

WATTS *Current*

November 2013

For Our Members

Open House at New Energy Efficient Home

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative will host an open house at Dan Trenkamp and Julie Hildebrand's new, all electric and energy efficient home on Saturday, November 16, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The home is located at 3089 285th Street, Hopkinton. Take X47 north of Highway 38 about three miles, or south of Highway 20 about seven miles to reach 285th Street. Signs will be posted.

Scott Casey of Casey Building Solutions, Cascade, built this 2,108 square foot home using the most energy efficient building methods available. Visitors can learn about insulated concrete form foundations, structural insulated panels for superior exterior walls on the main floor, spray foam and cellulose insulation, LED lighting, electric fireplaces, and how to use switched outlets to reduce phantom energy loads. All Seasons Heating and Cooling, Dubuque, will explain the ground source heat pump system and the heat recovery ventilator.



If there is a home building or remodeling project in your future, you won't want to miss this open house! MVEC staff will be on hand to explain the incentives available to building the most comfortable and efficient home possible.



Family History Results in The Quilting Shop

"Memory quilts are fun to make. They help bring memories out of the past."

Kathy Martin, Bernard

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Did You Know?

The easiest and most cost-effective way to insulate your home is to add insulation in the attic.



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Your Piece of the Pie MVEC retires \$700,000 to members

The Cooperative's Board of Directors approved retirement of deferred patronage dividends totaling approximately \$700,000 from the years of 1995, 1996, and 2012. Checks for dividend payments of \$5 or more were scheduled for mailing in late October to current members and to former members at addresses on record. If your retired patronage dividends are under \$5, the amount will be posted to your electric account and listed as a credit amount on your November electric bill.

Patronage dividend checks are considered void after 120 days from issuance so please promptly deposit your check upon receipt. Also be sure to notify the Cooperative of address changes after you move out of our service area so future patronage checks can be properly delivered to you.

MVEC is different from investor-owned utilities. You, as a consumer and member, own a portion of the business. That ownership has benefits and entitles you to a *Piece of the Pie*.



MVEC holds onto allocated patronage to cover emergencies, such as a natural disaster, and other unexpected events, and to expand its electric system, all of which may require large-scale construction of poles and wires. The action decreases the need to raise rates or borrow money to pay for the infrastructure. After a number of years, as financial conditions permit, the patronage is retired. The amount of your check is based on the amount of electricity you consumed during one or all of the years listed above.

Sharing a *Piece of the Pie* is just one way MVEC is looking out for you.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, MVEC retains operating margins that have been allocated to members as patronage dividends. These dividends, called deferred patronage dividends (or capital credits), are retained for investments in new plant and equipment. Annually, the board determines how much of the retained patronage to pay back to the members in cash.

SAVE UP TO 50% ON FILTERS

When's The Last Time You Changed Your Air Filter?
Breathe easy & lower your energy bill. New filters to your door fast and easy.

Go to mvec.coop or FilterChange.coop and **Order Filters Now**

FilterChange.coop FREE SHIPPING

LED Christmas Lights Rebate

It's that time of year for homeowners to start hanging Christmas lights. Numerous homes have beautiful displays that grab our attention throughout December. In January, the higher electric bill then grabs the homeowner's attention. Holiday decorating can be a win-win with the use of LED Christmas lights. LED lights consume far less electricity than incandescent bulbs, providing the same beautiful color with much lower operating costs. Because



LED lights do not heat up and are cool to the touch, they are much safer on trees or when displayed next to curtains or blinds. Their maintenance time is low and they can last up to 100,000 hours, providing savings for a lifetime.

Think you can't afford to convert to LED Christmas lights? We can help! MVEC is now offering a \$2 per strand rebate on all LED Christmas lights.

To obtain rebate:

1. Fill out the LED Christmas Light Rebate Form found on www.mvec.coop or call our office at 800-927-6068 to request a form.
2. Send the form along with the receipt for the new lights to our address listed on the rebate form. You may also scan the form and receipt, and email to aschilling@mvec.coop.

The rebate will be found as a credit on your next month's energy bill. Limit five (\$10) per household.



Cooking Efficiently

Control energy costs while preparing holiday feasts

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that cooking, alone, accounts for 4 percent of total home energy use, and this figure doesn't include the energy costs associated with refrigeration, hot water heating, and dishwashing.

