



September 2023

A CHOICE: Minnesota's Energy Future

Darrick Moe, CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

Minnesotans expect the lights to come on every time they flip the switch. However, increasingly the reliability of our electric grid is becoming a serious challenge as we plot our energy future. A recent assessment from the North America Electric Reliability Corporation warns more than two-thirds of North America's electric grid is at risk of energy shortfalls this summer and the problem will only get worse.

Also, let us not forget that just last December, we were a gnat's hair away from having rolling blackouts in Minnesota due to nasty winter weather. The winter before, weather in Texas created power supply issues and caused rolling blackouts in western Minnesota and the Dakotas.

As the CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, which represents Minnesota's non-profit electric cooperatives, I am concerned about Minnesota's energy future and how to ensure our power is always reliable, affordable and sustainable. Minnesota's electric cooperatives are owned and governed by the more than 1.7 million Minnesotans we serve and are leaders in the clean energy transition. Our power lines are located in all 87 counties and spread throughout 85% of Minnesota's land mass.

This year the legislature passed an aggressive carbon-free by 2040 bill which sets a clear benchmark for just how quickly our energy transition will need to take place. As the experts in our field, we want to make it clear that the path to a reliable

carbon-free future presents a monumental challenge.

Decades of careful planning are required to build out our grid; it cannot be accomplished with just the flip of a switch. To meet the moment, it is imperative those managing and planning this transition retain flexibility. We advocate for pursuing an "all-tech-on-deck" approach to seek reliable and affordable solutions. Let's explore emerging technologies while avoiding any more costly mandates we might end up regretting.

We must leave all of our options on the table and allow for exploration and innovation. The greatest solution for our energy future might be something not yet discovered, and every energy source we have today has its limitations. Therefore, it is essential that we don't handcuff ourselves to a limited number of options by proliferating policy mandates.

Minnesota's energy future is a choice. With an aggressive policy direction now established, let the experts who are building, planning, and executing this clean-energy transition make the tough choices necessary to proceed without further mandates that limit options and without the additional costs imposed by favored schemes to achieve the goal.

Our vision for Minnesota is an electric grid that is reliable, affordable and sustainable. A grid that is ready for millions of new electric vehicles, appliances and growing



beneficial electrification while keeping electricity affordable. A system that has plenty of power for those cold winter nights and hot summer days. A future where Minnesota can be an example to the world on how to get the clean energy transition right.

To get to that future, we can't have mandates restrict our ability to think creatively, we cannot afford unnecessarily long permitting delays, and we can't let shortsighted wishful thinking fog our view of reality. The last thing we want is energy costs to drive up the price of goods for a struggling family or to have an elderly couple be without air conditioning on a boiling summer day.

Minnesota's non-profit electric cooperatives are democratically controlled by the people we serve. Our only "special interest" is everyday hard-working Minnesotans who expect reliable and affordable power. The cooperative way is one of collaboration, cooperation and common sense. By embracing this model and entrusting the experts in the field, we can forge a path toward a bright energy future that benefits all. We all have the same goal in mind. Together, let's march forward, united in our commitment to a reliable and sustainable energy landscape for generations to come.

STEAM EV



About 150 students from around our area participating in the summer STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) camp learned about wind and solar energy along with other topics on August 3. South Central Electric demonstrated our all-electric Chevy Bolt to educate the students about electric cars

Directors Tour SCE Distribution System

On July 10th South Central Electric Directors toured a portion of the electric system and received updates on current and possible future projects. Directors saw the progress crews had made on replacing some original line and poles in Ann Township in Cottonwood County and Kimball Township in Jackson County with new underground. They visited the newest substations in Trimont and north of Jeffers. Directors stopped at the former Alliant substation near Storden which has SCE under-build line on the transmission poles following along State Highway 30. The projects are all part of increasing reliability and capacity on South Central Electric's distribution grid.

Some of the original wire removed from Kimball Township in Jackson Co.



Crews remove poles in Kimball Township in Jackson County. Overhead line was replaced with new underground. Some of the line and poles in the area were original construction.

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Estimated Cost of \$8,000 to \$11,500 includes the following:

- Briggs & Stratton® Power Protect DX with industry leading 10-year warranty.
- Minnesota winter ready with battery warmer, oil heater & battery charger.
- Automatic transfer switch.
- Electrician installation.



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FARMFEST 2023



Electric Co-op Booth Drawings

Thanks for stopping by the Electric Cooperative Booth at Farmfest. The winners from the drawings are:

- Misting Fan – **Corner Grove Farms**, BENCO
- String Trimmer – **Carolyn Huhnerkoch**, Redwood Electric
- Leaf Blower – **Wayne Johnson**, Meeker Electric Cooperative
- Chain Saw – **Dean Wenzel**, Federated Rural Electric
- Lawn Mower – **Gary Kranz**, Redwood Electric





Cold weather rule outlines process to avoid winter disconnection and loss of electricity

The state's Cold Weather Rule guides utilities on winter disconnections as long as customers follow these main guidelines.

Residential Customer Notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. The electric cooperative may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any public assistance, including energy assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;
2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and
3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. In addition, an electric cooperative must, between August 15 and October 1 of each year, notify all residential customers of these provisions.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer between October 1 and April 30, an electric cooperative must provide:

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection;
2. A statement with the customer's rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
5. A statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

Emergency energy assistance phone numbers

Des Moines Valley Health & Human Services (Cottonwood County)	831-1891
Des Moines Valley Health & Human Services (Jackson County)	847-4000
Jackson County Sheriff's Department	847-4420
Martin County Human Services	238-4757
Martin County Sheriff's Department	238-4481
MN Dept. of Energy Services (Ask for fuel assistance)	1-800-657-3805
Minnesota Valley Action Council	1-800-767-7139
Brown County	354-3138
Martin County	238-1663
Watonwan County	375-5748
Salvation Army's Heat Share (Jackson & Martin Co.)	238-9797
Watonwan County Human Services	375-3294
United Community Action Partnership (Jackson & Cottonwood Co.)	1-800-992-1710

If you live in an area that is not listed, call your electric co-op for details.

SCEA WATER HEATER PROGRAM

SCEA's peak shave water heater program provides members with a Marathon water heater at a discounted price for participating in the load management program.

The cost for water heaters is **\$750**. This is a great value for members. SCEA pays the cost of the electrician to wire the water heater and radio control. The member would pay any costs incurred by a plumber.



Official monthly newsletter

South Central Electric

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The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at South Central Electric's building at 71176 Tiell Dr., St. James, MN.

Please see our website for a summary of the board meetings.

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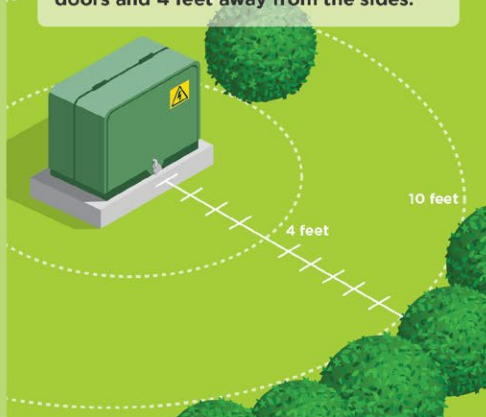
Avoid the Big Green Box

Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers (the big green box). While safe, they are not meant for touching, climbing or playing. Pad-mounted transformers carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities.

Never touch, climb or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformer clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from the transformer doors and 4 feet away from the sides.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always dial 8-1-1 before you dig.

Report problems. If you notice anything amiss, like an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact us immediately.



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