

WATTS Current

January 2007

For Our Members



The View From the Corner Office

by Jim Lauzon, CEO

2006 has come and gone. It is common this time of year to reflect upon the past 12 months as we look to a new year. As they say... the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Once again, 2006 was a good year for the cooperative. We saw a reasonable growth, 235 new members, and 24 miles of new lines. This modest growth in members has helped us to keep rate increases lower as our cost of operation increases. Yet growth also drives our costs, causing new construction and the need for new power sources. As we look to the future, and the need to build new power plants to meet this growth we see significant increases in our costs. New power plants are expensive to build. One significant way to offset these costs is to ensure that the energy we use is used efficiently. There is a significant difference between efficiency and conservation. In the late 70's, we saw Jimmy Carter sitting by the fireplace in a sweater, calling for conservation, asking us to lower our thermostats to save energy. While conservation is good, as we should never waste our resources, efficiency is better received as it does not call for sacrifice. A great example of efficiency is the Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL). This bulb produces the same amount of light, measured in lumens, while using only 25% of the energy. You don't sacrifice light levels for energy savings if you size them properly. If every MVEC member used 5 CFL lights in their home 4 hours a day instead of an old fashion incandescent light, we would save about 4 million kWhs of energy annually. This is enough energy to meet the needs of 300 new members.

MVEC initiated some new energy efficiency programs in 2006, and we are continuing that focus in 2007. We will continue to give 5 CFL light bulbs to every member requesting them this year. Stop by our office in Anamosa to pick them up, or send us a note with your bill and we will drop them off when we are in your neighborhood. Replace your inefficient incandescent light bulbs with these CFLs and help us control future power costs.

Our efficiency efforts have not been limited to light bulbs. In 2006 we replaced 250 older less efficient water heaters with new higher efficiency units. We will run this program again in 2007.

We also have offered to buy down the interest rate for home improvement loans by 3 percentage points if the loan is used to save electric energy. This program will also continue this year and we will expand it to include additional local banks.

Helping to save our members money on their electric bills. That is what these programs are all about. That is what Cooperatives are all about, and have been about for over 70 years. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Ultimate Corn and Wood Fuel Pellet

"It took lots of experimenting before coming up with the final finished product but I put it together!"..... **PAGE 4**

Donald Vorwald, Holy Cross, Iowa



Did You Know?

Dirty spots in your insulation often indicate holes where air leaks into and out of your house.



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Help Us Save You Money!

We encourage all members to call us whenever they have questions. When the question is, “Why is my bill so high?”, you may be able to get the answer by asking yourself a few questions first.

Did you pay your bill on time or did a late payment cross in the mail with the newest bill?

Did you turn in your meter reading on time or was an estimated reading used to create your bill?

Many times, members don’t understand our billing process. Members of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative read their own meters to help keep their costs down. These readings are due by the 28th of each month. The meter reading is used to calculate the bill that is mailed on the 8th day of the following month. If the Billing Department does not receive your reading by the 28th, an estimated reading will be used to create your bill. A “meter card charge” of \$1.00 per meter will also be assessed to your account. If a reading is not received by the 28th of the

second consecutive month, it becomes necessary for a Cooperative employee to read your meter and a charge of \$20.00 plus tax is assessed to your account per meter. Timely meter readings are even more crucial for the Heat Plus accounts as those bills cannot even be calculated without an accurate meter reading from both meters.

To keep your bill more consistent, make sure you read your meter on the same day each month. If you read your meter on January 15th and again on February 15th, the billing you receive in March will reflect a 31-day period. Then if you don’t find time to read your meter again until March 31st, your April bill will be for 44 days. This is 13 more days or almost a half-month more usage on your bill. Then, if you read your meter the next month on the 15th again, your bill will lessen to only 15 days. This fluctuation, especially if it is combined with colder or warmer weather, or other changes such as engine or tank heaters, can often raise questions.

The best advice we can offer is to pick a day and read your meter that same day each month. You will be surprised how close your bills will be from month to month provided your lifestyle habits remain consistent, too. Therefore, you can save yourself, and your Cooperative, money by simply reading the meter each month and making sure the reading is received in our office by the 28th.

Switch to Budget Billing
 When the bitter winds of winter are blowing and causing your heating bills to rise... Budget Billing can be a helpful way for you to effectively plan and balance your energy spending.
 Call Us Today - 800-927-6068

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative
 Your Tailored Energy Cooperative

*Account must be current and have 12 month billing history.