As holiday parties and potlucks gear up, keep these tips in mind to control energy costs:

- **Don't peek.** Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, forcing it to use more energy to get back to the proper cooking temperature.
- **Turn it down or turn it off.** For regular cooking, it's probably not necessary to have your oven on as long—or set as high—as the recipe calls for. For recipes that need to bake for longer than an hour, pre-heating the oven isn't necessary. And residual heat on an electric oven or stovetop will finish the last 5 to 10 minutes of baking time. Just remember to keep the oven door closed or the lid on until time is up. Alternately, if you're baking in a ceramic or glass dish, you can typically set your oven for 25 degrees less than the recipe calls for. Because ceramic and glass hold heat better than metal pans, your dish will cook just as well at a lower temperature.
- **Give your burners a break.** For your stovetop to function effectively, it's important that the metal reflectors under your electric stove burners stay free of dirt and grime.

- **Don't neglect your slowcooker.** Or your microwave, toaster oven, or warming plate. For example, the average toaster oven can use up to half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time. Information to help you estimate how much



Make good use of your slowcooker, microwave, or toaster oven to save energy. Source: GE Appliances

- energy your own appliances use is available on EnergySavers.gov.
- **Give your furnace the day off.** If your next party involves a lot of work for your stove, think about turning down your furnace to compensate. The heat of the oven and all those guests will keep the temperature comfortable.
- **Make contact.** Electric stovetops can only transmit heat to pans they are in direct contact with; the less contact your pan has with the burner, the more energy the stovetop will have to expend to heat the pan. If cooking with your warped pan is taking longer than it should, it may be time for a flat-bottomed update.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Is it Really Just Pennies a Day?

The wide variety of electric heaters marketed today are a tempting purchase for anyone wanting to take the winter chill out of a room, or even the whole house. Regardless of the brand or style catching your eye, be sure to calculate the cost to operate it before you buy.

An average electric space heater is 1,500 watts or 1.5 kilowatts. That is just pennies a day to operate right? NO! A 1,500 watt heater operating for 24 hours will cost \$3.96. If it runs for 30 days, those pennies add up to \$118.80. (*See calculation below.) The money to purchase and operate just one heater may be better spent on additional attic insulation, caulk, weather stripping, or windows. Call us at 800-927-6068 for a home energy assessment and learn how to make your energy dollars work for you, efficiently!

*1.5 kWh x 24 hours x \$0.11 cents per kWh = \$3.96 x 30 days = \$118.80 per month
(MVEC currently charges \$0.11 per kWh)





Family History Results in The Quilting Shop

Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa, Iowa

I met Kathy Martin as she arrived at her country farm home at 9079 Bellevue-Cascade Road, Bernard, Iowa, after a day of work. After visiting shortly, I asked her why she opened The Quilting Shop. Kathy said, "I've done everything from nuts to bolts since graduation. Since May, I've worked at Rockwell Collins in Bellevue, as do two of my daughters. When a friend suggested I apply, it was the answer to our health insurance cost problems. I've been married 27 years to my husband, John, who works for Noonan Fencing, which allows our son, Dan, to take over running Martin Cattle Company. He custom feeds between 800 to 1,000 head of cattle, which keeps him busy. He's married and the proud father of a beautiful daughter, which makes me the really proud grandmother. It's great to have the joy of kids. Another daughter and her husband lives in Cherokee. I'm a firm believer that everything happens for a reason."



Kathy Martin

So, my next question was how she got started making custom quilts. She replied, "That's another story. I took Home Ec in school. I enjoyed sewing. Although I was never involved with quilt making with Grandma, she made yo-yo quilts." Seeing my quizzical look, she explained, "She made 4-inch fabric circles, folded in the edges, used a running stitch, then pulled it together making flowered patterns, and then sewed it together by hand. I worked on the farm helping, as well as other jobs throughout the years, but I always sewed, making kids clothes, did mending, and made western wear. When I got out of high school, I became a cosmetologist. Later, I went back to college and got a computer degree and worked at a job in Dubuque."

Here, she got out an old storage box. "I didn't know what you might like to see," said Kathy. "But, here's a lap quilt, one of those like Grandma made. A rolled up nylon which looks like a doughnut is inserted inside each fabric square." Kathy then demonstrated for me. She continues, "This box has samples of Grandma's hand tied quilt blocks of all sizes that could be used for wall hangings. Grandma

also had sandpaper squares measured to size to use to make her fabric quilt blocks. I have it much easier. I do not have to use these sandpaper templates. This box was my treasure find; makes me feel very blessed."



Kathy showing the patriotic wall hanging.

As I take a photo of a unique patriotic wall hanging, Kathy informs me, "I did this quilted decoration in one afternoon. Once I start something, I try to finish it quickly."

As she shows me more handmade quilts, she explains that she has many repeat customers. She unfolds a T-shirt quilt that consists of lots of T-shirts fashioned together, presenting what Kathleen refers to as, "One of my memory quilts." Kathy adds, "I use a stabilizer on the back to keep the shape. I get a lot of orders for these at graduation." This makes my mind go into overdrive as I peruse the idea of using the Starlighters Theatre's T-shirts from various presentations for a fundraising idea.

