

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • April 2006

THUNDERSTORM SEASON IS FAST APPROACHING

Most homes and offices are filled with electronic devices (entertainment systems, computers, microwaves, etc). The microchips inside these devices are extremely sensitive to voltage fluctuations and are susceptible to costly or permanent damage from electrical spikes and surges. The need for protection is increasingly important. The proper surge protection equipment can effectively save your appliances, satellite television, computer and telephone.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative can bring peace of mind to our members with our surge protection program. This carefree program is available for lease through the Cooperative. There are no upfront installation costs or purchase to make. In the event of a power surge, your surge protection equipment will be replaced at no cost to you. Monthly lease costs start at only \$5.95 per month with an average lease cost of \$7.95 per month due to the number of electronics most homes now own.

With thunderstorm season fast approaching, protect your home's electronics by calling 1-800-927-6068 to schedule a consultation. Let the Cooperative Principle of **Concern for Community**; bring you peace of mind today.



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R

E

Care

*Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative*

109 North Huber Street
Anamosa, Iowa 52205

OBJECTIVE: "RECare" is a voluntary energy assistance program established to help low income families weatherize and heat their homes. Funds collected are distributed by a local community action agency. The money does stay in the area; it is a program of members helping members!

One Time Pledge \$ _____

Payable to: Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative

Monthly Pledge:

\$1.00 _____ \$2.00 _____

\$3.00 _____ \$5.00 _____

Other \$ _____

I hereby authorize the Cooperative to add this amount to my monthly electric bill. I understand I can cancel my monthly pledge at any time by notifying the Cooperative in writing.

Account
Number _____
Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Return this form with your energy payment and meter reading.

BOARD ALLOCATES 2005 OPERATING MARGIN

At the February 24, 2006 Board of Directors meeting, board members unanimously approved allocating over \$670,000 of the 2005 operating margin to cooperative members who purchased electric service from Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative during 2005.

Your share of the allocated margin called, deferred patronage dividends or capital credit allocation, is based on the total dollar amount of your patronage with Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. We calculated your patronage from the amounts billed to you for electric service in 2005.

Look for a message on your April or May energy bill that will identify our 2005 allocation. (This information is only a notice for you, and cannot be treated as cash or deducted from your bill.)

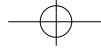
Payment of retired patronage dividends will be made to you at a future time as determined by the Board of Directors. For this reason, continue to inform us of your address changes if you discontinue your electric service with the Cooperative at any time in the future. We want to make sure that you receive your future patronage dividend checks.

Your Cooperative operates as a not-for profit organization to provide you electric service. Revenue collected that is not needed to cover the cost of providing service is divided among the members and returned as future dividend payments.

If you have questions about your patronage dividends, please call Cleo at 319-462-3541 or 800-927-6068 or email crogers@mvec.com.

BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

In compliance with Title VI of the civil rights Act of 1964, copies of the by-laws of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative are available at the reception counter of the Anamosa office. If you want a copy of the by-laws, please ask at the Cooperative office or contact us and a copy will be mailed to you.



Energy Working For You!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREE FOR THE RIGHT PLACE

Trees and other vegetation that grow too close to electrical lines can create shock and fire hazards and cause power outages.

Before beginning landscaping projects this spring, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity encourage homeowners and businesses to seek help in choosing and planting trees and bushes that will not interfere with their electric supply.

“Trees provide many aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits, including energy-efficient shade and cooling during peak electric usage. But everyone needs to be aware of the dangers and risks created when trees grow into power lines.” says Ken Smith, Director of Operations.

Trees conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if limbs grow too close to electric lines. Power outages or flickers can occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines, and electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires.

A much greater concern is the safety risk when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb or person playing or trimming around the tree can be fatal.

Trees growing near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. If you have trees or other vegetation that appears to be growing into power lines or equipment, contact Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. Never try to prune them yourself.

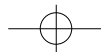
SAFE PLANTING TIPS

- Consider mature height of trees. Do not plant any tree that can grow to 25 feet tall near overhead power lines. A mature height of less than 15 feet is best.
- Do not plant trees and bushes near underground utility services. Roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformer or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.
- At least 48 hours before digging, call Iowa One Call at 800-292-8989 so that the location of underground utilities can be marked.

**CALL 800-292-8989
BEFORE YOU DIG!**



Allow 48 hours for response from all involved utilities.





