OUR BRIGHT FUTURE
INNOVATIVE WAYS WE PROVIDE SOLAR ENERGY

At People’s Energy Cooperative, we work hard at delivering on our mission to provide reliable electricity to our members and communities with superior customer service and innovative energy solutions at fair and reasonable prices. Recently, we have been focusing on innovative ways to provide renewable energy solutions for our members, specifically in the area of solar energy.

As a producer of electricity from solar energy we can accomplish two key objectives: 1) help Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), our power provider, increase their mix of renewable energy resources and 2) provide our members with an affordable way to “go green.” Our intent is to keep prices fair and reasonable for all members and protect our environment.

COMMERCIAL SOLAR ARRAY IN ORONOCO TO PROVIDE POWER FOR DPC: Construction of the Minnesota Three, LLC commercial solar facility is progressing well. Although a bit behind schedule due to the wet spring, the solar array is projected to be operational in mid-June, barring any additional significant weather delays. The 517 kW system located just north of the Cooperative headquarters along Highway 52 could produce enough energy to power nearly 60 homes.

The Minnesota Three, LLC project is owned and will be managed by three southeastern Minnesota electric distribution cooperatives: People’s Energy Cooperative, Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services (Albert Lea), and Tri-County Electric Cooperative (Rushford). Dragonfly Solar of Lakeville, Minnesota, is responsible for engineering, procurement and construction of the site.

In an effort to expand the renewable energy mix, Dairyland has agreed to purchase the renewable energy produced at the site. Each cooperative owning the installation is part of the Dairyland Power system.

Working together with the other cooperatives has allowed this installation to happen as it would have been too large of a project to attempt alone. It not only demonstrates our commitment to renewable energy, but shows the power inherent in the cooperative business model’s guiding principle of “cooperation among cooperatives.” (article continues on page 3)
On June 25, 2013, President Barack Obama issued a Memorandum directing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use the Clean Air Act (CAA) to issue proposed carbon dioxide (CO2) pollution standards and guidelines for existing and modified or reconstructed power plants by June 1 of this year.

In his memorandum, the President directed that the EPA “ensure that the standards are developed and implemented in a manner consistent with the continued provision of reliable and affordable electric power for consumers and business.”

If the standards are anything like the ones recently implemented by the EPA for new power plants being built, I’m concerned it will be a major challenge for generators to provide affordable and reliable electric power.

You see, the standards published on January 8 of this year require carbon capture and storage at newly built coal plants even though the technology doesn’t exist on a commercial scale at any power plant in the world. That’s not reasonable and basically eliminates coal as a source of energy which will affect both the reliability and affordability of electricity.

Please don’t misunderstand me, clean air is just as important to me as it is to anyone else. As a mother, and now grandmother, I want us to do all we can to make sure that we are protecting our environment for all generations into the future. We just need to be practical about our approach.

Cooperatives across the country are concerned that the EPA’s proposed standards may seek to require greater CO2 emission reductions than can be achieved at individual power plants by looking beyond individual plants and considering the entire electric utility system to determine the “best system of emission reduction”. This could require utilities to:

- Shift electricity generation from coal to lower-emitting fossil units such as natural gas which is very volatile in price.
- Shift from coal or natural gas to renewables like wind or solar which are expensive to implement and don’t provide reliable power 24/7.
- Reduce energy consumption through energy-efficiency or demand-side management programs like controlled water heater programs which are threatened by new efficiency standards for electric water heaters.

We need your help communicating to Representative Walz (District 1) and Representative Kline (District 2) that this regulation needs time for careful and thorough consideration. Ask them to support an adequate comment period of at least 120 days to allow cooperatives and others the time to evaluate the implications of the EPA proposal and provide meaningful comments to the Agency. Reliable and affordable electricity is at stake!

In closing, my wish is that each of you enjoys a wonderful summer with family and friends.

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

Calling the Cooperative

Effective on August 1st

The Cooperative’s old Rochester phone number, 507-288-4004, will no longer be in service and therefore will not automatically forward calls to our Oronoco office. You can reach our office by calling 507-367-7000 or 800-214-2694.

Cooperative Action Network

To learn more about the Clean Air Act and other national policy issues facing America’s electric cooperatives, visit www.action.coop. You can also voice your concern to EPA Administrator, Gina McCarthy through the site.

Get informed & make your voice heard!
COMMUNITY SOLAR A POSSIBILITY: In an effort to help members “go green,” we are also currently exploring community solar site opportunities. Community solar sites make investing in renewable energy more affordable for members who want a renewable energy source. Community solar also doesn’t have an adverse effect on the Cooperative like distributed generation systems do.

