

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

# WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • October 2005

## 2005 DIVIDEND PAYMENTS DECLARED

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, like most other electric distribution cooperatives, retains operating margins that have been allocated to members. These funds, called deferred patronage dividends (or capital credit allocation) are retained for up to 15 years to balance long-term debt financing for plant additions and other needs.

Since 1960 MVEC has retired over \$14 million of the allocated member patronage.

This year, the Board of Directors has directed payment of dividends for years ending 1990 and 2004 patronage totaling \$400,000 to cooperative members and former members. We expect to mail dividend checks over \$5.00 to addresses of record in late October. Please deposit your check as soon as possible since the check will become void 120 days after issuance.

*Reminder – continue to send us your address changes after you leave our service.*

Each year, a significant number of dividend checks are returned, undeliverable. When we do not have a current address for former members, the undeliverable patronage dividend dollars become abandoned property, subject to forfeiture after three years.

### *Watts Inside:*

- Stray Voltage?  
We Can Help! Page 2
- Annual Meeting  
Well Attended Page 2
- Annual Meeting  
Prize Winners Page 3
- MVEC Assists a  
Mississippi Cooperative Page 3
- Family Fun at Schusters's Page 4
- Watts the Answer Page 5
- MyPyramid and the  
Sweet Potato Page 6
- Heating Assistance  
Applications Page 7
- RECare Page 7





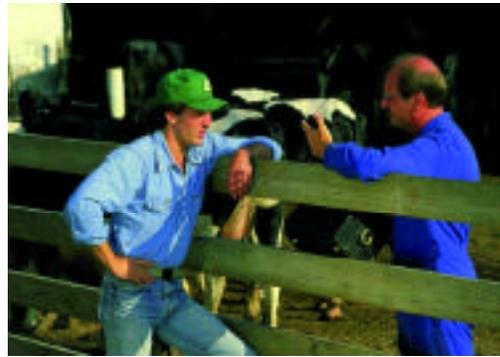
## **STRAY VOLTAGE? WE CAN HELP**

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 electric fencers, 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.



## **ANNUAL MEETING WELL ATTENDED**

Over 600 people attended the Cooperative's Annual Meeting in Farley on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Members enjoyed a delicious meal while visiting with their friends, neighbors and fellow cooperative members.

During the business meeting, Directors Eldon Busch, Gene Manternach and Judy Gotto were re-elected. CEO Jim Lauzon presented the Executive Report highlighting the shift in demographics of the cooperative and ways the cooperative continues to meet the needs of that changing membership.

The Board of Directors held their reorganization meeting following the business meeting where officers were re-elected as follows:

President	Bruce Reade, Center Junction
Vice President	Larry Swanson, Manchester
Secretary	Eldon Busch, Bellevue
Treasurer	Judy Gotto, Epworth
Asst. Secretary	Charles McCullough, Bernard





Energy Working For You!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## MVEC ASSISTS A MISSISSIPPI COOPERATIVE

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) is assisting the storm ravaged south with the departure of three linemen, a basket truck and a service truck loaded with electrical equipment and supplies. Matt Appelhans, Senica Fisher and Jared Howard departed Anamosa on September 6 for Mississippi to assist Coast Electric Power Association. Iowa's electric cooperatives, through their affiliation with the statewide Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives organization, have a disaster plan in place that allows them to quickly respond when another cooperative requests assistance, whether that cooperative is in Iowa or another State. Assistance will continue, with fresh crews or equipment, as long as requested by the affected areas.



Left to Right: Jared Howard, Senica Fisher, Matt Appelhans

These linemen are expecting long hours and limited sleep on cots in air-conditioned tents. Because the cooperative's headquarters is out of service, the linemen will be based at one of the cooperative's service centers in Kiln, Mississippi. They will join linemen from other Iowa cooperative's for the next 3 to 4 weeks as they work to restore power to many of the Cooperative's 66,000 members where most of the system has been flattened.

The decision to provide this assistance is very carefully considered in each circumstance recognizing our first priority is the continued, reliable service of our own membership. In this particular situation, MVEC members may have to wait a little longer for us to respond to new construction projects in exchange for our helping thousands of others in desperate need.

MVEC is proud of the work ethic and spirit of the linemen willing to take on this challenge as they meet one of our 7 Cooperative Principles, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives".

