

WATTS *Current*

September 2014

For Our Members

Our Purpose, Our Members



By Jim Lauzon, CEO

This was the theme of our 2014 Annual Meeting of the Membership held on August 21st. Our members exercised their rights with two separate voting opportunities and this issue of the *Watts Current* will inform members about the results and how they impact our purpose in serving you.

First, we welcome Charlie Peters, Bellevue, as a new director to represent members in Jackson and Clinton Counties. Mr. Peters is a well-respected and active Jackson County resident and we look forward to his input on our board of directors. Members also re-elected Gene Manternach representing Jones, Cedar, and Linn Counties and Judy Gotto, At-Large director. During the Annual Meeting, the directors held a reorganizational meeting. The following directors will hold office as follows: Larry Swanson (Delaware, Buchanan, and Clayton Counties), President; Ron Thielen (Dubuque County), Vice President; Gene Manternach (Jones, Cedar, and Linn Counties), Secretary; Charles McCullough (Dubuque County), Assistant Secretary; and Judy Gotto (At-Large), Treasurer.



Charlie Peters

Next, the membership in attendance at the Annual Meeting voted to approve a Restated Articles of Incorporation. This restated version incorporates all changes made to the document since its creation 78 years ago and specifically includes several changes and corrections necessary since the last update in 1996.

Many of the changes are cosmetic or grammatical. For example, titles were given to each of the Article Sections to make it easier to find something. The words Association and Cooperative were used interchangeably in the original and now read Cooperative throughout. Other changes clarify the original intent so as to minimize misinterpretations of the document.

The Cooperative was formed under Chapter 94 of the Acts of the 46th General Assembly. The current Code governing Cooperatives is Section 499 of the Code of Iowa and this is now reflected in the new version.

Any perceived limits as to what the Cooperative can do for its members has been eliminated by stating we can do all things allowed by law. Specifically, the Internet and electric wiring of premises has been added to the list of approved purposes. While we have no current plans to enter

Continued on page 2

Special JETS to Wherever?

"It's not unusual to put on 200 miles in one day."

Mickey Baumler, Anamosa

Page 4



Did You Know?

Trees that lose their leaves in the fall are the most effective at reducing heating and cooling costs!



Watts Inside:

Are You A Member?
Page 3

Heat Plus Meter Readings
Page 3

Special JETS to Wherever?
Page 4

Annual Meeting Cash Prize Winners
Page 5

Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours
Page 5

Farmers Urged to Be Aware of Electrical Hazards
Page 6

Watts Green
Page 6

Electricity Remains a Good Value
Page 7



Our Purpose, Our Members

Continued from page 1

those arenas, these Restated Articles now allow those opportunities.

The original incorporators remain listed in the document so we never forget those who worked together to start our Cooperative so many years ago.

The list of who can become a member has been updated to include irrevocable trusts or other forms of business. (Please see separate article on memberships.) Businesses may appoint an individual to vote on their behalf and thus in some cases an individual will be allowed to vote for their personal membership and for a business membership. To qualify as a member, the business must have a unique federal identification number, and be a separate legal entity from an existing member. The previous document was not clear and alluded to allowing a representative of a business to be a member. The new Articles clarify the distinction between having multiple accounts under one membership, and having multiple memberships.

In addition, any two individuals may now apply for joint membership, where the former document allowed only husband and wife. This allows two siblings who farm together to apply for a joint membership, or any other two individuals jointly using the services of the Cooperative.

The new Articles allow the Bylaws to establish additional membership requirements as needed in the future. The Bylaws can be updated by the Board of Directors so are more easily updated as conditions change.

Years ago the Cooperative refunded the initial membership fees paid to join and stopped sending paper membership certificates. The new Articles specify the membership certificate shall be maintained in an electronic format by the Cooperative and references to the certificate being turned in upon leaving were eliminated. References to repayment of the membership fees have been eliminated.