Current laws in place for distributed generation (personal solar or wind energy sources) are unfair and a disadvantage to cooperative members for basic economic reasons. The primary reason is because the Cooperative is forced to buy the excess power from distributed generation sources at retail rates rather than wholesale rates. The secondary reason is loss of energy sales. While we are a not-for-profit cooperative, we are still a business that has a budget to balance in order to operate effectively for the good of all our members.

Look for more information in future newsletters and on our Facebook page as we continue to seek out ways to provide “innovative energy solutions.”

WATT?! UNDERSTANDING NEW BULBS, BRANDS, LUMENS, & LABELS:

If you’ve been making the switch to energy efficient lighting, you’ve probably noticed the changes that have come to the light bulb aisle. There are LEDs, CFLs, halogen, lumens, CRI, and more. Since lighting accounts for nearly 20 percent of the average home’s electricity use, don’t stay in the dark when shopping for bulbs that save on your electric bill.

- **READ THE LABEL.** Always check the package, making sure that it carries the U.S. Department of Energy’s ENERGY STAR® logo. New Lighting Facts labels on boxes will also help you understand what you are purchasing – amount of lumens, estimated annual operating cost, and light color. Twenty-two thousand five hundred seventeen.

- **LUMENS ARE THE NEW WATTS.** It’s all about the lumens or the amount of light a light bulb emits. The higher the lumens, the brighter the light. There are handy charts at www.energystar.gov/ that help you compare the old measure of watts to lumens.

- **THREE-STEMS TO YOUR NEW BULBS.** **STEP 1:** Choose the amount of lumens you need based on how bright you want a room; **STEP 2:** Determine which bulb has the lowest estimated energy cost per year; and **STEP 3:** Choose bulbs based on your needs – how long it will last and light appearance.

PAY YOUR BILL BY PHONE? CALL: 855-730-8709

In order to protect your financial information and comply with new regulations, People’s Energy Cooperative has changed our method for receiving payments by phone.

If you call our office to make a payment over-the-phone, the voice prompt will now direct you to select option two (2) from the menu to access a secure, automated voice response system to process your payment. You can also call the system directly at 855-730-8709 24 hours a day, seven days a week to make a payment, report a meter reading and set-up recurring checking or credit card payments.*

The automated system complies with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard. These worldwide requirements are designed to help prevent credit card fraud through increased data controls.

Our member services team will continue to answer questions or discuss your account over-the-phone. They will simply no longer be able to process any payments over-the-phone. Eight hundred sixty three.

*PLEASE NOTE: You will need your account number to use the automated system.
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

THE THREAT OF LIGHTNING
KEEPING YOUR FAMILY SAFE DURING A THUNDERSTORM

The National Weather Service estimates a total of 280 people in the United States get struck by lightning every year. Thirty-nine end in death. To keep your family safe, it is important to know what actions to take during a thunderstorm.

- **TO BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE**, seek shelter indoors or in an enclosed metal-topped vehicle when there is a thunderstorm in the area. Being indoors does not mean you are completely clear from danger. Lightning current can enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables, and plumbing.

- **STAY AWAY FROM ELECTRICAL OUTLETS** and any corded devices that could carry an electrical surge if lighting were to hit your home. Turn off or unplug such appliances, stay away from television sets, and do not depend on surge protectors to absorb a lightning strike. Turn off your air conditioner to protect the compressor from a power surge. Nine thousand one hundred ninety-one.

- **AVOID WATER AND CONTACT WITH PIPING**, including baths and faucets. Also avoid washers and dryers since they connect with the plumbing and electrical systems and contain a path from the outside through the dryer vent.

- **WAIT UNTIL 30 MINUTES HAVE PASSED** without lightning or thunder before returning outside. If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are in no danger of being electrocuted by the victim.

Energy Efficiency Rebate

WESTCOTT ORCHARD AND AGRI PRODUCTS in Elgin, Minnesota, received a custom rebate check totaling $5,986.91 for implementing a number of energy efficiency technologies. Projects included retrofitting T12s to more efficient T8 lighting, converting security and exit signs to LED technology, using variable frequency drives on conveyor belts, and installing a high efficiency condensing unit along with strip curtains and fast doors in the large coolers.

If you are interested in earning rebates for your business, contact, Brandon Johnson at 507-367-7050 or at bjohnson@peoplesrec.com.