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SOME SKIN IN THE GAME?**

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# CEO MESSAGE

FROM MICHAEL J. HENKE, PRESIDENT & CEO

mhenke@peoplesenergy.coop

To make a good chocolate chip cookie, every recipe has essential steps and ingredients. When you skip an important step or forget a main ingredient – something will feel ‘off’ with the finished product. For example, not enough flour will leave the cookies flat and crispy instead of thick and chewy. Forgetting chocolate chips will create an entirely different cookie. My grandchildren would never accept a chocolate chip cookie without the chocolate chips!

Our cooperative has ‘essential ingredients’ for success and the key ingredient is you, the member-owner. In the cooperative business model members are like flour in baked goods, they provide the structure. The difference between a cooperative and other business models is that the members who are served by the business are the ones who own and govern the organization. They elect the board of directors to represent them who then hires a CEO, like me, to run the business within the guidelines and policies set by the Board.

But the success doesn’t just rest on the shoulders of the seven members who represent the membership. They rely on other members to help with some of the work. For example, the Nominating Committee helps seek out and vet potential board members to ensure good governance. The Operation Round Up Board helps live out the cooperative principle of ‘concern for community’ by reviewing grant applications from local community groups and then awarding grant money collected from members who voluntarily contribute to the effort.

Active member engagement keeps the cooperative true to its roots – transparent, accountable, and collectively driven. I encourage you to check out the opportunities listed on pages 6 and 7 and learn ways you can get involved at your cooperative

Advocacy takes member engagement one step further. Someone who advocates on behalf of the Cooperative shares public support for our mission and vision, firmly believing that we are an ‘essential ingredient’ within all our communities. An advocate takes the time to educate themselves on issues important to the Cooperative to better understand the challenges we face. An advocate not only connects with their friends, neighbors, and family on cooperative issues, but also reaches out to their state and federal legislative representatives. When members connect with their legislators, it shows that cooperatives aren’t just faceless utility companies – they’re owned by the very people they serve.

Next month, we will be hosting two Legislative Energy Forums. We encourage you to join us to better understand the current issues facing our cooperative and make that personal connection with those hoping to represent you in St. Paul next year. Check out page 5 for more information about these events.

Now, we may not be in the business of chocolate chip cookies, but you are an essential ingredient to our success. We couldn’t keep the lights on without you!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Michael J. Henke". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

Michael J. Henke  
President & CEO  
(800) 214-2694

# MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## highline

Vol. 88 • Issue 8

PEC's Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on July 25. During the meeting, the following items were discussed: a safety spotlight on electric shock drowning; quarterly financials and capital budget review for second quarter 2024; use of consultants for upcoming projects; CrowdStrike/Microsoft issue that affected CRC; storm costs and emergency declaration; review of service territory redistricting to balance member counts; and roundtable discussion with Brent Ridge, President and CEO of Dairyland Power Cooperative.

**A quorum of directors was present, and the following actions were taken:**

- ▶ *Approved update to Rate Y for shared wells*
- ▶ *Approved update to Rate Schedule EV3 for electric vehicle fast charging*
- ▶ *Set the next Member Advisory Committee meeting for November 14*

## DID YOU KNOW?

**The CoBank Sharing Success program is making a difference.**

Earlier this summer, the Cooperative secured \$3,250 in matching grants through CoBank's Sharing Success program. CoBank is one of the largest private providers of credit to the U.S. rural economy. The bank delivers loans and other financial services to agribusiness, rural infrastructure, and Farm Credit customers in all 50 states, including People's Energy Cooperative. We partner with CoBank through their Sharing Success program to support organizations in our service territory. This year, these funds supported four vital organizations:



**1. Cooperative Family Fund - \$1,000**

Supports children of cooperative employees who lose a parent that is actively employed by an electric cooperative.



**2. H.O.P.E. Ranch - \$750**

Specializes in mental health treatment through equine-assisted psychotherapy.



**3. Mechanical History Roundtable - \$500**

Preserves antique equipment and rural heritage in Olmsted County.



**4. Plainview Elgin Area Food Shelf - \$1,000**

Serves the community by meeting essential needs.

Together, these grants empower positive change in our communities!

