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MANAGEMENT STAFF

Elaine J. Garry,
President/CEO

Gary Fitterer,
Director of Engineering

Mike Henke,
Chief Financial Officer

Michelle Olson,
Director of
Member Services

Gwen Stevens,
Director of Member &
Community Relations

Troy Swancutt,
Director of Operations

GENERAL INFORMATION

Office Hours:

7:30 am – 4:00 pm, M–F

Telephone: 507-367-7000

Toll-Free: 800-214-2694

Web Address:

www.peoplesenergy.coop

Gopher State One Call:

1-800-252-1166

(for digging & line location)

RIGHT OF WAY

CLEARING FOR *RELIABILITY AND SAFETY*



Last month we experienced severe weather including heavy rain, tornadoes and high winds causing several outages in our service territory. Many outages were caused by tree branches blowing into or onto cooperative power lines and were a great reminder of how critical right-of-way clearing and vegetation management are in providing safe and reliable electric service.

A right-of-way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath and near power lines that electric utilities have the right and responsibility to clear of any vegetation that may cause harm to individuals or disruption of electrical service. We require a 20-foot clearance on each side of a single-phase distribution power line, a 30-foot clearance for multi-phase distribution lines, and a 40-foot clearance for transmission lines.

In 2016, 21 percent of interruptions were caused by trees, shrubs or bushes. Therefore, if vegetation encroaches on the ROW, our vegetation management team will trim or remove the hazard.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a power line. Power lines can carry up to 69,000 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know

that climbing trees close to a power line is extremely dangerous.

Trees can start fires when branches are blown into power lines, or by knocking them down (*shown in the incident pictured above*).

You can help keep the ROW clear by not planting trees or other vegetation in or near the ROW. When planting trees, be sure to call Gopher State One Call by dialing **811** or **800-252-1166** before you dig to have them locate underground utilities so you stay clear of them as well. Also, make sure that you understand what the potential height and spread of the tree will be as it grows to make sure it doesn't encroach on a ROW in the future.

If trees that are near a power service or line need to be trimmed or removed, please contact us. Never trim a tree in the ROW zone on your own, always enlist a professional that is certified to do so. It is our goal to keep everyone safe and your electric service uninterrupted.

CEO MESSAGE

FROM ELAINE J. GARRY, PRESIDENT & CEO



Elaine J. Garry

egarry@peoplesrec.com

I hope you are enjoying summer and all the outdoor activities it offers. Despite a few severe storms and cooler than normal temperatures in June, we've had a pretty nice summer so far.

I'd like to expand on the article on the front page and share more information on the significance of our vegetation management program.

Over the years, your Board of Directors has set guidelines, policies and goals that guide the work plans of the Cooperative. Electric service reliability is one of their top priorities and their guideline on electric service states that, "the electric service system shall be operated and maintained such that the frequency and duration of outages shall be minimal."

To quantify "minimal", the Board set a strategic goal for the Cooperative to have an average system availability index (ASAI) of at least 99.980 percent. This means that on average, our member base should have power 99.98 percent of the time or be without power no more than one hour and 45 minutes in a year. To give you some perspective, our lowest ASAI in the past nine years was 99.912 percent in 2011 and the highest was 99.985 percent in 2015.

While the difference in percentages may seem insignificant for the average consumer, outages can be costly for businesses and life threatening for livestock and individuals on life sustaining medical equipment so avoiding them is critical.

To achieve the 99.980 percent goal, we developed maintenance plans which include our vegetation management program since trees cause a large portion of our outages (21 percent in 2016).

As you may already know, vegetation management is a significant expense. This year alone, we budgeted \$1.5 million for right-of-way maintenance and are in the fourth year of our first five-year cycle of clearing vegetation. By adopting a planned, five-year cycle, we anticipate reducing this expense in future years by staying on top of clearing so right-of-ways don't become overgrown.

Typically, door-to-door contacts, brochures, door hangers, phone messages, and/or electronic communications are used to notify property owners of

upcoming vegetation management work. If you have a concern over trees that may be affected, please be sure to reach out to us right away upon receiving notification to discuss your concerns and possible variances.

If you want to request a variance from what is planned, you must complete a 'Request for Reduced Clearance Variance' agreement. Once approved, you may be offered an alternative such as reducing the clearances using other methods (i.e. pruning rather than removing) or rerouting the line. Alternatives that involve additional expense to the Cooperative will need to be paid for by the property owner in advance of any work being performed to ensure other members aren't burdened with the added costs. This is a new practice adopted by the Board at their June meeting.

