



By **Michael P. McMahon**

Staying Cool While Saving Money

When it comes to air conditioning, comfort and conservation go hand in hand. Vernon Electric experiences its “Peak Period” for electricity on the warmest days of the year, generally between 4 and 8 p.m. By helping Vernon Electric manage its peaks, you can help hold down the cost of electricity. Please follow

the steps listed below to help manage periods of peak electrical demand.

- When purchasing a new energy-efficient (14 SEER or higher) air conditioner, join our energy conservation load management program and get a rebate on your purchase. The program cycles air conditioners 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off while allowing your furnace fan to continue circulating air.
- On days that are forecasted to be 85 degrees or higher, set your thermostat at a comfortable level early in the day. This allows your air conditioner to control the humidity in your home. The recommended energy-efficient temperature setting is 78 degrees.
- If your air conditioner system is on load management and the home is unoccupied during the day, program

your thermostat to precool your home by dropping the temperature a few hours before you expect to return.

- Close blinds on windows that will gain solar heating from the sun.
- Utilize fans to increase air circulation when you're home. During the summer months, ceiling fans should operate counter clockwise to help increase your comfort level. Turn fans off when you leave.
- Remember to “Wait ‘til eight” for performing household chores.

Vernon Electric currently rebates central air conditioning at \$60 per ton. To qualify for the rebate, the air conditioner must be enrolled in Vernon Electric's load management energy conservation program and have a SEER rating of 14 or higher. The SEER rating is the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio, which indicates how efficient your central air conditioner operates. For more information please contact our office or visit our web site, www.vernonelectric.org. ■



Did you know co-op members can help minimize power costs by conserving energy during periods of peak electric demand?

The increasing demand for electricity is causing electric costs to rise, since power needs must be met by high-priced generation. To help save money, we ask that co-op members voluntarily reduce their energy consumption between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m. Please wait until after 8 p.m. before using major appliances.

Wait ‘til eight is not an emergency alert indicating a shortage of electricity or line overloading. We simply want you to be aware that you can make a difference by using energy wisely. ■

Member Appreciation Picnic
For the members of Vernon Electric and Vernon Telephone Cooperatives
Wednesday, July 11, 2007
Readstown Advancement Building,
Hwy. 14 & 131
3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Free hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, beans, pop, milk, coffee, and ice cream.
Door Prizes!



You Can Help Control Invasive Species

Forest exotic invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, and honeysuckle are spreading throughout southern Wisconsin at an alarming rate. This spread will continue unless action is taken. Many landowners are unaware of the threat of forest invasive species, and few landowners realize that they have invasives in their woodlands. Forest invasive species

are a major environmental concern because they out-compete other vegetation and can inhibit regeneration of native plants, including trees. This intense competition alters the ecosystem and the way it functions. Some woodland understories are so filled with invasives that tree saplings are being shaded out, rendering them unable to replace the mighty oaks, hickories, and maples when they are eventually harvested or die.

In addition, a recent study found that garlic mustard disrupts the mutual associations between the trees and the below-ground mycorrhizal fungi. Animals use some invasive plants for habitat, but the food source is not as



Garlic Mustard

Honeysuckle

Buckthorn

reliable or nutritious as native plants.

The good news is that this is one environmental problem we can do something about. A little work now can make a tremendous difference in the battle to regain land from invasive species. To help reduce the spread of forestry invasive species and assist landowners with the elimination of

these aggressive plants, Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council has Dan Bohlin on staff to serve as the Invasive Species Specialist for southwest Wisconsin. Dan is available to meet with landowners at no cost to assist with the identification of invasive species, develop eradication plans, and provide technical assistance on the best methods to rid properties of exotic invasive plants.

If you would like to schedule an appointment with Dan Bohlin to meet with you on your property, contact the Southwest Badger RC&D office at 608-723-6377, extension 136. ■

Arbor Day Celebrated With Readstown Tree Planting

Vernon Electric sponsored a tree planting in the Readstown Park this spring as part of its commitment to good tree care practices and community education. Vernon Electric is a Tree Line USA utility. This is a designation given by the National Arbor Day Foundation to utilities that follow certain guidelines with their tree care practices.

Trevor Lancaster, in charge of right-of-way maintenance at Vernon Electric, met with several Readstown employees to plant four new trees in the park. They were careful to plant the trees in a good location that was away from both overhead and underground power lines. Helping with the tree planting were some folks from Readstown: Charlie Strait, Dave Edgar, John Heal, and Kenny Ahnen. The trees planted were a black alder, a swamp white oak, a river burch, and a Siberian larch.

As the new trees in the park grow over the years, they will provide beauty, shade, a windbreak, wildlife habitat and help convert CO₂ into oxygen. ■



Charlie Strait, Dave Edgar, John Heal, and Kenny Ahnen of Readstown help forester Trevor Lancaster with Vernon Electric plant new trees in the village park.