### MANAGEMENT

Michael J. Henke,  
*President/CEO*

Michelle Olson,  
*Director of  
Member Services*

Gwen Stevens,  
*Director of Cooperative  
Relations*

Dody Wubker, *CFO*

Nicholas Woetzel,  
*Director of Operations*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### DISTRICT 1:

Jon Kroening, *Secretary*

#### DISTRICT 2:

Jodie Tvedt, *Vice Chair*

#### DISTRICT 3:

John Winter

#### DISTRICT 4:

Tracy Lauritzen, *Treasurer*

#### DISTRICT 5:

Jerry Wooner, *Board Chair*

#### DISTRICT 6:

Art Friedrich,  
*Dairyland Director*

#### DISTRICT 7:

Jeff Orth

Visit [peoplesenergy.coop](https://peoplesenergy.coop)  
for a listing of the areas  
covered by each district.

Business Hours:  
7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M–F

# \$30 SPOT YOUR NUMBER

Each month, we hide four account numbers (without the last two digits) within the text of the newsletter. If you find your number, contact the Cooperative by the 15th of the next month at **(800) 214-2694** or [memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberservices@peoplesenergy.coop) to receive a \$30 credit on your bill.

**Good luck in finding your account number!**

# Enjoy Your **LABOR DAY**

**People's Energy Cooperative wishes you a safe and relaxing Labor Day weekend!**

We will be closed on Monday, September 2 for our employees to enjoy the holiday weekend with family and friends. If you have a power outage, please call (800) 214-2694 to report the problem.

## Fun Facts about Labor Day

According to the Department of Labor, "Labor Day is an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers. The holiday is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being." The first Labor Day was celebrated on September 5, 1882, in New York City and included a parade. It became a national holiday on June 28, 1894, when President Grover Cleveland signed a law making the first Monday in September of each year a national holiday.



## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT 2024

Throughout 2024, Carr's Tree Service and New Age Tree Service continue to work with us to execute our vegetation management plan.

Carr's Tree Service will be spraying in portions of Glasgow, Highland, and Watopa townships. They will also be doing tree work in portions of Plainview and Whitewater townships.

New Age Tree Service will be spraying in portions of Watopa, Minneiska, and Mount Vernon townships. They will also be doing tree work in portions of High Forest, Racine, and Pleasant Valley townships.





# How does energy policy affect **Reliable & Affordable Electricity?**

## 2024 Legislative Energy Forums

Our members expect their lights to stay on at a price they can afford. As we navigate the ongoing energy transition, it's crucial that state and federal policies prioritize both reliability and affordability. Join People's Energy Cooperative, and local Minnesota State House candidates, for a conversation on net metering, Minnesota's nuclear moratorium, and other important issues.

We are grateful that Rep. Duane Quam and Heather Holmes will be joining us in Stewartville and Michael Hutchinson and Kenny Navitsky will be joining us in Elgin.