I understand that trees are important to curb appeal and that they serve functional purposes such as for privacy and as wind blocks, we just want to make sure they don't impede on the reliability and safety of the power we provide our members. After all, providing safe and reliable electricity is our mission.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,
Elaine J. Garry,
President & CEO,
507-367-7000

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE WANT ADS!

Did you know we host on-line want ads on our website for members? Check it out by visiting www.peoplesenergy.coop/classifiedads. You can sort the listings by category to see what's available in our area for sale. If you would like to post an ad, submit your ad through the website and allow 24 hours for the posting to become active.

Just another one of the benefits of being a People's Energy Cooperative member!

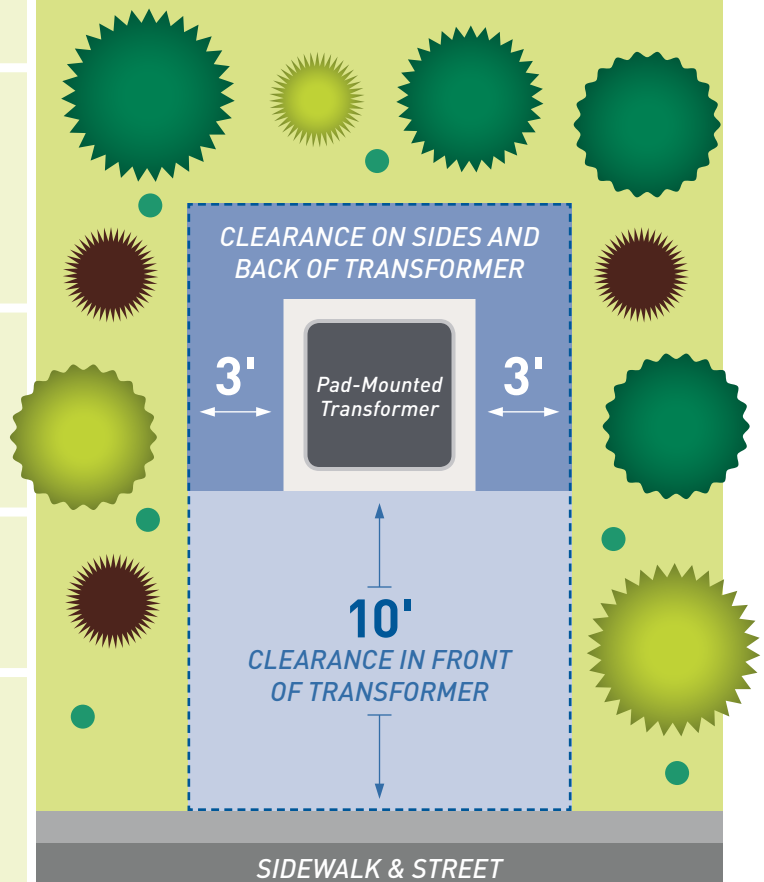
INFORMATION TO REMEMBER ABOUT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Areas around electrical equipment must be free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access. Please refer to the diagram that shows the proper clearance for vegetation by a pad-mounted transformer. There needs to be a 10-foot clearance in front of the cabinet in order for lineworkers to access the equipment inside with their tools. Additional tips include:

- ▶ **PLANT TREES AWAY FROM UNDERGROUND UTILITIES** to prevent roots from interfering with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- ▶ **NEVER PLANT TREES WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY** or directly under powerlines. Trees planted within the right-of-way will be removed. Mature landscape trees in a maintained area near distribution lines must be ten (10) feet or more from the powerline.
- ▶ **PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE** for the disposal of debris from trees cleared due to a power outage or because the tree is dead and presents a hazard.
- ▶ **ADVANCE NOTICE WILL NOT BE GIVEN** when trees need to be removed due to storm damage or power restoration activities.
- ▶ **PEC WILL ENSURE THAT NO PART OF A TREE** that could support the weight of a small child (40 lbs.) is within 10 feet of a distribution powerline based on the Cooperative's Safety Action Clearance Threshold.

PAD-MOUNTED TRANSFORMER GUIDE

– OVERHEAD VIEW –





2017 MEMBER APPRECIATION

Join us at our **Family Picnic** celebrating our members!

We are thrilled to be returning to Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch on Saturday, September 9, 2017, for our annual member appreciation event. The event will run from 3:30-7:30 p.m. This family-style picnic was a popular event last fall!