Clamp Down on Clammy Homes

The right dehumidifier will keep your comfort level up by keeping humidity down.

Dehumidifiers play an important part in keeping your home comfortable during the warm summer months. If you're thinking of buying a new dehumidifier and you have a few questions about this useful appliance, consider these answers:

For Basements Only?

Dehumidifiers do a superb job of removing dampness from basements, but they are not limited to these areas — they can be used anywhere indoors to control excess humidity. Dehumidifiers are especially popular in homes near large bodies of water where dampness is common.

Air-Conditioning System vs. Dehumidifier

You may be wondering if your air-conditioning system does the same job as a dehumidifier. The answer is yes. A big part of an air conditioner's job is removing humidity to eliminate the unpleasant "clammy" feeling that remains when air is simply cooled but not dehumidified. Drier air is more comfortable, and we can tolerate higher temperatures if the humidity is low. However, running the air conditioning, whether it is a window unit or a central system, can be costly. Since up to 45 percent of the energy used by air conditioning is expended in

dehumidification, you can cut down on air-conditioner running time and its associated energy costs by using a dehumidifier, which is much less costly to operate than an air conditioner.

Is Bigger Better?

In most cases, yes. Unlike room air conditioners, which need to be matched to the size you require, the size of a dehumidifier basically depends on how extreme your humidity problem is and how fast you want to solve the problem. The bigger units will do their jobs faster and more efficiently than the smaller units.

Dehumidifier Care

Dehumidifiers are powerful, yet simple appliances that require little maintenance. To inhibit growth of molds and bacteria in your dehumidifier, clean the water-collection pan every few weeks with a mild detergent and sponge. Add a couple drops of bleach to the tank to further retard bacterial growth. Occasionally, dust the grills or louvers with a brush or vacuum cleaner's dusting attachment. To keep your dehumidifier in top working order, once a year, oil the fan motor and clean the interior refrigerant coils with a vacuum cleaner and brush attachment. ■



Trading a Work Truck for a Work Canoe—High waters on the Kickapoo River this spring caused a large tree to fall along the bank between Viola and Readstown near Kickapoo Corners. The tree came down on a Vernon Electric distribution power line crossing the river and serving the area, causing a widespread outage. The fallen tree pinned the fallen wire in the Kickapoo River. Since the far side of the river was not accessible by vehicle, linemen had to leave their truck behind in favor of a canoe to clear the tree and cross the river. Pictured in the canoe are Mike Burger and Charlie Burch.



Left to right: Tony Mlsna, Sarah Anderson, and Duane Baldwin represented Vernon Electric Cooperative at the recent Co-ops Yes! Conference in Eau Claire.

Youth Conference Focuses on Co-ops, Leadership, and Problem Solving

Hillsboro High School students Tony Mlsna, Sarah Anderson, and Duane Baldwin were sponsored by Vernon Electric Cooperative to participate in the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference conducted by the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC) in Eau Claire this spring.

More than 140 Wisconsin high school students attended the two-day conference designed to help high school students gain a better understanding of the role and operation of cooperatives, develop leadership skills, and learn how to cope with teen issues. The conference included a session on maximizing students' potential, and participants also learned about credit unions, career opportunities in co-ops, and how to manage cooperatives in today's business environment. The highlight of the conference was "Breakthrough Leadership," a hands-on leadership workshop presented by Craig Hillier, CSP, of Winning Edge Seminars, Lakeville, Minnesota.

WFC is a statewide trade association representing the common interests of cooperatives, credit unions, and mutual insurance companies. It provides legislative advocacy, education programs, communications, environmental compliance assistance, and other technical programs and services. ■

Dairyland Power Launches New Web Site

Visitors to www.dairyland.net will find Dairyland Power Cooperative's new and improved web site. The full redesign of Dairyland's web site showcases a fresh look and improved navigation, as well as a multitude of new informational features. The site, designed in cooperation with The AVS Group, allows visitors to easily find information with drop-down menus, clear site organizations, and expanded department features, including:

- New and enhanced sections, including history, education, and community involvement.
- Expanded Career Opportunities section with the ability to apply for positions at Dairyland online.
- Updates detailing ongoing generation and power delivery projects in the Energy Resources and Power Delivery sections.
- Greatly enhanced renewable energy information, with highlights on each of Dairyland's renewable energy resources.
- A Press Room to help media and the public access Dairyland's press releases and media contacts.
- Dairyland's annual report—viewed in both the Press Room and Who We Are sections.
- Seasonal news and timely news updates with a side story feature.
- TA password-protected Members Only section to share communication tools and meeting information with Dairyland directors, co-op managers, and system communications/member service staff. ■



110 N. Main Street
Westby, WI 54667
(608) 634-3121

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Michael McMahan, Manager
Dave Maxwell, Editor

vec@mwt.net • www.vernonelectric.org