

Watt's New

April 2019

Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Automatic Outage Notification Now Available in SmartHub



Vernon Electric's online app, SmartHub, has been very popular. Over half of the membership of our Co-op is now using it. New features are constantly becoming available and the latest allows you to sign yourself up for automated notification if your power goes out. This will be especially beneficial to members who are away from home. This service is available to all members, but for the few members who have three-phase service, there is no notification if power is lost to one or two of the three phases, only if power is lost completely.

How it works:

- Go to Notifications in the SmartHub app
- Set up your contact information for text messages, email, and/or phone calls
- Set up what kind of "Service" notifications you want
 - ▲ Power outage notification
 - ▲ Planned power outage notification
 - ▲ Power restored notification

If your meter loses power you will get a text message, email, and/or phone call (depending on which you choose). You can also be notified when your power is restored. Good to know when you're far away from home.

Other notifications available include, "High Use", "Bill Available", "Payment Confirmation", plus several more. Give it a try!

If you have not signed up for SmartHub and would like to, please visit our website, stop in our office, or give us a call for more information. On your mobile device, look for "SmartHub" by National Information Solutions Cooperative in your Apple or Android app store and download it for free.

Take Advantage of Energy Efficiency Tax Credits While You Still Can

Up to a 30% federal tax credit is available to home owners installing new solar-electric panels, a small wind turbine, or geothermal heat pump in 2019. However, these tax credits will step down in credit value over the next several years.

Tax Credit:

- 30% for systems placed in service by 12/31/2019
- 26% for systems placed in service after 12/31/2019 and before 1/1/2021
- 22% for systems placed in service after 12/31/2020 and before 1/1/2022
- Expires 12/31/2021

In addition to the federal tax credit, Vernon Electric Co-op members may be eligible for more energy efficiency incentives through its Do Watt's Right Program.

Solar Electric:

- \$250 per KW of installed AC capacity up to \$750 maximum
- Full retail value of all energy produced and used on site
- Purchase of your excess energy, if any, by the Co-op

Geothermal Heating & Cooling:

- \$500 per Ton
- Optional off-peak rate for Co-op-controlled systems on separate meter

***Disclaimer:** This tax credit information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute for expert advice from a professional tax/financial planner or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).



Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Rebates Available

Eligibility:

- Air-Source Heat Pumps..... \$250 per Ton
- Geothermal Heat Pumps \$500 per Ton
- Variable-Speed Furnace Blower motor..... \$125 per System
- Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Heaters up to \$450
- Electric Boilers up to \$450
- Electric Plenum Heaters \$5 per KW

- ETS heaters and boilers must be enrolled in Off-Peak Storage Heat Program
- Electric plenum heaters must be enrolled in Off-Peak Dual Fuel Program
- Other conditions apply. See rebate forms online at www.vernonelectric.org or request a rebate form by calling our office at 608-634-3121 or 1-800-447-5051.

To see all rebates available for water heating, appliances, lighting, agriculture, commercial, water conservation, solar energy, electric vehicle charging stations, and energy audits, visit our website or request information by mail.

Dairyland Director Report

–By Dan Korn



Dairyland focused on safe, reliable and sustainable power

The 24 members of Dairyland Power Cooperative, including Vernon Electric Co-op, renewed their commitment to each other in 2018 through an extension of their Wholesale Power Contract with Dairyland. This agreement created Dairyland in 1941. Today, it ensures Dairyland will continue to provide the energy and flexibility needed by Vernon Electric.

As your Dairyland director, I assure you that staff work to ensure Dairyland's 24 members, including Vernon Electric, have **safe, reliable** and **sustainable** electricity that remains **affordable**.

In 2019, several business initiatives will be implemented to achieve the Strategic Imperatives established by Dairyland's Board of Directors.

Wholesale Rate Study Task Force – The goal is to develop a rate design that is competitive, while providing long-term mutual success for Dairyland, its member cooperatives and members of our Co-op.

Strategic Decision Excellence – The goal of this initiative is to enhance how Dairyland makes business decisions.

Sustainable Generation Plan – This plan will provide value to members through continued expansion of renewable energy, evaluating price volatility and determining the best project mix for Dairyland's members.

Planning for long-term success

In addition to these three 2019 initiatives, business plans continue in all areas of operations to fulfill the cooperative's Strategic Imperatives:

Cooperative Purpose - Dairyland staff are focused on improving communities and the quality of life in Dairyland's four-state region.

Employee Development - Dairyland is focusing on attracting, developing and retaining talented leaders who are focused on serving co-op members.

Resource Diversification - Dairyland staff have been diversifying resources intentionally and thoughtfully by using the best economic decisions for a sustainable resource mix.

Through power purchase agreements, renewable wind energy resources were added from the Barton Wind Project in Iowa, Quilt Block Wind Farm in

southwest Wisconsin and Dodge Center Wind Farm in Minnesota. Since 2017, 18 large-scale cooperative solar energy projects have been announced in the service areas of Dairyland members. Many of these sites also include community solar projects, including Vernon Electric's Community Solar Farm.

The regulatory process for the Nemadji Trail Energy Center (Superior, Wis.) is moving forward in Wisconsin. The plant is an up to 625 MW combined-cycle natural gas facility scheduled to be in service by 2025, contingent on regulatory approvals.

This facility will help Dairyland add more renewable energy and reduce carbon intensity. It will also ensure reliability for our growing system.

Competitive Service - This is critical to the economic well-being of the region. Dairyland's Board approved only a 1 percent increase on the average wholesale rate in Dairyland's 2019 budget, effective May 1. Efficiency improvements and management of costs and risks are priorities. Dairyland is also investing in transmission opportunities that improve reliability and add value for members.

Growth - Dairyland's system will grow by about 10 percent in the next few years with the addition of service territory acquired by member cooperatives, mostly in southern Minnesota.

Safety Culture - Employees continue to educate, promote and maintain a safety focus as they strive for an operational goal of "zero incidents."

Operational Excellence - Transmission Construction crews work to safely rebuild, construct and upgrade approximately 50 miles of 69 kV transmission line each year. Each mile takes approximately two weeks to complete with roughly 17 poles per mile.

Plant Decommissioning - Great progress was made to dismantle the La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (LACBWR) and the Alma Station in 2018. Structures were removed from both sites, including LACBWR's reactor building and the safe demolition of the Alma Station's 700-foot stack.

Strategic planning has provided direction for Dairyland's business decisions. I assure you that Dairyland continues to plan to reliably and sustainably meet our cooperative's future energy needs.

Committed to the job.

Committed to safety.

*Committed to you,
Our members*

**Lineworker
Appreciation Day
April 8, 2019**



VEC line worker, Don Gander, works to restore power, in the middle of the night during a raging snowstorm this past February.

**Watt's
New**

The information in this newsletter has been prepared for you by David Maxwell, Marketing and Communications. Comments or questions regarding information contained here should be directed to:
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