The use of the word Districts was replaced with Geographic Areas to minimize the confusion with election by Districts as outlined in Iowa Code. For many years the Cooperative has elected its directors

by an at-large election, meaning all members vote for all directors. The requirement to have two directors from each Geographic Area remains in place. The Geographic Areas must be identified in the Bylaws and has not changed. This ensures representation across the territory served by the Cooperative. The new Articles allow a director who moves out of their geographic area to serve out their term as long as they otherwise qualify, but they will not be allowed to seek reelection except in their new area.

The new Articles allow the Bylaws to establish other terms and conditions for becoming a director provided they do not conflict with the conditions established in Iowa Code or the Articles.

The new Articles remove the requirement for the Board to fill each vacancy, but allows the Board to do so if appropriate. The Board must fill the vacancy if the number of directors falls below the statutory minimum, currently five. This allows the Board to wait until Annual Meeting when the members will elect a director.

The Articles now allow a director to resign, something not specifically allowed in the previous document. It also allows the Board to consider the missing of three or more consecutive Board meetings as a voluntary resignation by a director. The wording provides the Board leeway in accepting the resignation so as to accommodate short term health or other personal issues that may prevent a director from attending meetings. Previously, a director who did not attend a meeting of the Board could retain their seat unless recalled by the membership.

The Board of Directors has also taken the time to review the Bylaws of the Cooperative. The Bylaws are the secondary governance document allowing for additional requirements to those items addressed in the Articles. The Bylaws cannot conflict with the Articles and are not allowed to modify the intent of the Articles. The revised Bylaws are available for your review.

It is our privilege to serve your electric service needs. Our purpose is our members.



Are You A Member?

You pay your bill each month. Perhaps your household has received a dividend check. So, are you a member and owner of the Cooperative? If your account is a single membership in your spouse's name, you are not a member and may not receive membership benefits. Read on for more information on how to change your membership type so that you can enjoy the benefits of being a member.

A cooperative is owned by the members it serves and the members receive important benefits including:

- The ability to get answers to questions about the account. For example, if the account is listed only in the husband's name, we cannot give the wife any details due to privacy laws.
- Patronage dividend payments, generally made annually, can only be issued in the name of the member.
- Voting rights for directors that represent your interests or other Cooperative business that may impact service are available only to members. Each membership is entitled to one vote.
- An opportunity to run for a seat on the board of directors.

Becoming a member requires receiving electric service from the Cooperative and signing a Membership Agreement.

There are three types of memberships available; Single, Joint or Business.

Single Membership – Issued only in one person's name, regardless of how many people may receive service at the location. This person is the only one who can obtain information on the account, vote on cooperative business or receive patronage dividend checks.

Joint Membership – Issued in the name of any two people using the electric service. This could mean a husband and wife, two siblings or any two individuals. The membership is allowed only one vote, but either person can make inquiries on the account and patronage dividend checks are payable to both parties.

Business Membership – This is a business entity including a corporation, partnership or an irrevocable trust. The business entity must designate a representative to vote on behalf of the business. Patronage checks are issued in the name of the business.

An individual may hold a personal membership

(single or joint) and also act as the appointed representative for a business. In this case, that individual has the ability to vote on behalf of both memberships. Conversely, if an individual receives service at several locations, all the locations fall under one membership and therefore only one vote is allowed and patronage is earned under the one membership.

If you wish to make a change to your membership status, a new Membership Agreement is the only requirement. Contact our office and we will gladly assist you in changing the type of membership associated with your electric account.

The person, or persons, signing a Membership Agreement agree to follow the Articles of Incorporation, the By-Laws and the rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The Agreement requires a signature and a social security number or Federal Identification Number, depending on the type of membership requested. MVEC has policies in place to protect the security of personally identifying information. A uniquely identifying number, typically the social security number, is required to ensure future patronage dividend payments are made to the correct person and to enforce the one membership, one vote requirement.

A location that receives service, but does not have a properly completed Membership Agreement on file, will be designated as a Class B member. These accounts enjoy reliable, affordable service, but do not receive patronage payments and cannot vote in Cooperative elections.

Membership in the Cooperative you own is both a right and a privilege. Our purpose is our members and we are always working for you.