## ANNUAL MEETING PRIZE WINNERS

- Electric Grills:** Dale Boge, Marvin Jarding, Wayne Steffen
- \$100 Bills:** Douglas Crosby, Elmer Scherbring, Lester/Ruth Weber, Vernon Boge, Vincent Kotz, Sylvester Rauen, Dale Clemen
- \$50 Bills:** Zelma Deacon, William Juran, Ambrose Pins, Eunice Davison, Lori Schmidt, Leonard/Rosemari Austin, Roger Boge, Joseph Kelchen, Jr., Mrs. Dennis Jansen, Merle/Marie Gronewald, Loren Heber, Norbert Gonnson, Henry O'Connell, Wayne/Verna Budde, James Schuster





## FAMILY FUN AT SCHUSTERS' AMAZING CORN MAZE AND PUMPKIN PATCH

*Grace Zimmerman*

Imagine driving into the yard of Schuster's Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch on a weekend afternoon to have some precious family togetherness. You'll be greeted by Pam Schuster to acquaint you with the fun that abounds on the family farm. There's a tent by the corner of the red barn near the little kids maze and a bigger pumpkin shaped maze. Parked in the yard is an orange H – Farmall hitched to a wooden wagon, as well as a John Deere tractor hooked up to another wagon. The Schusters built the wagons with safety foremost in their minds so that no one could fall out. Benches along each side are attached inside the wagon for seating. This helps make for an enjoyable ride out to the pumpkin patch. Volunteer drivers helping Ron Schuster are his brothers, Dave and Tim Schuster and friends Tim Ernst, Bob Gassman, Mark Nachtman and Terry Peiffer. Your eyes will open wide at the sight of three acres of pumpkins. "That's a lot of pumpkins!" Around the edge of the patch are the smaller sized pumpkins for the little kids. The patch contains the regular sized, bigger ones and the "tall" ones.

Ron explains, "We started planting the pumpkins in 1988. We start

planting the first week in June. We can plant up to July. The later we plant, the less the weed problem. With lots of compact vines, we can hold the weeds down. This year, probably because of the dry



*Above: Ron works in the pumpkin patch.*

weather, the pumpkins are ripening a little earlier. We rotate the patches, which helps provide different scenery from one year to the next. Tall corn, timber and hay fields are part of the surrounding scene. It's strictly a family affair. We don't want it to be commercialized. We also raise a few gourds. This year, because of raccoons and the dry weather, the Indian corn didn't make it very well."

**MY NOTE:** Pam and Ron also raised two children. Daughter, Angie is, a pilot for United and, son, Christopher is a bricklayer.

There's definite pride in Ron's voice as he tells me about them.

By the way, you did not read the first paragraph incorrectly! Ron informed me, "We painted the 1948 H – Farmall orange to fit in with the pumpkin patch theme. I've put way more in the tractor restoration than it's worth. But it was fun!"

When I inquire about the maze, Ron answers with pride, so evident in his voice. "My wife, Pam, is good at it. She makes a grid and we go from there. No professional could do better. We've been doin' the maze for six years. This year the maze is a pumpkin on a four acre square. It's small enough for everyone to enjoy. There's a little kids maze, too. We were gonna' quit because the maze is a lot of work, and lots of time is involved in the maze, but the kids like it. She's an important part of this family business. She sells the tickets, and takes in the money. If she wasn't around, this wouldn't be around either. We like it. It's fun. I enjoy the families who come out here. There are no complaints. They have fun. If that isn't enough to keep the Schuster family busy. Ron farms with his dad. They milk 45 Holsteins on a nearby family farm, have beef cows, raise the



Energy Working For You!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



calves and raise corn and hay. This explains why they're only open weekends. Ron adds, "We'd like to plan for a more permanent set up than having the tent set up. There's sure to be one windy weekend, which presents a problem for the big tent. And we need a shed to keep the wagons, etc. Now we have to store them on another farm."

With their attitude and willingness to work, I betcha' it happens!