### **Stewartville** **Thursday, September 19**

Dinner – 5:30 PM

Forum – 6:00 PM

Riverview Greens Golf Course  
1800 Clubhouse Dr. NE, Stewartville

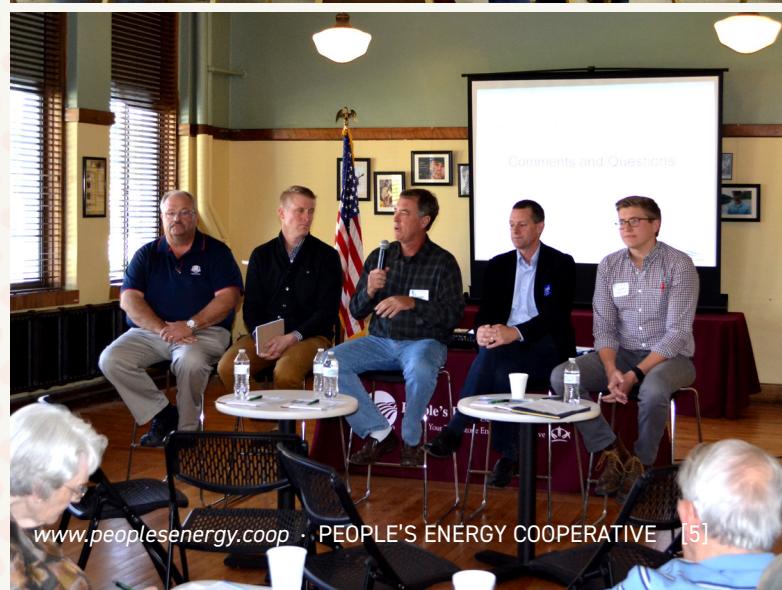
### **Elgin** **Tuesday, September 24**

Dinner – 5:30 PM

Forum – 6:00 PM

The BlackTop Bar and Grill  
30 Main St. E, Elgin

To help us plan accordingly, please RSVP by emailing [rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:rsvp@peoplesenergy.coop) or by calling (507) 367-7054. Please include your name, which meeting you will be attending, and the number of guests that will be attending. Nine thousand six hundred thirty-seven.



Are you ready to have some

# SKIN IN THE GAME?

Whether you know it or not, just by being a member of People's Energy Cooperative, you have skin in the game.

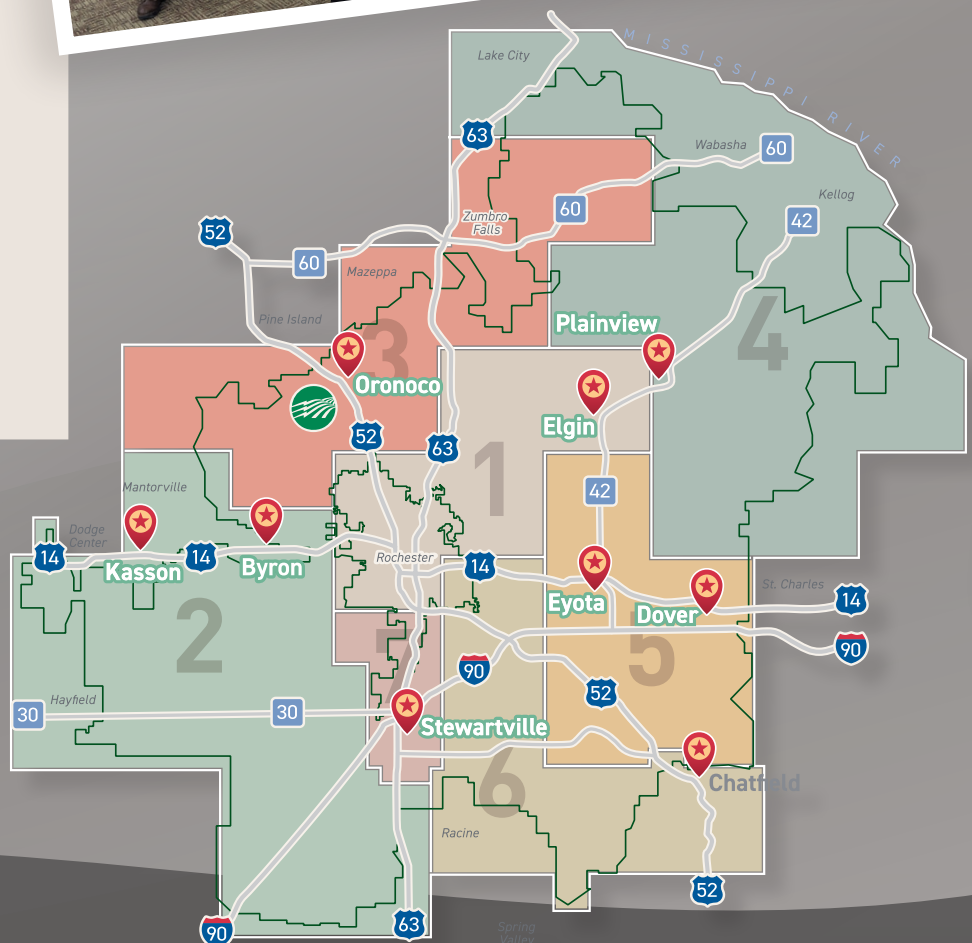
What does that mean? You are not just a bystander in a quickly changing industry. By paying your bill every month, you invest in the future of the Cooperative and benefit by receiving capital credits. By participating in programs like energy management or energy efficiency rebates, you engage with our efforts to support a changing electric grid. By attending events like the Annual Meeting or Legislative Forums, you educate yourself on issues important to the Cooperative. Every one of these actions plays an important part in our success.