Heat Plus Meter Readings

The 2014-2015 Heat Plus rate with Power Cost Adjustment is \$0.49 per kilowatt-hour for electricity used from October 1, 2014, through May 31, 2015. The bill you receive in November will reflect your first months usage for this heating season. MVEC strives to keep this rate as low as possible to encourage the installation of highly efficient heat pump systems. If you are planning a building or remodeling project, contact us at 800-927-6068 for energy efficient ideas.



Special JETS to Wherever?

Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa, Iowa

When attending Margaret (Mickey) Baumler’s retirement party, I heard the many accolades bestowed upon her as the ‘bestest’ of JETS (Jones Economy Transportation System) bus drivers. It just seemed right to find out about her extra touch. It’s something she had provided for 25 years.

Mickey tells me as I visited with her, “I started working with the JETS bus in Monticello, part-time. It was a busy world going back and forth to the nursing home and Advancement Services. It was a nice job for me. I’d had experience while living at home with dad’s problems.”



Mickey and Dale Baumler

Mickey continued, “As I began working out of the Anamosa area, I’d book in to start at 7 a.m. and work until 6:30 p.m. The first years were the hardest. There were not so many drivers. The drivers had to be retired. It’s not a full time job. The JETS bus is for people of all ages. It’s not just for the handicapped. You may want to call if you feel you can’t handle your vehicle because of how you feel in the traffic or weather. You may feel you don’t want to contend with the big trucks passing you and splashing your windshield.”

“It’s important for drivers to be there when the customer exits the home,” says Mickey. “All handicaps are not evident just by looking at a person. We take many regularly to the Senior Centers for meals. Others find JETS extremely convenient for doctor’s appointments, to go shopping, get groceries, or visit someone. Many times we help them carry the groceries. Anyone applying for a job at JETS must realize you have to help riders to get on and off the JETS bus.” At this point, Mickey interjected, “It is really important to call for appointments, at least a day ahead.”

Asking Mickey how busy drivers are, she responded, “It’s not unusual to put on 200 miles in one day.” Some of the comments I heard as I approached Mickey’s past riders as to why they missed her were, “She’s always so willing to help. She just seems to understand when we need help, so that we don’t even need to ask, and Mickey always wears that big happy smile.”

Mickey has lived with her husband, Dale, for 40 years on a farm north of Anamosa. He is also retired from working after 24 years at Wilson and 17 years at the State Reformatory at Anamosa. Their home looks like a show place with well tended flowers and shrubs planted by Mickey. Their deck is very inviting to sit and enjoy the country side. As they inform me that they have raised four children and have five grandchildren who live nearby, it brings those proud gleams to their faces.

Mickey relates the keys necessary to be a good JETS bus drivers. First, is having compassion. Second, be willing to be patient. Third, treat everyone the way you would like to be treated.

For those of you having trouble finding the phone number, here it is: 319-462-2143 or 1-800-453-0906. It is listed under Jones County JETS at 100 Park Avenue in Anamosa. You may want to keep the following cost information at your fingertips:
\$2.00 each way in town.
\$1.00 each for extra stops in same town.
\$1.00 each way for trips to the Senior Center.
\$3.00 each way out of town within Jones County.
\$25.00 per hour if there is waiting time or just dropping off and no return outside of Jones County.

Please remember to call one day in advance for appointment. Their hours are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. You can also send an email to jets@co.jones.ia.us. Special trip rates will take place in December, for events such as the Annual Christmas Lights Tour. You are requested to call for details if you would like to participate.

NOTE: Jones County JETS is independently run. It is one of six county transit operations in Region 10 organized under the East Central Iowa Council of Government. The RTA provides transit service in Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. For information and rates, call 1-800-839-5005.



Annual Meeting Cash Prize Winners

Over 500 members and guests were in attendance at the Annual Meeting. Members enjoyed a delicious meal and participated in the business of their Cooperative. Cash prize winners are listed below.