No Need to Go Out in the Cold with Our Automatic Payment Plan!

Who likes to go out in the cold if they don’t have to? Well, you don’t need to to pay your electric bill. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative offers members the convenience of our Automatic Payment Plan. Your electric bill payment can be automatically made each month through your checking account. Nothing could be easier. Complete an application form and return it along with a voided check. Don’t go out in the cold, print the form from our website or call today to have an application mailed to you. 800-927-6068



Tips for Staying Warm

A plan for saving energy during cold weather includes analyzing all the elements that go into heating a home, including the habits of the people who live there. So, in addition to making sure your existing heating system is in peak operating condition (or replacing it with a more energy efficient unit), talk with family members about how a little effort can yield significant results in cutting heating bill without adversely affecting anyone's comfort.

Most of these ideas won't cost anything more than a few minutes of time; the tips that do require a small outlay of cash quickly should pay for themselves through smaller heating bills.

- **Set the direction of ceiling fans for proper circulation.**

Run ceiling fans in a clockwise direction during cold-weather months to move the warm air that gathers near ceiling back into the room.

- **Warm up your bed.**

Turn down your thermostat and use extra blankets or quilts to stay toasty at night.

- **Vacuum baseboard heaters, air registers or radiators.**

When you see dust, dirt and lint building up, clean any of these devices that are part of your home's heating system.

- **Move furniture or window coverings that are blocking air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators.**

Make sure all heated air you're paying for reaches its destination! A blocked air register can cause an adjoining room to overheat, and upholstery or curtains can trap heat between the wall and the fabric, preventing it from being distributed throughout the room.

- **Install radiator reflectors.**

These panels will help reflect heat away from walls and into rooms.

- **Isolate unused rooms, as long as doing so will not hurt water pipes.**

Turn down the thermostat in a room with baseboard heat, or close the registers for a forced-air furnace. However, don't allow temperatures in rooms with water pipes to approach the freezing point.

- **Remove humidity from the kitchen and bathroom with a properly sized exhaust fan.**

Too much humidity can cause condensation and frost on windows and possibly damage them. But don't leave an exhaust fan on longer, or at a higher speed, than necessary. In one hour, an exhaust fan can blow a "houseful" of heated air outside. In addition make sure these fans are not discharging air and moisture into the attic; they should be vented outdoors.

Payment Agreements

Do you need help paying your bill? Don't wait. If you have a past due balance that is subject for disconnection you may be able to enter into a Payment Agreement to avoid disconnection of service. The agreement will be negotiated to meet your individual needs and you may spread payment for the past due bill up to twelve months. If you would like help with your bill, call the Billing Department at 800-927-6068. Don't wait. If you are interested in assistance, call before the disconnect date to avoid additional charges to your account.



Ultimate Corn and Wood Fuel Pellet

Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa, Iowa

I took lots of ingenuity and experimentation for Donald Vorwald to achieve completion of his final product, which he named, “Ultimate Corn and Wood Fuel Pellet”. He stresses the fact that the unique pellets are environmentally safe. (Other pellets may contain salt that can be detrimental to pellet heaters and pipes. He worked with Iowa State to learn, but Donald tells me, “I figured it out, using common sense, how to make the environmentally safe pellets.



Corn, Sawdust and Pellets

I have a better long lasting pellet, too. It’s made from corn and sawdust, no glue is added. I worked on how to stick these things together. It took lots of experimenting before coming up with the final finished product but I put it together! It’s very exciting. Measurements have to be exact!” The gleam in his eyes was proof of pride in his perseverance in achieving the final product.

The result was a large pellet machine, which is out in a shed in the farmyard. Don adds, “It’s up in production this year and going pretty good.”



Pellet Machine

When I inquired about the sawdust, Don informs me that he gets it from various places which otherwise might be sending it to landfills. “It must be clean. The sawdust never sees the outside. It comes directly from the source, right from the planers and chippers. There is definitely no sawdust from pressed wood or plywood. It must be clean, all natural,” states Don as he adds, “I use my own corn.”

One customer informed Don that he was burning corn and heating 1700 sq. ft. and now since he used the corn-sawdust pellets, he heats 3000 sq. ft.