We know that you often juggle many schedules which makes it hard to step away and enjoy time with your friends and family. We hope you join us out at the Ranch for a good meal, fun activities, and time to relax. To help us ensure we have enough food and seating available for everyone, please RSVP by August 25 so we can plan accordingly. Be sure to include all requested information so checking in at the event goes smoothly.

We hope you can join us for a fun-filled event!

FOOD: Food will be served from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. and will include your choice of a hamburger or hot dog (*please be sure to indicate your selections when you RSVP*) along with baked beans, potato chips and a cookie. Beverage options will include Kool-Aid and water. We will also have cotton candy, root beer floats, and a popcorn wagon!

ACTIVITIES FOR EVERYONE: Ironwood Springs offers a wide array of activities to please all ages, interests, and activity levels. Activities to choose from include:

- Zip Line*
- Sling shots
- Disc golf
- Boulderling wall*
- BINGO
- Mini golf
- Pony rides*
- Petting Zoo
- Wagon rides*
- Bounce house
- Archery*
- Horseshoes
- Hiking trails
- Lawn games
- And More!

**Activities with an asterisk require a signed release form.*

NEW THIS YEAR! ENERGY PASSPORT: Members can work their way through stations throughout the event grounds. Complete six of the stations listed below and you can enter into a drawing for a prize!

- Electrical Safety Display
- Hand-Crank Generator
- 811 Call Before You Dig
- Energy Trivia
- "Take a Selfie"
- Test Your Skills
- Energy Efficiency Displays (two sets)

To help save the cost of postage, we prefer that you RSVP at www.peoplesenergy.coop. If you don't have access to the internet, please use the business reply card at the center of the newsletter to RSVP the number of attendees and your food selections by August 25.



Sophia Fulton

Q&A with Sophia Fulton

In June, Sophia Fulton enjoyed a week in our nation's capitol with 1,700 other high school students from 43 states at NRECA's 2017 Youth Tour. We asked Sophia a few questions about her experience and she shared the following.

PEC: What motivated you to apply?

Sophia: The idea of being able to experience for myself the stories that make up our nation was what motivated me to apply. I knew that it's too easy to think of the US government as simply a huge entity, instead of as a group of people with stories. Through the Youth Tour, I was able to learn about some of those stories that played a part in building our nation, and also learned that my story plays a part as well.

PEC: What was the most memorable part of your week-long experience?

Sophia: There is so much to choose from! From seeing an amazing musical performance at the Kennedy Center to visiting the grave of John F. Kennedy, the trip was a collection of memorable moments. However, the most memorable part was the Holocaust Museum. When you enter, you're given an identification card that tells the story of an actual holocaust victim. As you travel through the museum, you read through their story, getting to know

them as a friend. At the end, you find out if the person on your identification card survived the Holocaust or not. Mine did not. This experience has inspired me to strive for opportunities to speak up for those who cannot, and act when others turn their backs.

PEC: What did you learn?

Sophia: I learned how awesome electric cooperatives are! It's amazing that cooperatives from across America care enough about the youth in their communities to send them to DC for a week. The community focus that cooperatives have is not something I've ever seen in other business models.

PEC: How will your Youth Tour experience impact your future?

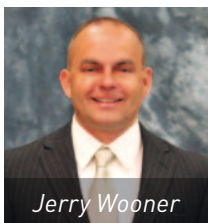
Sophia: The entire experience showed me how important it is to advocate for what is good. Many of the representatives we spoke with encouraged us to write to or meet with them in the future to talk about the issues that are important to us – otherwise they often go unheard.

PEC: What stood out to you about our nation's capitol?

Sophia: I loved that nearly everything had symbolism – even the sycamore trees near the Korean War Veterans Memorial were chosen because the bark looks like camouflage. The 9/11 Memorial was especially symbolic: there are memorial benches for each victim, under each of which flows a stream of water. At 9:37 each morning – the time of the 9/11 attack – the water goes still for a minute in memory of the attack.

PEC: Why should students consider applying for the Youth Tour in 2018?

Sophia: There is something life-changing about being able to see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears the stories on which the United States has been built. From the memorials to the politicians to the museums, Washington, D.C. is an experience that each American should have – and why not do it through something as high-energy and exciting as the Youth Tour!