Robert Kloser, Epworth
Lavonne Coyle, Epworth
Vera Fink-Buehler, Manchester
Perry Gittings, Bernard
Earl Brimeyer, Holy Cross
Ken Smith, Peosta
Ruth Weber, Dubuque
Frank Naber, Dyersville
Steve Bradley, Manchester
Betty & Jeff Doyle, Dubuque
Alvin McDermott, Bernard
Merle Winch, Hopkinton
John Gaul, Peosta
Mickey Burlage, Worthington
O'Rourke Farms LLC, Dubuque

John Foht, Dubuque
Mrs. William J. Klaren, Worthington
Celester Feldmann, Durango
Marty Kluesner, Farley
Lyal Pfeiler, Rickardsville
Lola Orris, Monmouth
Sue & Cleta Deppe, Bellevue
Mrs. William McMahon, Farley
David Sieverding, Bellevue
Ken Faust, Strawberry Point
Loras Lawrence, Monticello
Norine Hankemeier, LaMotte
Laverne Freiburger, Holy Cross
William Tauke, Zwingle
Lyman Lanpher, Onslow



Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours

Peak hours are the busiest times for your cooperative, since many people are using electricity at the same time. In addition, it costs us more to generate electricity when demand soars during peak periods—and the cost of your electricity also may rise. Obviously, using less electricity during peak periods can save your cooperative—and you—money.

Here's how you can help during peak hours, which generally fall between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.:

- Shift household chores and activities away from peak periods. Wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed, for instance.
- Use the most energy-efficient appliances you have. Your microwave oven, for example, uses considerably less energy than your stove or cooktop.
- If you're buying a new appliance, make sure you get a highly efficient one. Look for ENERGY STAR labels when you're evaluating different models.

Be aware of your energy consumption, and try to get in the habit of using energy efficiently year-round.

Use the energy you need, but use it wisely! You'll help us avoid building expensive new power plants—and that, in turn, will help keep your electric rates stable.

Thank you! On behalf of my wife Jenni and our family, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for all the member support during the election of directors at the recent MVEC Annual Meeting. The upcoming term will surely have a learning curve, but I welcome the opportunity to serve the membership and help continue the tradition of excellence at MVEC.

Charlie Peters





Farmers Urged to Be Aware of Electrical Hazards

Farmers and farm family members face dangers every day. Although tragedies such as tractor rollovers and grain bin suffocation receive the most attention, electrocution and electrical burn accidents are frequent on farms. Electrical Safety is one of the priorities during National Farm Safety and Health Week September 21-27, 2014.

A simple movement of a portable grain auger from one bin to another can have tragic results if the individuals involved are not extremely careful. The use of tractors with large cabs and antennas and oversized grain wagons can also result in preventable electrocution incidents.

Electrical equipment around fields, such as power lines in the end rows may get overlooked during such a hectic time of year as harvest. However, failure to notice overhead power lines can be a deadly oversight.

Most farmsteads could use a very careful overhead visual inspection of electrical lines. The service may no longer meet the proper codes because of the age and/or damage to poles and pole guy wires. The sag may have increased over the years, while the height of the machinery being used today may be much higher. Utility regulators require power lines to be 18.5 feet or more above the ground to provide adequate clearance.

However, today's farm equipment has a long reach when extended; and even when collapsed for roadway transport, many pieces of equipment may exceed that 18.5 foot height. A daily check should be made of where equipment will be moving to



ensure that it will clear power lines. But don't take matters into your own hands. They may not be as high as they look. Never undertake the height measurement of the lines without the on-site help of the utility company officials. A good rule is to maintain a 10 foot separation from a power line completely around it, whether you are driving underneath or passing a grain auger near it.

In addition to conducting a field survey of power lines to locate potential hazards, employers should obtain safety information from utility companies for the benefit of their workers if the lines are to remain energized.

Where possible, install electrical safety warning signage to prevent equipment and personnel contact with power lines. This will also be beneficial to your suppliers who may be making deliveries to your farm. Always keep in mind that electricity doesn't allow mistakes and neither should you.

Watts Green

Today's changing energy landscape is bringing more attention to renewable energy resources. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative supports generation that is safe, reliable, cost effective, and environmentally responsible.

Green renewable energy is electricity produced in an environmentally friendly manner. Sources of green energy include the sun, wind, and water, which are pollution free and naturally reoccurring.