HOUSING FROM THE BURDS

Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa

Guess which Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative customer is celebrating a 34th anniversary this month of April? If you guessed a business located four and one half miles west of Dubuque, 14650 Highway 20 outside Peosta, Iowa you were right! It's Burds Housing, Inc.- started by Tom Burds behind his home in Epworth, Iowa. The business has been at their present location for about 30 years. Strictly a family business, Tom works with son, Tim, completing the set-up and servicing of the homes. The other son, Todd, is in charge of sales.

Todd explained, "We sell factory built homes, in both the manufactured and modular variety. The homes differ as to the code in which they are initially built. Manufactured homes are built to a federal code, enforced by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This code basically says that the home has to be built 'ready to be lived in', the furnace and heat ducts are installed, the water heater and plumbing is completed, gas and electricity lines are run as well; all done at the factory. After completing a set-up only a couple of hook-ups are left to do. Manufactured homes come as a single or in multiple sections and are placed on a crawl space with a frost pier foundation or flat on a basement.

A modular home is built to code specific to each state, such as CABO. It does not have to be ready to be lived in so typically the furnace, heat ducts, water heater and plumbing, etc. are completed after the home is on site, not at the factory. Modular homes are typically placed onto a basement and come to us in two or more sections.

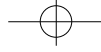


Building Systems modular housing."

Our homes have changed dramatically over the past 10 years. We now offer fully finished drywall, hardwood trim, oak cabinetry, optional 5/12 roof pitch, appliance packages and many more options. Ten years ago we sold mostly singlewides and placed them in manufactured home communities. Now, most of the homes we sell have 2 or more sections, placed both in manufactured home communities and on private ground, with a large percentage on finished basements. We find that a lot of our buyers are those who have been living in older homes, who find it's now more economically feasible to purchase a modular or manufactured home then remodel the older home.

Currently, we represent 3 manufacturers - the Amish-built Dutch, Hart Housing, and Wick

It was easy for me to see why Todd seemed so enthusiastic and in tune about the homes that he offers to customers. "We customize homes. We've even had people who wrote out a floor plan on a napkin and it was built to suit. We're trying to improve on the old stereotypes by educating the customer on how our homes have changed and what is available today. Fifty percent of our business is referrals. We have a definite advantage that the wood used in our homes isn't sitting out in the rain or elements as it might be with a stick built home. All our homes have factory-backed warranties with any service required being done by our dealership or the factory if need be. Cost effectiveness is another attraction. Once a contract is signed the cost is fixed, no price over-runs;" explains Todd with a definite exhibition of pride in his voice as he shows me some of the homes on exhibit. I personally



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liked the arrangement where the master bedroom and bath are on the opposite side of the home of guest bedroom and bath. The ceramic fireplace and whirlpool tub really added to the appeal. Of course, he explained the technical aspects such as wall studs, insulation, floor joists, roof pitch, etc. It was evident, even to me, that the pitch of the roof made a big difference when comparing the outer appearance of modular and manufactured homes of today to those in days of yore!



Whether or not you're considering the purchase or building of a home, you'll enjoy a visit with Todd and come away realizing the utility and beauty of manufactured and modular homes exhibited at Burds Housing on Highway 20, just four and one half miles west of Dubuque. Todd can be reached by phone at 563-556-7293 or 800-397-7293 or by email at burdshousing@yahoo.com. You'll learn a lot!

LOCAL BUILDING PROFESSIONALS ATTEND ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDING CONFERENCE



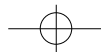
Gary Weber recently attended the annual Momentum Is Building conference sponsored by Iowa's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in Des Moines. The two-day conference focused on energy-efficient building practices and materials, green building, and best practices for contractors. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative joined in sponsoring the conference, which had record attendance this year.



Gary Weber, MVEC Member Advocate, second from left, with area contractors in attendance.

Speakers included Jack DiEnna with the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium, Washington D.C.; Doug Rye, syndicated radio host, often called "The King of Caulk and Talk" and promoter of energy-efficient building techniques, Don Otto, Iowa City builder who makes small homes live big; and Bill McAnally, Iowa Central Community College Carpentry Instructor and Kevin Nordmeyer, architect with RDG in Des Moines who discussed the low-energy efficient water heaters, electric code updates, installing doors and windows correctly, energy efficient landscaping, and an update on HVAC products.

The sessions were well attended, with builders and electric cooperative staff from across Iowa present. "Energy efficiency is a critical factor in the success of builders and other contractors in today's market," says Gary Weber, Member Advocate for Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. "Building trades professionals know their customers want the most energy-efficient home possible. We support the Momentum Is Building Conference as a way to help our local trades professionals and the consumers in our area."