"I'm kind of a weirdo," she says. "I like the history behind old quilts. I like to go to auctions, farm sales and garage sales to look for old quilts to repair. Some I keep and some I give to charity. This pink and green hand stitched quilt is an example." She then unfolds what she describes as the highlight of her collection. "This is a queen size memory quilt that has all the family names and birthdays hand sewn on each square, said Kathy. "It was the family on mom's side; the Covington and Moyer family. I'm guessing it was done by my great-grandma. It now belongs to my oldest brother."



The pink and green quilt Kathy repaired.

"This is one of my quilts, which I made in an afternoon," she said. "I had the fabric on hand, so I sat and cut pieces out using plastic templates for the pattern size. I used the sewing machine. Nothing fancy. It's so easy compared to what Grandma had."



As she showed me the ‘busy’ upstairs sewing room, bright large hand sewn socks caught my eye, another perfect gift item. Kathy then exhibited the accu quilt cutter, which she uses to make special quilt designs like leaves and flowers. I ascertained these could be used for appliqué work.

“I collect fabric,” said Kathy, which was evident as she opened up drawers stowed away in large furniture storage. “I also feel I have to mention the best seamstress I’ve ever quilted for, Tami Urnie, who learned from her aunt and mother. She just purchased Cotton Creek Mill Quilt Shop in West Branch, Iowa. It was a careful task for me to quilt a Halloween quilt that her mom had hand embroidered.”

Then, Kathy unfolded a John Deere quilt and also a Farmall quilt that she made for a man who had contacted her about an item for a benefit auction. This was followed by a memory quilt requested by a daughter for her dad made out of his shirts. These, Kathy had fashioned into small-sized shirts on each quilt block. “Memory quilts are fun to make,” she says. “They help bring memories out of the past. All quilts are different. Customers are invited to ask about topics for fashioning their one-of-a-kind memory quilts.”



John Deere quilt



Memory quilt



Farmall quilt



Memory quilt

When I asked her about an estimate of the number of quilts she has made, she paused, “I have no idea, but I quilted 14-15 quilts from October to December last year. I make quilts for people in the tri-county area and even in Wisconsin and Illinois. I do the designs, preferring to do long arm quilting and that’s what I do mostly. People bring me the quilt tops already finished with their backing material ready to assemble or I can furnish the backing. The long armed machine is not computerized. If I can draw it, I can quilt it.”

Kathy continues, “I bought my Nolting long arm quilting machine three years ago in Hiawatha. It’s



Kathy stands next to her Nolting long arm machine.

American made so I have access to a classroom to practice, play, and learn. I did take the class nine years ago, but at that time I couldn’t afford the expense.”

“Here’s another instance of where I appreciate the support and patience of my husband,” said Kathy. “I attend quilting gatherings and retreats, which are really known as eat and sew. We share recipes as well as using it as a time to get together, sew, and discuss upcoming trade shows.”

After I spent such an enjoyable time with Kathy, showing so much pride in the old family quilts and telling of the history of quilting, I asked her if she might consider doing such a presentation for quilt groups. She apologized stating that her home wasn’t a top notch set-up. I explained that her enthusiasm for the history of quilts dating all the way up to the present would be better than any video or trying to learn about quilting by reading. So, I’m advising you to give it a try and contact her at 563-542-0750, or by sending an email to kathymartin@bernardtel.com. I would like to sum up that I don’t believe Kathy ever gave it much thought that growing up with the women of the family so involved in quilting that her avocation just came naturally!

P.S. for Kathy: It was a great writing experience, as your former junior high teacher, to see what you have achieved, observe your great outlook on life, the pride you have in your family, the joy which you exude when speaking of grandchildren, and your positive view of the future!



Protect Electronics, Prevent Hazards

Big-ticket electronics, such as televisions, computers, and gaming consoles, are at the top of many holiday wish lists—but safety may not be. Purchasing, installing, and operating these items safely protects not only the expensive equipment, but also your entire home. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following tips, and for more information, visit holidaysafety.org.

Safety tips

- Always purchase electrical devices from a reputable retailer that you trust. Be especially wary when making online purchases.
- Check that all electrical items are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Intertek (ETL).
- Always read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions before use.
- Send warranty and product registration forms for new items to manufacturers in order to be notified about product recalls. Recall information is also available on the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (<http://www.cpsc.gov>).
- Never install an exterior television or radio antenna close enough to contact power lines if it falls.
- Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit into a two-prong outlet.
- All appliances and cords should be kept in good condition. Examine them regularly for damage, and repair or dispose of damaged items.
- Keep cords out of reach of children and pets.
- Make sure entertainment centers and computer workstations have enough space around them for ventilation of electronic equipment.
- Keep liquids, including drinks, away from electrical devices. Spills can result in dangerous shocks or fires.
- Unplug equipment when not in use to save energy and reduce the risks for shocks or fires. Power strips or surge protectors make a good central turn-off point.
- Always unplug electrical items by grasping the plug firmly rather than pulling on the cord.
- If you receive any kind of shock from a large appliance or any other electrical device, stop using it until an electrician has checked it.
- If an appliance smokes or sparks, or if you feel a tingle or light shock when it’s on, stop using it. Discard and replace it or have it repaired by an authorized service provider.

