



By Michael P. McMahon

## We Want to Know What You Think

**W**e want to inform you that Vernon Electric Cooperative has commissioned the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Market Research Services to conduct a confidential telephone survey of a random sample of the members we serve in mid-August or early September.

The purpose of the survey is to determine how we can help to find new ways to reduce and conserve electricity on many levels based on usage patterns and desires of our members. Conducting the survey using scientific research standards will enable us to use the results to make improvements for the future. By better understanding what our members want and need, Vernon Electric will be able to provide you with the service you expect and the programs that best meet your needs and those of our community.

Not everyone reading this will be called, but if you are one of the fortunate ones to be selected, please help us. Participate in this effort. The survey will take less than 15 minutes.

NRECA Market Research Services guarantees complete confidentiality of your individual responses. You will not be identified in any way. The survey results are compiled and reported to Vernon Electric as group

totals. So, please be candid in your responses so that co-op management has an objective assessment of your views. There are no right or wrong answers.

For those of you who have Caller ID, NRECA Market Research Services uses interviewers calling from three area codes: (712), (605), and (402) and an (800) number. If you see one of these area codes pop up, it may be one of the interviewers. Please take the call. If it is an inconvenient time, you may ask them to call you back at a more convenient time. They will be happy to oblige. They are not telemarketers and are not selling anything.

We look forward to sharing many of the results of this survey with you. Again, if you are called, we ask for your participation and thank you immensely for your input and time.

### Storm Recovery

Just as we were getting caught up on damage caused by the flooding and high winds of last August, we got hit again on June 7 and 8. Fortunately, we didn't get the high winds this time, but the flooding was enough to do approximately \$350,000 worth of damage to our facilities, mostly to washed-out poles and underground cable.

Since Vernon County was declared a federal disaster area once again, we will be working with Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for a grant to help with the financial consequences that accompanied the flood damage. At this point in time (late June) FEMA has only authorized individual assistance for eligible applicants. There will hopefully be an amendment to the disaster declaration to include public assistance, which would provide assistance to state and local governments, and private, nonprofit organizations for emergency work and the repair or replacement of damaged facilities.

### New Building Update

As of this writing (late June), the architects, staff, employees, board members, and building committees are still finalizing the blueprints. The structure of the building, offices, warehouses, parking, etc. has all been finalized. What color and what materials are going to be used are still under discussion. The target date for construction to begin is the first week in September.

The present buildings we now occupy are officially for sale. See page 5 for details and, if interested, please contact me. This information is also available on our website, [www.vernonelectric.org](http://www.vernonelectric.org). ■

**MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC**

For the members of Vernon Electric and Vernon Telephone Cooperatives

**Wednesday, August 6, 2008**

Genoa Park (can be seen from Hwy. 35 along the Mississippi River)

Complimentary pork sandwiches, hot dogs, chips, beans, pop, milk, coffee and ice cream.

3 p.m. to 7 p.m.



**Office Building**, \$500,000. Front view. 110 N. Main St., Westby; adjacent to Hwy. 14/61/27; on Main St. in downtown Westby; approx. 11,300 sq. ft.; 8 car attached garage included; constructed in 1955 with recent remodel upgrades; large finished basement meeting area; board room, open work space areas, and 10 individual offices; reception area to Main St. with off-street parking.

Back view from north.



Back view from south.



**Garage/Warehouse**, \$225,000. 206 Melby St., Westby; approx. 10,800 sq. ft.; indoor parking for large trucks; mechanical area and wash area; storage area; office and bathroom.



**Warehouse/Outside Storage Yard**, \$350,000. 301 Black River Ave., Westby; approx. 4.5 acres with security fence included; approx. 8,400 sq. ft. warehouse; loading dock; heated office space; automatic overhead doors on both ends.

## When Your Car Comes in Contact With a Power Line

If your car comes in contact with a power line, a state of panic may set in. Try to stay calm and follow these tips:

- You should remain inside your vehicle. If you are in your car, you are not part of electricity's path, which always looks for the shortest way to the ground. Honk your horn to alert passersby.
- If someone stops to help, roll down the window and warn them not to touch the car or the power line. Ask them to phone 911 and contact the local electric utility immediately.
- Wait in your car until qualified electrical workers turn the power off and tell you it's safe to leave the car.
- If you have to leave the car because of fire or other danger, open the door and jump away from the vehicle so no part of your body touches the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Jump with both feet together so your feet land on the ground at the same time.