But that's not all. If you are ready to elevate your personal involvement in our mission and vision, consider volunteering for one of these important committees at People's Energy Cooperative:

## Do you like to support community work?

Operation Round Up® is a philanthropic arm of the Cooperative funded by members who have chosen to round their bill up to the next dollar and have that change put into a grant fund. This grant program distributes nearly \$100,000 annually to local charities, schools, and service organizations throughout our region. The Operation Round Up® Trust Board reviews grant applications on a quarterly basis and determines the grant amounts awarded.

Currently, we are looking for a member to serve from District One. The term starts October 1 and is a three-year term with the option for a second term.





## Do you enjoy recruiting and getting to know new people?

As part of the Board election process, the Nominating Committee seeks out and vets candidates to run for the PEC Board of Directors each year. The Committee plays an important role by ensuring the best candidates are put forward to the membership for a vote. Members from any district may serve on the Committee, regardless of which district is up for election. The Committee starts meeting in October with an informational training and then works to seek out and vet candidates before making its official nominations at a meeting in early January.

If you value having a voice in who represents you on the PEC Board of Directors, this committee is for you!



## Do you like to help guide the future of an organization?

You may want to consider running for the Cooperative's Board of Directors if you are interested in having an impact on the future of the organization. These leaders are the governing body of the Cooperative and represent the members in policy and ratemaking, approving the Annual Work Plan and Budget, hiring corporate legal assistance and auditing firms, and hiring and managing the President/CEO. Directors are elected to a three-year term by the members of the Cooperative, hold monthly board meetings, attend cooperative events, take part in training sessions, and participate in state, regional, and national conferences.

In 2025, the seat for District 1, currently served by Jon Kroening, and the seat for District 6, currently served by Art Friedrich, will be up for election.

We encourage you to consider serving your fellow members in some way. If you have any questions or are interested in working in any of these capacities, please email [memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop](mailto:memberrelations@peoplesenergy.coop) or call (800) 214-2694. Twenty-eight thousand six hundred nineteen.





## Third Quarter Grants

People's Energy Cooperative Trust's Operation Round Up<sup>®</sup> Board provided \$26,329 in grants this quarter to the following organizations:

\$1,350 to Ability Building Community in support of a new job skills program

\$2,500 to Chatfield Public Schools in support of STEM activities for the preschool

\$10,000 to the City of Eyota in support of new swings at the West Side Playground

\$1,000 to Damascus Way to help purchase a car

\$1,000 to Elder Network to help purchase games for respite programming

\$1,679 to Eyota Kids Korner, LLC to help with the purchase of an AED

\$2,000 to Hiawatha Homes Foundation to help with the purchase of an EZ Ceiling Lift

\$1,500 to Oronoco Gold Rush Days in support of infrastructure and logistics for the event

\$800 to Stewartville Public Schools in support of the Canoemobile program

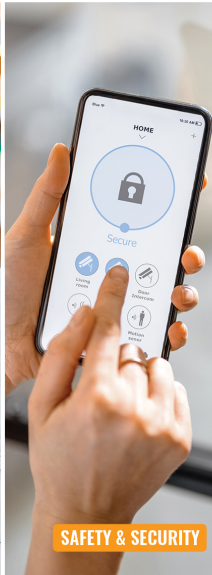
\$1,500 to The Landing MN in support of the H.E.R.O. Van program

\$3,000 to Wabasha County Fair Ag Association to help cover the cost of youth entertainment during the fair

To be considered for fourth quarter grants in 2024, applications must be submitted no later than September 20, 2024. Program guidelines and applications for donations are available at [peoplesenergy.coop/operation-round-up](https://peoplesenergy.coop/operation-round-up) or by calling the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694. Eighteen thousand four hundred thirty-three.