Don also heats his own house with his unique pellets. He proudly showed me his multipurpose heater in the basement of their farm home, which showed a constant bright flame and remarked, “Last year it cost approximately \$450 to heat their two-story home.” He made certain to tell me that it’s a family affair including wife, Julie, who works at Finley Home Care in Dubuque and sons, Sam, age 7 and Luke, age 4. “They all help!” My natural question was what led to his becoming involved in making pellets. “Seven years ago, Julie and I bought my folks 120-acre farm. I work for Gene Vorwald & Sons Construction; we do all different kinds of dirt work in the summer time. But in the winter time, things are slow, that’s when I became interested in making environmentally safe pellets.”

If this sounds like an answer to your heating problems or it might make you feel better using environmentally safe pellets or may result in lower heating bills, now is the time to get on the phone. Don’s phone number is 563-870-2001 to make contact with him. “I’m usually working in the shed and I prefer people call ahead of time. Most customers come right here, and return again as happy customers.”

I just have to add that I know you’ll be impressed with Donald Vorwald’s ingenuity, frankness and pride. Of his product when you meet with him. I’m certain that the meeting and resulting purchase of the “Ultimate



Corn and Wood Fuel Pellet” will add your name to the happy customer list.



40 Pound Bags of Pellets

Don Vorwald would like to give a special thanks to Limestone Bluffs RC & D and the DNR Program.

Please Cash Dividend Checks!

Dividend checks were mailed to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative members on October 31, 2006 and automatically become void on February 28, 2007. If you have not cashed your check please do so soon or call the office and make arrangements to have the check applied to your energy bill. 800-927-6068

Which would you rather do without? One lunch or electricity for a day?

For about the cost of lunch at your favorite restaurant, most of our members get all the convenience and comfort of electricity for a day.

Which would you rather give up? Lunch? Or your heating, cooling, hot water, entertainment, clean clothes, lights and home-cooked meals?

It might not be a fair question, but it makes us pause to think about the great value of electricity in our lives.



Watts The Answer?

1. Meter readings need to be received by the Billing Department no later than the _____ of each month.
2. A plan for saving energy during cold weather includes analyzing all the elements that go into heating a home, including the _____ of the people who live there.
3. Uncashed MVEC dividend checks become void on _____.

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 bills.

Name: _____

Address: _____

November winners:

Terry Tobin, Dubuque

Loras Lawrence, Monticello



Vegetables From the Oven

Susan Uthoff, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

The smell of food in the oven is almost as comforting as it tastes. It doesn't have to be a cake, cookies or meat roasting. In this cold weather, what makes you feel better than coming into a house smelling of good food cooking? Have you tried roasting vegetables? Roasting vegetables can be a satisfying, healthful way to fill your home with good aromas and create a hearty meal.

Roasting gives vegetables a richer, sweeter flavor. Try a variety of seasonal vegetables - corn, onions, peppers, brussel sprouts, tomatoes, garlic, eggplant, zucchini and summer squash. You can also add root vegetables like potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips and rutabagas.

Place the vegetables in a roasting pan that is large enough so they're not too crowded. Overcrowding steams vegetables and leaves them limp rather than tender. They should be basted occasionally, with broth or juice (orange or apple), and stirred gently.

Vegetables have varied cooking times, depending on their density and size. Dense vegetables are potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash, turnips, carrots and onions. Soft vegetables are like peppers, zucchini or asparagus. If roasting different types together, cut the denser ones in smaller sizes so that all vegetables become tender at the same time. Tomatoes, summer squash and eggplant need less time than corn, rutabaga, onions, bell peppers and winter squash. Parsnips, potatoes, carrots and some squashes and beets can take up to an hour or more.

Vegetables play an important part in a MYPyramid balanced diet. Here is a recipe for roasting vegetables.

Oven-Roasted Vegetables

- 5 cups assorted vegetable pieces, washed and cut in chunks
- ¼ cup Italian salad dressing



Preheat oven to 425 °.

Place the hard (dense) vegetables in a 9 x 13 pan. Pour salad dressing over vegetables and gently stir until the vegetables are lightly coated. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Add soft vegetables and stir until the vegetables are lightly coated with the oil mixture. Bake for 15 more minutes, stirring once or twice.

Did You Know?

When using glass or ceramic pans in ovens, you can turn down the temperature about 25°F and cook foods just as quickly.