Now that you're envisioning a visit to the Schuster Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch, here's the information that will come in handy. They're open on

weekends, Saturday and Sunday, starting the last weekend in September from 10 am to 5 pm, till after Halloween. There will be a sign on Highway 52, just north of St. Donatus and south of Dubuque to make it easy to find. The address is 7541 Schueller Heights Road, Dubuque. It's just across the highway from Czipars Apple Orchard. Ron mentions, "We don't sell to supermarkets but do some business with Czipars. They do tell people about our maze and pumpkin patch, sending people our way to the big red barn. By the way, Czipar's apple crop is good this year. The frost didn't hurt their crop."

Doesn't this give you an excellent idea for a weekend outing which the entire family will enjoy? If you have questions about this enterprising, energetic, entrepreneurial, and entertaining family, you can call 563-556-2879 to add to fall fun.

### WATTS THE ANSWER?

- 1) MVEC has retired over \_\_\_\_\_ million dollars of patronage.
- 2) What color is Schuster's Farmall tractor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Sweet potatoes are a great source of which vitamin? \_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

August winners:

Lorrie Both, Bellevue  
Cletus Thielen, Zwingle





# WATTS HEALTHY

*Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist*

## MyPyramid and the Sweet Potato

The Food Guide Pyramid has under gone a make-over. Scientists have found that American adults don't get enough calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium and vitamins A, C and E. So the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has remodeled the Food Guide Pyramid to be MyPyramid. One size doesn't fit all, so the new MyPyramid symbolizes a personalized approach to healthy eating and physical activity. The symbol is designed to be simple. It was developed to remind consumers to make healthy food choices of a variety of foods and to be active every day.

Fall is an easy time to eat a variety of foods and foods that are high in Vitamin A. Bright orange vegetables like carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes and pumpkin are excellent sources of Vitamin A. One medium baked sweet potato contains 2488 RE vitamin A. The 117 calories of the sweet potato also give you 397 mg potassium, 32 mg calcium, 3.4 grams fiber, 26 mcg folate, 2 grams protein, 28 mg vitamin C as well as phosphorus, magnesium and zinc.

Sweet potatoes are a great source of vitamin E, and they are virtually fat-free, which makes them a real vitamin E standout. Most vitamin E rich foods, such as vegetable oils, nuts and avocados, contain a lot of fat. Just two thirds of a cup of sweet potatoes provides 100% of the USRDA for vitamin E, without the unwanted fat.

According to the Sweet Potato Commission the sweet potato is not a potato nor is it a yam. It is a rooted tuber, member of the morning glory family and native to the Americas. It is not related to the ordinary potato, or the African yam. There's only one crop of sweet potatoes per year – August to October. They undergo a curing process then they are kiln dried and stored for a year round supply. Now is the best time to include sweet potatoes in meals. Sweet potatoes in the fall are naturally sweet and moist.

When selecting sweet potatoes, choose ones that are firm, fairly well-shaped and somewhat even in color and free of blemishes or decay. Do not refrigerate sweet potatoes unless they are already cooked, as low temperatures may cause flavor loss.

Sweet potatoes can be baked, boiled, roasted, cut in chips and deep-fried. To bake, wash and dry, pierce in several places with knife. For the best ever baked sweet potatoes: Rub a little vegetable oil over clean and dry sweet potatoes of uniform size. Place on baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees F. 30 to 50 minutes, depending on size. Sweet potatoes that are greased before baking peel easily. Check for doneness by piercing with a knife. Although you can microwave them for about 6 minutes, some people feel a better flavor will develop during slow oven baking.

Canned or frozen sweet potatoes may be substituted for the fresh form in any recipe calling for cooked sweet potatoes as the starting point. Canned sweet potatoes are generally smaller in diameter because of their better canning qualities. Six to eight canned sweet potatoes are approximately the equivalent of four medium fresh sweet potatoes. Below is an equivalent chart for sweet potatoes.

<u>Fresh</u>	<u>Canned</u>	<u>Cooked &amp; Mashed</u>
2 medium	3-4	1 1/4 cups
3 medium	1 lb. Can	2 cups
4 medium	3 qt cans	2 1/2 cups





*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)



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

*Watts Current...*

...is published monthly for the members of  
Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.  
109 North Huber Street  
Anamosa, Iowa 52205  
319-462-3541 or 800-927-6068  
**OFFICE HOURS**  
Monday thru Friday  
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Web Site: [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop)  
e-mail: [mvec@mvec.com](mailto: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

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Permit 174