HEALTH & WELLNESS



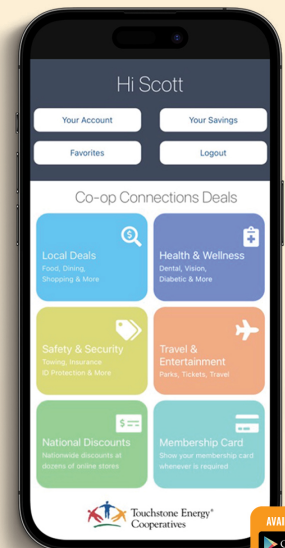
SAFETY & SECURITY



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VISIT [WWW.CONNECTIONS.COOP](https://www.connections.coop) FOR MORE INFORMATION.



# one small action, **ONE LARGE IMPACT**

When you make the switch to paperless billing and/or automatic bank draft payments, you're not just helping the Cooperative manage fixed costs. As a member, you also benefit from this one small action.

## **1. CONVENIENCE**

Say goodbye to paper clutter and manual check writing. With paperless billing, your statements arrive directly in your email inbox. No more hunting for lost bills or stamps.

## **2. ECO-FRIENDLY**

Going paperless reduces your environmental footprint. By opting for electronic statements, you help reduce waste.

## **3. TIMELY PAYMENTS**

Automatic bank draft payments ensure your bill is paid on time, every time. No more worrying about due dates or late fees.

## **4. SECURITY**

Paper bills can get lost or stolen. With electronic billing, your information is securely stored online, and you receive your bill the same day it is processed.

## **5. SIMPLICITY**

Set it and forget it! Once you've enrolled in automatic payments, your bank account will be debited automatically each month.

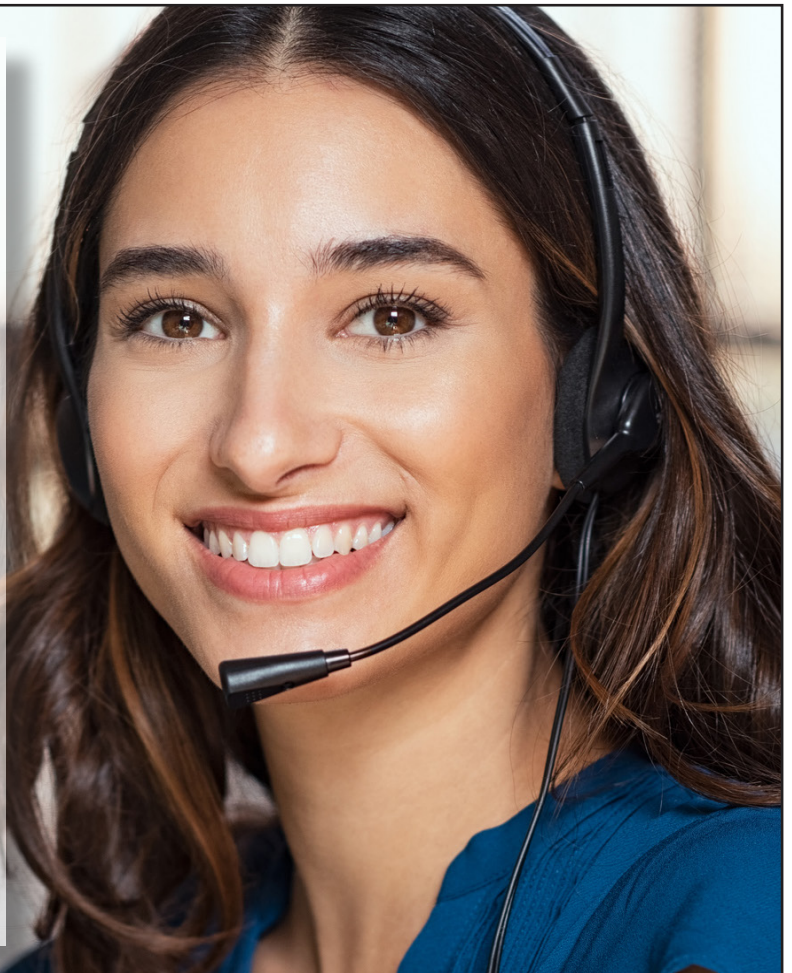
As you can see, your one small action of making the switch will reap multiple rewards. Make the switch today and enjoy a hassle-free, greener way to manage your electric bill! Visit [peoplesenergy.coop/choose-paperless-or-ach](http://peoplesenergy.coop/choose-paperless-or-ach).