Renewable electricity technologies are among the cleanest and have the least impact on the

environment. Some of the renewable energy that is sold to our members is purchased under contract from wind turbines and solar arrays owned by other members.

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's Watts Green Renewable Energy Program enables you to support renewable energy by paying a small premium on your bill. The cost is currently 2 cents per kilowatt hour, or \$1.00 for a 50 kilowatt block.

Your participation in the Watts Green Renewable Energy Program will help provide incentive for others to produce green power. Call our office today at 800-927-6068 for more information.



Electricity Remains a Good Value

In today's world, you won't find many items that cost less than \$5. You can purchase a gallon of milk, a gallon of gas or a Big Mac® meal from McDonald's. But did you know that an average day's worth of electricity costs less than \$5?

Even in our country's shifting energy climate, electricity remains a good value. In fact, electricity has the lowest cost per day of any of the items listed above. And not all of those items are necessary for daily life!

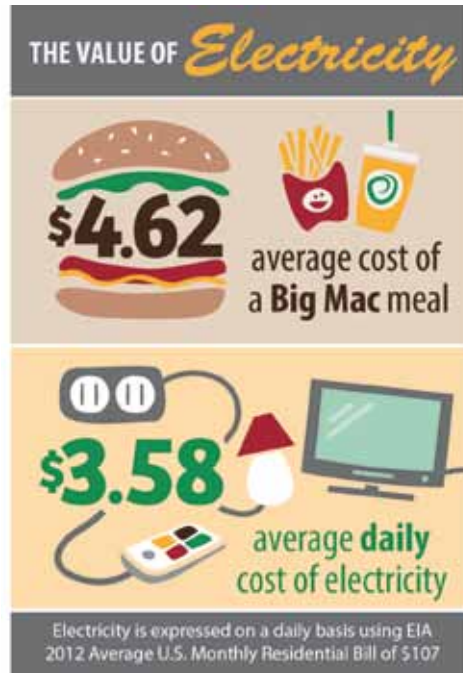
Think about your daily necessities (electricity and gasoline, to name a couple), and then think about the cost of the special treats we allow ourselves to purchase on a weekly basis (maybe even on a daily basis for some items!). We don't often question the cost of a Big Mac® meal – it costs over \$1 more to buy a Big Mac® meal than it does to purchase a day's worth of power. And yet, we frequently become upset if our electricity rates rise.

It makes sense; we have become increasingly reliant upon electricity. Electricity has, for many of us, gone from a luxury commodity to a necessity and an expectation. We expect the lights to come on when we flip the switch, and we expect our power to stay on during the best *and* worst conditions. How else would we keep our food fresh, our homes cool in the summer or warm in the winter? It is easy to cut a Big Mac® out of your spending routine here and there to save a few dollars. But we cannot simply cut electricity out of our budgets if times get tough or we decide that we want to scale back our spending in order to save.

Perhaps that is why it is so upsetting to us when our rates increase, even if only in small increments. It is nearly impossible for us to think about what our lives would be like if we did not have electricity. If at times it doesn't seem that electricity is affordable, remember – even as the demand for electricity grows – annual cost increases still remain low, especially when compared to other consumer goods such as medical care, education, gasoline and, yes, even Big Macs®. Electricity is still a great bargain. And also remember this: Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative is committed to making sure that you and your family always have safe, reliable and affordable electric service in your home.

So the next time you crave a Big Mac®, remember your electric bill, and think about what a great deal you're getting for your dollar!

Source: Statista.com, 2014. Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material.



Watts The Answer?

1. There are three types of _____ available; Single, Joint or Business.
2. A daily check should be made of where equipment will be moving to ensure that it will clear power _____.
3. Even in our country's shifting energy climate, _____ remains a good value.

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: _____

June winners:
 Lester Dierks, Preston
 Thomas Paulsen, Wyoming

July winners:
 John Kilburg, Spragueville
 Marcia Weigel, Dyersville



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Attention Teachers:
Call us for programs on
electrical safety, renewable
energy or energy efficiency.

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