WATTS HEALTHY

Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

EAT LESS, ENJOY IT MORE!

You've probably heard the joke about being on a "seefood" diet. The "seefood" diet means whenever you see food, you eat it! The biggest nutrition problem in America is not WHAT we eat, but HOW MUCH we eat. The key to healthful and delicious eating is to downsize your portions at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and especially snack time. Today's super-sized servings mean that American families are seeing, and eating larger portions at home, in restaurants, and wherever they buy food. The amount of food in front of us has a big effect on how much we eat.

Start with a small serving. Small servings may be exactly what you want and you can always have more if you are still hungry. Studies show that kids and adults eat 25 to 50 percent more food when served large portions. Bigger servings make us eat faster, take bigger bites, and consume more calories. Large serving sizes are just one of the many reasons why we eat and drink more than we think. The size of dishes and glasses also affects how much we consume. Children and adults pour more (and drink more) when they use shorter, wider glasses rather than taller, skinnier ones.

Another problem, is the large size food packages, especially snack

packages like bags of chips and boxes of candy. When people eat straight out of the package, they eat more than they think. An easy way to enjoy food in moderation is to never eat out of the bag. Take a small portion, put it in a small bowl, and put the bag away. Food that is out of sight is out of mind.

Moderation is also important in other aspects of family life like the amount of time we spend watching TV, playing video games, and working on the computer. Turning off the TV and choosing "screen time" carefully gives families more time to enjoy each other and more time to be active.

Iowa State University Extension is promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, and urges Iowa families to enjoy the benefits of moderation. Simple changes, like choosing smaller snack portions and more TV-free time, can make a big difference in your family's health and happiness. There is a direct connection between our TV habits and our eating habits. The average American child will see 40,000 TV food ads per year, mostly for high-fat, high-sugar items. Turning off the TV means your child will see fewer ads and may do less shinning to get these foods. Turning off the TV is an easy way to enhance your family's health and happiness. More screen time (TV, computers, and video games) leads to higher weights for

both adults and children. Turning off the TV will help your family maintain a healthy weight.

Listen to your body's cues. Your internal signals of hunger and satisfaction can help you eat right, if you listen carefully and honor them. Try this recipe that is a good source of vitamin C and fiber.

Confetti Salad

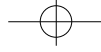
Makes 10, 134 calorie servings

- 1 (12 ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained or 1 and 1/2 cups frozen corn
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained.
- 1 bell pepper
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium tomato

Dressing

- 1/4 cup Italian dressing
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 T. chopped, fresh cilantro

Chop bell pepper and tomato. Put in large bowl and add remaining salad ingredients. Combine dressing ingredients. Pour dressing over salad. Cover and refrigerate for 6 hours before serving.



MVEC MEETS WITH LAWMAKERS AT CAPITOL

More than 200 cooperative supporters, including representatives from Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, traveled to Des Moines on Tuesday, March 7 to discuss issues important to electric cooperatives with lawmakers.

A key message delivered to legislators focused on the cooperatives' involvement with renewable energy, including information on interconnections with member-consumers, contributions to green pricing programs and integrating renewables into their over all generation mix.

During the past year, Iowa's electric co-ops purchased 452,000 kWhs from consumer-owned renewable energy units – more than double of just one year ago. Member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives also contributed \$42,726 to their green pricing programs in 2005, which translates into the equivalent of 2 million kWhs. Iowa's electric cooperatives receive power from 10 separate wind farms and are providing power to more than half of the states' ethanol and soy biodiesel plants.

“This annual event is an excellent opportunity to personally visit our elected officials and provide them with a co-op perspective on issues that are important to our business and ultimately our member-consumers,” says Jim Lauzon, CEO.

Board Members Charles McCullough, Ron Thielen, Tom Stewart, Gene Manternach and Richard Bishop and Director of Member Support, Patty Manuel attended the meeting and met with Senator Stewart, Senator Hancock, Senator Connolly, Representative Lukan and Representative Jochum.



WATTS THE ANSWER?

It's the law, everyone must call Iowa One Call _____ hours before digging.

The biggest nutrition problem in America is not what we eat, but _____ we eat.

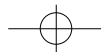
During the past year, Iowa's electric co-ops purchased _____ kWhs from consumer-owned renewable energy units.

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: _____



NOTICE

The office of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative will be closed April 14th. for 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
Dividend Questions	patronage@mvec.com
New Service Questions	engineering@mvec.com
Management	management@mvec.com

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

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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