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# Test Your Energy Efficiency Knowledge

School is almost back in session, so we've got a pop quiz for you!  
How well do you know your energy efficiency facts?

1. **True or False:**  
Closing shades and drapes during the day helps keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
2. **Fill in the Blank:**  
Set both the upper and lower water heater thermostats no higher than \_\_\_\_°F.
3. **Multiple Choice:**  
Decreasing your cooling system in the summer or increasing your heating system in the winter by one degree can increase your energy use by:  
a. 10%      b. 0%      c. 3-5%
4. **True or False:**  
It isn't important to change your furnace filter when dirty or by the manufacturer's recommendations.
5. **Fill in the Blank:**  
An electric space heater can cost more than \$\_\_\_\_ per month to operate.

Answers: 1) True; 2) 120°F; 3) c. 3-5%; 4) False; 5) \$100

## Energy Efficient Rebates

**Are you building a new house this fall? Thinking about upgrading your heating or cooling system? Are you planning any energy efficient projects around your house?**

If so, People's Energy Cooperative has rebates available that could help you save energy and money. To learn more about the types of energy efficient rebates offered to our members, visit [peoplesenergy.coop/rebates](http://peoplesenergy.coop/rebates).

Eligibility criteria may vary for individual rebate offerings and is subject to change or cancellation without notice. View individual rebate forms for additional details.



# Look Up & Look Out this Harvest Season

Would you know what to do if your farm equipment came in contact with a power pole?

Unfortunately, accidents happen. If you come into contact with an overhead power line, it is almost always safest to remain in the cab. Call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait until utility workers have cut off electricity and confirmed that it is safe to exit the vehicle.

Only if the machinery catches on fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. It is important not to touch anything that is in contact with a power line. Thirty-one thousand nine hundred six.

Staying safe starts with preparation. To help avoid an electrical contact emergency, develop a safety plan and make sure farm workers and family members understand the plan. Take time to look up and look out for electrical lines before heading out to the fields this harvest season.

**Safe Electricity urges farmers to keep equipment – and extensions – at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions, and recommends the following tips to keep farmers safe:**

- Be aware of the location of power poles and lines, including field entry and exit points, and plan a safe equipment route.
- Use a spotter when raising any equipment such as augers, grain trucks, and even ladders. It can be difficult to tell how close you are to overhead power lines.
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground, shifting weight, or other conditions can make it difficult to control raised equipment.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance. If you see a power line that is sagging or low, notify us so we can fix the line.







**People's Energy Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South  
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

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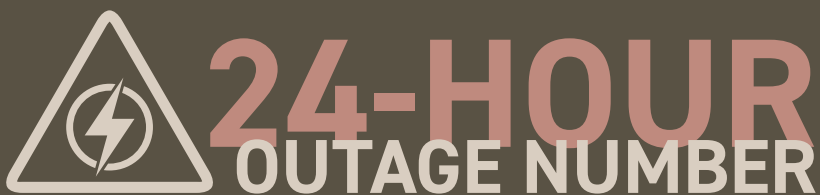
*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Education Outreach

As families and teachers prepare for the upcoming school year, People's Energy Cooperative would like to remind you that we are here to support the learning in your classroom.

Representatives from the Cooperative are happy to visit area classrooms throughout our service territory to talk about electricity with our next generation of members. Presentation topics include how electricity is generated, how it gets to our homes and businesses, what we can do to conserve energy, and how to stay safe while using it. We also provide a brief overview of how the Cooperative functions and talk to students about career opportunities in the utility industry.

If any of these presentations would be a helpful addition to your classroom curriculum, please contact the Cooperative at (800) 214-2694. We are also happy to help create something new if you have an idea for an energy-related topic of interest to our area students.



**WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT, SO DO WE**

Call even if you think your neighbors have reported the outage. Leave one light on so you know when power has been restored. Have an emergency kit prepared.

**(800) 214-2694**