Jerry Wooner



Gene Miller

PEC BOARD ACHIEVEMENTS

Board Chair, Jerry Wooner (District 5) recently received the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Director Gold Credential. NRECA's Director Certificate Programs are specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors fulfill their roles and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on the key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now

and in the future. The Gold level is the advanced level and awarded to directors who have earned their Credential Cooperative Director Certificate (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and have completed 3 additional BLC credits after earning their BLC. Five hundred fifty-six.

Congratulations to Director Gene Miller (District 4) for being elected treasurer on the Dairyland Board of Directors. Gene has represented People's on the Dairyland Board for 18 years.

THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COST SHARE GRANT RECIPIENTS

The purpose of our economic development efforts is to attract business development which provide economic opportunities and help make the communities we serve a more attractive place to live. One of the programs we offer is a matching grant program in partnership with Dairyland Power Cooperative. The City of Eyota and Community Economic Development Associates (CEDA) recently were awarded grants to support their economic development efforts.

CITY OF EYOTA: Eyota received a grant for \$1,800 to fund their Build and Save program for residential and new construction. Their objective is to promote lot sales, increase tax base, create new opportunities for further development and bring new interest from outside developers to Eyota. The EDA is stimulating builders to participate in the spring and fall showcase of homes as well as creating a community video that follows the city slogan of "Great Living, Great Schools." Four hundred six.

CEDA: CEDA received a grant for \$1,595 to help develop an informational booklet about the communities they serve in our region. The booklet includes pertinent information about community assets such as: rail access, airport proximity, industrial land availability, community demographics, research and education facilities, and access to major highway/interstate systems and metropolitan centers. It will be distributed at international trade shows to businesses considering facilities in the region.



JEANS DAY AMONG PEC EMPLOYEES RAISES \$1,610 FOR LOCAL NON-PROFITS

For those who work in the office at People's, the dress code is business casual. But on Fridays, employees have the option to wear jeans when they donate to nonprofit organizations designated to receive the funds. Employees suggested organizations at the beginning of the year and for a minimum \$25 donation, they can wear jeans on Friday for two-months. Through the month of June, employees have donated \$1,610 to Channel One, Salvation Army, Relay for Life, the Minnesota chapter of ALS, and the Ronald McDonald House.

OPERATION ROUND UP® SPOTLIGHT

Our Operation Round Up® Board of Directors enjoy the opportunity to support local initiatives. In Stewartville, three grants from the past year provided much needed financial support for improvements to the following high-use community spaces that are used by Stewartville residents and those who visit from the region.

- **Safety equipment for the lifeguards at the Stewartville Public Swimming Pool to aid in emergency situations.**
- **Two handicap-accessible swings were installed at Meadow Park South**
- **A more user-friendly walking path leading from the parking lot to the bleachers at Bear Cave Ball Fields.**





Why should I do a HOME ENERGY AUDIT?

Have you ever wondered about the energy use of your home? Have you noticed rooms that seem unusually hot or cold? If so, you should consider a residential home energy audit. Energy audits determine where your home consumes energy and assesses what measures you can take to make your home more efficient and save money.

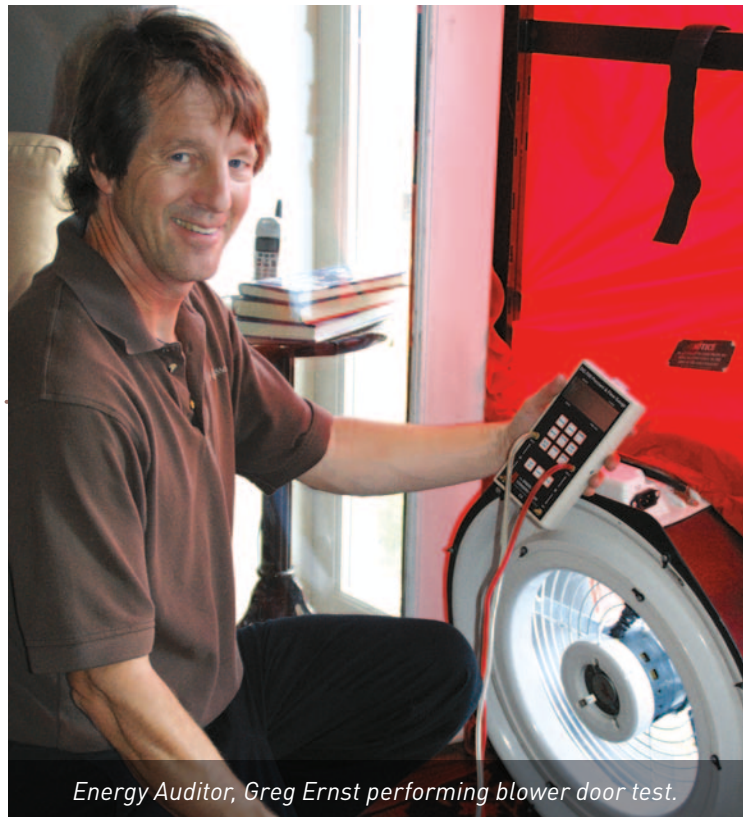
The process is easy! Your first step is to contact us. We'll send a pre-audit request form for you to complete. You can also find information and the residential energy audit form on our website. Once the completed form has been returned, we will collect your usage history and send it to a professional energy auditor. They will review the usage to look for patterns, and then reach out to you to schedule the appointment.