Make
Very
Efficient
Choices

Change a Light Pledge!

Thank you to all our members who participated in this challenge!



500
400
300
200
100

419

MVEC Members Took the Pledge!

Thank You!



Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2007 Incentive/Rebate Program

Effective January 1, 2007

109 N. Huber Street, PO Box 370, Anamosa, Iowa 52205-0370
800-927-6068 or 319-462-3542
memberservice@mvvec.com

Equipment/Installation	Incentive	Specifications/Regulations
Residential (Geothermal) Heat Pump (New)	Closed Loop \$150/Ton Open Loop \$250/Ton \$150/Ton	•Maximum \$8000; Must be ARI Listed; Sized to allow compressor to supply at least 83% of heating requirements at design heat loss conditions without exceeding 200% of cooling load. Pre-approval required.
Geothermal Replacement Units Only		
Air Source Heat Pump	\$150/ton	•ENERGY STAR rated; ARI Listed; Subject to control agreement; 14 SEER, cooling and 8.2 HSPF heating
Compressor Change-Out Geothermal/Air Source (Replacement)	\$100	
"Heat Plus" Space Heating Program	Special Heat Rate	•Electric Resistance or Geothermal; Requires premium electric water heater; No domestic water heating; \$250 equipment charge. Contact office for details and approval
All Star Home Program	\$250	•ENERGY STAR rated/4 Star HERS rated/RES Check/Compliance Cert.
Indoor Air Quality (Portable units do not qualify)	\$50	•Air Filtration/Radon/Heat Recovery/Ultra-Violet Air Purifiers
Central Air Conditioner	\$100 14 SEER \$150 16 SEER	•ENERGY STAR rated; 14 SEER; Subject to control agreement; Limit two per household
Electric Boiler (In-floor heating only)	\$250	•Must be CSA or UL approved/ASME H Stamp
Electric Water Heaters: (Domestic Water Heating Only)		All Electric Water Heaters must be energized
Electric Water Heater (Premium Quality; 50 Gallon)	\$250	•Energy Factor of .92 or above
Electric Water Heater (Premium Quality; 80 Gallon)	\$250	•Energy Factor of .90 or above
ENERGY STAR Appliances (Limited to one of each appliance/household): Refrigerator	\$25	•Must be ENERGY STAR rated
Dishwasher (Electric water heater required)	\$25	
Washing Machine (Electric water heater required)	\$50	
Room Air Conditioner	\$25	
Disposal of old refrigerator or freezer (requires purchase of new qualifying unit)	\$15	•Available only in exchange for new ENERGY STAR unit Limit two per household; disposal receipt required
Energy Efficient Interior Lighting (Compact Fluorescent) Limit 5 bulbs	\$2/Compact Fluorescent	
Energy Efficient Interior Lighting (Fluorescent Tubes T8-T5) Limit 5 fixtures	\$2/4 ft Fluorescent Tube	•ENERGY STAR rated; One rebate per household per year •Pre-approval over \$2,000 or 500 units
Commercial Outdoor Security Lighting (Dusk to Dawn)	\$30/High Pressure Sodium \$20/Metal Halide \$5/ Outdoor Compact Fluorescent	•ENERGY STAR rated •Pre-approval over \$500 or 25 units
Dairy—Milk Pre-Cooler	\$2/Cow	•Based on number of cows currently being milked.
Energy Efficient Premium Motors/Variable Speed Drive (VSD)	Variable	•Up to 200 hp; Pre-approval over \$1,000 or 20 units Contact office for complete details

•Request rebate application form from office and return with copy of sales receipt. (Forms may also be downloaded from www.lovea.loop)
•Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative reserves the right to discontinue the Rebate Program at any time. No rebates will be paid for a temporary or seasonal application.





Attention High School Juniors

Watch next month's Watts Current for details of our annual Youth Tour Contest and your chance to win an all expense paid trip to Washington D.C.

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

Our Energy Working For You!



Maquoketa Valley
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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

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 Paustign.....	319-462-4848
Cascade, Pete Boffali.....	563-852-3180
Dubuque, Rick Olson.....	563-582-3668
Ferley, Jim Lehman.....	563-744-3005
LaMotie, Brett Cox.....	563-773-8614
Manchester, Dan Peterson.....	563-927-6491
Maquoketa, Jerry Strooper.....	563-652-5014

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