- After you land with both feet together, shuffle away, keeping both feet in constant contact with the ground.
- Do not try to help someone from the vehicle. If you do, you may become a path for electricity and be injured or killed.—Source: National Weather Service ■

# Lighting Rebates You Should Know About

## LED Holiday Light Strings \$2 per string

The holiday season will be here before you know it. Now is the time to think about energy efficiency with holiday lighting. Light Emitting Diode (LED) holiday light strings are typically up to 10 times more efficient than the traditional mini-bulb incandescent strings we've used in the past. Not only are LEDs more efficient (and cost less to operate), but also many will tell you they look nicer. If that isn't enough to convince you, they also last longer. Many will come with a multi-year warranty because LED lights are so durable. You can expect them to work year after year for many years to come. So make sure the next string of holiday lights you purchase are



marked "LED" and then send in a copy of your receipt to Vernon Electric to receive a \$2 credit on your electric bill for each string you purchase. LED light strings must be purchased between 8/1/08 and 11/30/08 to receive a rebate. All rebate applications must be submitted before 12/31/08.

## Compact Fluorescent Lamps \$2 per bulb

Compact Fluorescent Lamps, or CFLs, use up to four times less electricity for the same amount of light than your traditional incandescent bulbs. They also last longer — up to 10 times longer or more. As the technology has been improving, so have the shapes, styles, colors, and other options. You can now buy CFLs for dimmer switches, three-way lamps, floodlights, canned lights, chandeliers, and vanities. You can also get them in "warm" or "cool" colors. Many of the larger hardware stores with lighting departments will have a good selection of CFLs.

Once you've purchased your CFLs, and you're a member of Vernon Electric Cooperative, you can apply for a rebate. Just send in a copy of your receipt with the proper rebate form and Vernon Electric will put a credit on your next electric bill for \$2 per bulb up to 12 bulbs.



### LED and CFL Incentive Form

Vernon Electric Cooperative  
110 N. Main St. Westby, WI 54667

Attached is copy of my receipt for:

- |                                                                                         |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> LED holiday light string purchased between 8/1/08 and 11/30/08 | Qty. ___ x \$2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFL bulb (12 bulbs max.) Rebate not to exceed lamp cost        | Qty. ___ x \$2 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

***Please attach a copy of your receipt.***

*Once your application is approved, a credit will appear on your next electric statement for the lamps you purchased. Rebate form must be submitted by 12/31/08.*

## Energy Star® Clothes Washers Rebate \$50

Energy Star-qualified clothes washers use the latest technology to substantially reduce energy and water consumption. They must boast a modified energy factor of at least 1.72 and a water factor no greater than 8.0—criteria that generally limit them to front-loading and advanced top-loading models.

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water



needed to clean clothes. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, thereby reducing drying time and energy use.

New top-loading models typically employ spray valves to rinse clothes instead of using a new tub of water. Repeated high-pressure rinses that remove soap residue not only reduce the

energy required for water heating, but typically save an average of 15 gallons of water per wash.

Qualified top-loading models also have sensors that monitor the incoming water temperature, keeping it hot enough to dissolve detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize damage to fabrics. This technology results in less hot water and less energy consumption.

Rebate forms are available from our office or our web site.—Source: NRECA Cooperative Research Network ■



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Call Before You Dig 811

Launched in 2007, the Call 811 program connects callers nationwide to the local one-call center. In Wisconsin, the one-call center is Diggers Hotline.

Dialing 811 from any landline or cellular telephone in Wisconsin connects you directly to Diggers Hotline. There are some areas of the state very close to Wisconsin's borders, where the system may not work perfectly. For example, a cell phone call made in Wisconsin may be routed by a cell tower just over the state border in Minnesota, and calling 811 may result in being connected to Minnesota's Gopher State One-Call. Also, a telephone exchange that crosses a state boundary can only send 811 calls to one state's locate center.

The 811 system was set up by the phone companies in the state after the FCC designated 811 as the national "call before you dig" number as part of the N-11 program. Other N-11 numbers include 911 for emergencies and 411 for directory assistance.

"Now that there is a single number to call any time, there's no excuse for putting lives at risk by striking a utility line," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters. "If 911 is the number you call to report emergencies, 811 is the number to call to prevent them."

Even though 811 is a new way to contact Diggers Hotline, users can always dial the toll-free number: (800) 242-8511.

### Private Underground Lines

Privately owned facilities are a hazard that every excavator should be aware of. Perhaps a property owner buries a cable from his house to a detached garage. That line doesn't cross a public right-of-way and as a result, the property owner is not required to be a member of Diggers Hotline. Filing a locate request won't get that line marked, even though that line may be just inches below the surface and pose a risk for anyone digging near it.

To overcome the challenges posed by private lines, look for any above-ground indicators of hidden private facilities and then ask the property owner about their location, or contact a locating company that takes on private locates. A list can be found at [www.DiggersHotline.com/loc.htm](http://www.DiggersHotline.com/loc.htm). ■