When the auditor arrives they will discuss concerns or questions you have, and explain what they plan to accomplish before setting up a blower door test. A blower door is a powerful fan that mounts to the frame of an exterior door. The fan pulls air out of the house lowering the air pressure inside causing the higher outside air pressure to flow in through unsealed cracks and openings. Auditors may also use a smoke pencil to help detect air leaks within your home and identify areas of discomfort.

For an additional fee, a thermal imaging inspection can be done that utilizes an infrared camera to check the effectiveness of the insulation within your home. The scan uses specifically designed infrared video or still cameras showing surface heat variations in your home. The resulting thermogram helps auditors determine if and where your home needs insulation.

The auditor will also complete a visual inspection of the house, looking for obvious areas in need of improvement. This will include attics, basements, vents and wall cavities – no area goes uninspected. Once the audit is complete, the auditor will finalize the report while still on site and review their findings with you.

Interested in the process, but not sure it's going to save more money? The audit itself costs \$240 or \$360, depending on if you opt for the thermographic scan. However, to offset the cost of the audit, you can receive a rebate up to 50 percent of the cost (*with a cap of \$500*) for implementing the recommended energy efficiency measures. For example, if the auditor recommends adding insulation (*which we do not have a prescriptive rebate for*) and the cost of the project is \$1,500, you would receive a \$500 rebate. Twenty thousand five hundred eighty.



Energy Auditor, Greg Ernst performing blower door test.

To learn more about this great resource, contact the Cooperative by calling 507-367-7000 or 800-214-2694, or by visiting www.peoplesenergy.coop.



People's Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1775 Lake Shady Avenue South
Oronoco, Minnesota 55960

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24-HOUR OUTAGE NUMBER

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.

507.367.7000 or 800.214.2694

SPOT YOUR NUMBER

\$30

*Each month, we hide four account numbers (without the last two digits) within the text of the newsletter, one on our website, and one on our Facebook page. If you find your number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at **800.214.2694** or **memberservices@peoplesrec.com** to receive a \$30 credit on your electric bill.*

GOOD LUCK IN FINDING YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER!

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Fun times at ROCHESTERFEST!



Last month, we joined in the fun at Rochesterfest Family Fun Night. Our activities encouraged everyone to have fun learning about electrical safety and energy efficiency. First, kids (and parents) tested their energy know-how with a spin at the trivia wheel. Kids also had a chance to power a light bulb with our hand-crank generator. Many found that it was much easier (and used significantly less energy) to power the LED light bulb rather than the incandescent bulb! Finally, kids learned how important it is to call 811 before you dig. They were challenged to "plant" hydrangeas in the sand pit without hitting the buried line. Needless to say, kids (and parents) walked away with a better appreciation for both electrical safety and energy efficiency. The greatest part of this event is that the activities were mobile! One thousand thirty-two.

If you have an upcoming event that you'd like us to join, reach out the Gwen Stevens, director of member and community relations, at gstevens@peoplesrec.com.

ATTENTION: To Our Cooperative Members Living in Olmsted County

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2017, the Olmsted County Transit Sales and Use Tax of one-half of one percent (0.5%) will be applied to your electric bill. This tax appears as a separate line item on your electric bill.

Member Appreciation Picnic!

We had so much fun last year, we decided to get the gang back together again. Get all the details on page 4!

SATURDAY, SEPT. 9th • 3:30 – 7:30 pm
Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch
– Stewartville, MN –

CORRECTION: We apologize for not recognizing Brenn Olson for receiving the People's Energy Scholarship at Grand Meadow High School on page four of our June newsletter.