Additionally, extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure extension cords have safety closures to help prevent young children from shock hazards and mouth burn injuries.

Plugs





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Make sure your plugs fit your outlets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong fit a two-conductor outlet; this could lead to an electrical shock. NEVER FORCE A PLUG INTO AN OUTLET IF IT DOESN'T FIT. Plugs should fit securely into outlets.

Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

GFCIs can help prevent electrocution. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock. Test GFCIs according to the manufacturer's instructions monthly and after major electrical storms to make sure they are working properly. Replace all GFCIs that are not working properly, but never replace a GFCI with a standard non-GFCI outlet or circuit breaker. Do not use an appliance or device that trips a GFCI on a non-GFCI-protected circuit; instead, take the appliance to an authorized repair center to be checked for faulty wiring or replace it.

Water and Electricity Don't Mix

Don't leave plugged-in appliances where they might fall in contact with water. If a plugged-in appliance falls into water, NEVER



Notice the third prong has been removed on this outdoor extension cord and there are several unsafe frayed areas.

reach in to pull it out—even if it's turned off. First turn off the power source at the panel board and then unplug the appliance. If you have an appliance that has gotten wet, don't use it until it has been checked by a qualified repair person.

Appliances

If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or if it has given you a shock, unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

Entertainment/Computer Equipment

Check to see that the equipment is in good condition and working properly. Look for cracks or damage in wiring, plugs and connectors. Use a high-quality surge protector bearing the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency, or call MVEC to learn about our surge protection program.

Outdoor Safety

Electric-powered mowers and other electric tools should not be used in the rain, on wet grass or in wet conditions. Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers

before each use for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings. If any part is damaged, stop using it immediately. Repair it or replace it. Always use an extension cord marked for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your tools. Remember to unplug all portable power tools when not in use. When using ladders, watch out for overhead wires and power lines.

Ladders

When using ladders, avoid contact with overhead wires and power lines. Stay at least 10 feet from all lines.

Lightning

During an electrical storm, do not use appliances (i.e., hairdryers, toasters and radios) or telephones (except in an emergency); do not take a bath or shower; keep batteries on hand for flashlights and radios in case of a power outage; and use surge protectors on electronic devices, appliances, phones, fax machines and modems.

Space Heaters

Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs. Don't use in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use. Do not use space heaters with extension cords; plug directly into an outlet on a relatively unburdened circuit.





WATTS HEALTHY

Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

Nutrition and Health

March is National Nutrition Month®2005. This year the theme is 'Get a Taste for Nutrition'®. National Nutrition Month® reinforces the importance of nutrition as a key component of good health, along with physical activity. As you think about 'Getting a Taste for Nutrition'® consider the following points.

Be adventurous and expand your horizons. Extension nutrition and health specialists for years have talked about eating a variety of foods for a well balanced diet. As research continues, we learn more about the benefits of food. Variety seems to be a key to good nutrition. As you plan meals and snacks choose foods based on flavor, texture and colors that are tasty and healthy.

Many people like strawberries but have you tried a mango? One cup of sliced mango has 128% of vitamin A and 76% of Vitamin C of the recommended USDA recommended daily value.

Treat your taste buds. You decide how much and how often you eat. You may be eating plenty of food, but not eating the right foods that give your body the nutrients you need to be healthy. Make smart choices from every food group and get the most nutrition out of your calories.

Maintain a healthy weight. Carrying excess weight may put you at greater risk for health problems. With healthful habits, you may reduce your risk of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and certain cancers and increase your chances for a longer life.

Being physically active isn't just a 'diet' or a 'program'. It is a key to a healthy lifestyle. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness. This means being physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Increasing the intensity or the amount of time that you are physically active can have even greater health benefits and may be needed to control body weight. About 60 minutes a day may be needed to prevent weight gain. Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most every day.

Exercise doesn't have to be painful or strenuous to be beneficial. A little muscle soreness when you do something new isn't unusual but soreness doesn't equal pain. You don't need to make your muscles burn to know they're working. If it hurts, stop doing it. You don't have to push yourself to extremes to get the benefits of exercise. Work up gradually to 30 minutes or more a day.

Balance food choices with your lifestyle. Choosing the right balance of foods helps you get the right combination of nutrients. To get the most vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but fewer calories pick foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products more often.

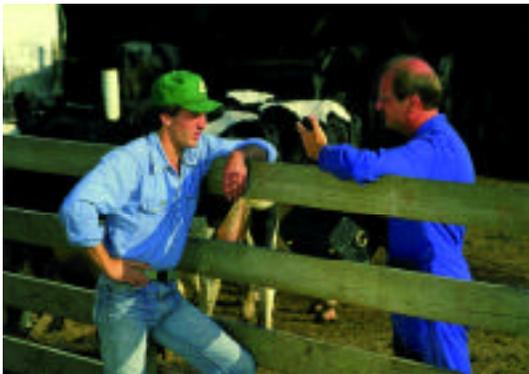
Be active. Be creative and enjoy a variety of ways to stay active to feel your best. There's no need for expensive equipment or complicated fitness programs. Start to be active by making a list of physical activities that fit into your lifestyle and schedule one every day. If you eat 100 more calories a day than you burn, you'll gain about 1 pound in a month. That's about 10 pounds in a year. The bottom line is that to loose weight, it's important to reduce calories and increase physical activity.

The sooner you start to 'Get a Taste for Nutrition'® the better for you, your family and your future. Find more specific information regarding the advice of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines



STRAY VOLTAGE? WE CAN HELP

Are you planning to build a new parlor, or upgrade your existing one? Do you suspect a stray voltage problem with your current facilities? If so, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative offers free technical assistance to all customers who wish to avoid future stray voltage problems or suspect they currently have a problem on their farm.



When building new facilities, it is important to be aware of the equipotential planes in the parlor as well as in concrete entrances and exits to the parlor. In existing facilities, stray voltage is often

caused by on-farm issues such as corroded connections or defective electrical equipment and contacting your electrician may be your first priority. Or you may choose to contact your equipment dealer asking them for installation advice or to inspect their product for defects or problem areas.

However, if these contacts fail to produce a favorable result, please call MVEC for additional, free, assistance. We have a direct interest in the success of your farm operation and our employees are trained to recognize stray voltage sources and suggest remedies to correct the problem.

For more information on stray voltage issues, please call Dennis Schwebke, Engineering Technician, at 1-800-927-6068.

WATTS THE ANSWER?

- 1) Substations are not a _____
- 2) In what town will our Spring Member Night be on March 24? _____
- 3) Extension cords should only be used on a _____ basis.

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

January winners

Dean Loeffelholz, Earlville
Michelle Schnier, Peosta



NOTICE



Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative office will be closed March 25, 2005 in observance of Good Friday.

Visit our Web Site

at www.mvec.coop or
Email direct to the following departments:

- Billing questions: billing@mvec.com
- Product or service questions: memberservice@mvec.com
- Maintenance issues: maintenance@mvec.com



Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative
109 North Huber St.
Anamosa, Iowa 52205-0370

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OFFICE HOURS
Monday thru Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Web Site: www.mvec.coop
e-mail: mvec@mvec.com

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.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Anamosa, Dallas Paustian..... | 319-462-4848 |
| Cascade, Pete Boffeli | 563-852-3180 |
| Dubuque, Rick Olsem..... | 563-582-3668 |
| Farley, Jim Lehman..... | 563-744-3005 |
| LaMotte, Brett Cox..... | 563-773-8614 |
| Manchester, Dan Petersen..... | 563-927-6491 |
| Maquoketa, Jerry Streeper..... | 563-652-5014 |

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