Extension cords

- Extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution. They should not be used as a long-term or permanent electrical circuit.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Only use weather-resistant, heavy gauge extension cords marked “for outdoor use” outside.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords clear of snow and standing water.
- Arrange furniture so that there are outlets available for equipment without the use of extension cords.
- Do not place power cords or extension cords in high traffic areas or under carpets, rugs, or furniture (to avoid overheating and tripping hazards), and never nail or staple them to the wall or baseboard.



Surge protector or power strip?

Although surge protectors and power strips both allow you to plug several devices in one location, it is important for consumers to understand that they are not interchangeable. A true surge protector includes internal components that divert or suppress the extra current from surges, protecting your valuable electronics from electrical spikes, while a power strip simply provides more outlets for a circuit.

Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation International*

Pull the Plug

Do you have old appliances no longer in use and taking up space? We can help you recycle them! The Pull the Plug program pays you for saving energy responsibly. Appliances in working condition will qualify for the following rewards:

Refrigerator	Freezer	Window air conditioner
\$35	\$25	\$25

Sign up today by calling MVEC at 800-927-6068. Our program contractor, Environmental Services of Iowa, will call you to schedule a collection time for your appliance to be recycled. (Limited to three appliances per year.)



Member 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
 Anamosa, IA 52205
 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, 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069, 515-725-7300.

Co-op Connections Card Savings

Use your Co-op Connections Card at these local participating businesses. Go to www.mvec.coop and click on the Co-op Connections Card link to discover national discounts, as well as information on the Healthy Savings discounts on prescriptions, vision and dental care, and more. If you have misplaced your card or have questions about all the benefits of the program, call Erica at 800-927-6068.



A free Co-op Connections Card app is available for the iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, as well as Droid and Blackberry phones. Even if you forget your card, you'll be able to save with the app.

Anamosa Floral
Anamosa
319-462-3000
 Free votive candle with purchase of any fresh arrangement

Grounds & Goodies
Anamosa
319-462-2868
 Free drink with purchase of deli item

Al's Clean Machine
Bellevue
563-542-3655
 10% off all services

Anytime Fitness
Dubuque
563-556-0056
 1st month free with a new 12 month agreement

Comfort Inn
Dubuque
888-651-7666
 Room rate discount

Fairfield Inn
Dubuque
888-651-7666
 Room rate discount

Massage Wellness LLC
Dubuque
563-599-6369
 \$5 off 1 hour massage

Comfort Inn
Dyersville
563-875-7700
 5% off regular room rate

Fabulous Fridays
Manchester
563-927-2197
 Buy one accessory and get one for 1/2 off (equal or lesser value)

Maquoketa Inn & Suites
Maquoketa
563-652-6888
 15% off regular room rate of the day

Trenkamp Electric
Miles
563-682-7944
 10% off labor charges

Pizza Ranch
Monticello
319-465-6000
 5% off meal purchase

Watts The Answer?

1. An open house at the new energy efficient home will be held November ____, 2013.
2. MVEC is different from investor-owned utilities. You, as a consumer and member, _____ a portion of the business.
3. A true _____ protector includes internal components that divert or suppress the extra current from surges, protecting your valuable electronics from electrical spikes, while a _____ strip simply provides more outlets for a circuit.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill or email them to erobertson@mvec.coop.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

September winners:
 Ruth Bies, Bellevue
 Steve Koch, Farley



Maquoketa Valley
Electric Cooperative
109 North Huber Street
Anamosa, Iowa 52205

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

Happy Thanksgiving



Our office will be closed
Thursday, November 28th
and Friday, November 29th

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Mailing Address:

109 North Huber Street • Anamosa, IA 52205
319-462-3542 or 800-927-6068

OFFICE HOURS

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

After Hours Call Center

800-582-8998

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www.mvec.coop

Find Us On facebook

www.facebook.com/maquoketavalleyelectriccooperative



Email direct to the following departments:

Billing Questions	billing@mvec.coop
Product or Service Questions	memberservices@mvec.coop
Maintenance Issues	maintenance@mvec.coop
Dividend Questions	patronage@mvec.coop
New Service Questions	engineering@mvec.coop
Management	management@mvec.coop

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