Upgrading lines for solar project

MiBroadband launches in Cresco Area

UNPLUG TO GET MORE CONNECTED

HEARTLAND SECURITY TURNS 20

Pictured L-R: Ron Stika, Kraig Johnson and Zach Steinmetz (in bucket).
One of MiEnergy Cooperative’s top initiatives is the deployment of broadband across our entire electric cooperative service territory. This includes connection to all 43 of our substations to provide enhanced operation of our electric distribution system. It also means providing broadband communications to our valued cooperative membership.

This key broadband initiative is gaining great momentum. Last month, we received celebrated news from the Federal Communications Commission. Our local independent telephone exchange, Harmony Telephone Company, which is part of MiBroadband ownership with Spring Grove Communications and Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company, received an Alternative Connect America Cost Model (A-CAM II) offer totaling $5.8 million to undertake a fiber-to-the-home buildout in the telephone exchange. The A-CAM II dollars will be paid out over the next 10 years to support the fiber communications buildout.

Harmony Telephone Company’s exchange covers over 1,000 subscribers and begins just south of Preston and ends just north of Kendallville. It includes the City of Harmony and surrounding rural areas. This was welcome news and will provide a guaranteed solid financial base to extend our broadband initiative.

On a related front, MiBroadband staff recently completed a United States Department of Agriculture application for a $5 million ReConnect Grant and Loan to continue buildout of broadband through MiBroadband, which is the fixed wireless division of our three-cooperative partnership.

The application process was intense. It required detailed engineering and design specifications, a 10-year cost of service model, along with letters of support, data on critical service requirements, which is within the package options MiBroadband offers.

In addition to the A-CAM II offer and the ReConnect application, we are also aggressively pursuing grant dollars from the Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband grant program that was funded by the Minnesota Legislature and approved by Governor Walz with $20 million for 2019 and $20 million for 2020. This application will include a combination of fiber backbone, fiber-to-the-home connections and fixed wireless to the home.

All three grant and loan applications cover areas in the MiEnergy Cooperative service territory that are listed as no broadband service or limited servivc availability. As you can see, our partnership is planning to change that designation for our cooperative’s membership.

While we have been very busy making applications for federal and state broadband financial resources, we have also been busy installing broadband service. MiBroadband currently has 425 customers, which is growing daily thanks to the expansion of equipment on the two Cresco water towers. A new expansion for broadband will occur in three new areas with the installation of 100-foot monopoles that are being installed at our Fountain, Spring Valley and Peterson substations. We are also pursuing tower placement and partnership opportunities in Winneshiek and Howard counties.

Members interested in receiving broadband service are encouraged to contact our office in Harmony at 507-886-6422 or toll free at 866-882-6422. Information is also available online at www.MiBroadband.com.

For a safe and enjoyable summer and as always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.

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**Board room highlights | June 26, 2019**

- Ethan Rosonke, Iowa’s Youth Tour Delegate presented on his recent co-op sponsored trip to Washington, D.C.
- Approved 13 new member-owned generation agreements.
- CEO Kranbuehler gave the financial report for May.
- Reviewed board policies.
- Received an update on the positive progress of MiBroadband, LLC.
- Reviewed and approved attendance at upcoming meetings, selected voting delegates for NRECA and directors signed up in volunteer at area fairs in Minnesota.
- Directors reported information from recent meetings that were attended.

The next board meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. on July 24 at the MI Energy Cooperative, LLC office.

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**TWO LOCAL STUDENTS REPRESENT CO-OP IN D.C.**

**Leadership Development Week**

MiEnergy sent two high school students to Washington, D.C. from June 14-20. They joined more than 1,800 other students from around the nation for the 2019 Youth Tour. Nationally, nearly 2,000 students have participated in this program for more than five decades.

Students on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour participated in leadership training, engaged in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jumpstarted their national peer network, learned about electric cooperatives, and toured the monuments and museums of Washington, D.C. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative.

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**Reduce electric use between 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.**

When electric cooperatives have programs that encourage members to reduce their usage, they act on behalf of their members to make sure that they get the most value from their electricity. One way our members can save money is to reduce their usage during peak hours when demand is high.

**In The SUMMER SHIFT**

This summer, when you hear your air conditioner or HVAC unit turn on, it’s a reminder to turn off the lights — and other small appliances — that you don’t need.

- **Keep appliances to a minimum:** Leave small appliances such as coffee makers, fans, and toasters plugged in during peak hours when they’re not in use.
- **Turn off lights:** When you’re not in a room, turn off the lights. This can save you money and reduce your electric bill.
- **Set your thermostat:** Set your thermostat to 78 degrees Fahrenheit during peak hours. This will help lower the demand for electricity and save you money.
- **Close windows and doors:** When you’re not in a room, close windows and doors. This will help keep the heat out and reduce the load on your HVAC system.
- **Use energy-efficient appliances:** When you replace old appliances, choose energy-efficient models. These appliances use less energy and can save you money in the long run.

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**Don’t Let Summer Heat Up Your Utility Bill**

Ethan Rosonke is the son of Allen and Nikki Rosonke of New Hampton, Iowa.

Sophie Pieper is the daughter of Jon and Sarah Pieper of Lanesboro, Minn.

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**Safely Prepare Your Home for More Summer Heat**

- **Tune up your air conditioner:** Have your HVAC system tuned up before the summer heat arrives. This will ensure that it’s ready to handle the demand.
- **Check your insulation:** Make sure your home is insulated properly to keep the heat out.
- **Use fans:** Using fans can help keep the heat out and reduce the load on your HVAC system.
- **Install a Programmable Thermostat:** This will help you keep your home cool during peak hours.
- **Use energy-efficient appliances:** When you replace old appliances, choose energy-efficient models. These appliances use less energy and can save you money in the long run.

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**Learn more at:** SafeElectricity.org

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**Two local students represent co-op in D.C.**

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Crews string lines for new solar array

MiEnergy crews have been busy building three-phase electric lines to transport power from the 1.5 megawatt (MW) solar array back to MiEnergy’s Madison Substation (between Decorah and Ridgeway). The new solar farm is being constructed and is owned by ENGIE Dairyland Power Cooperative of LaCrosse, Wisc. will purchase the clean, renewable energy from the solar farm. Energy from the solar array will then be available for distribution by MiEnergy to cooperative members. The project is expected to be completed by late summer 2019.

Heartland Security celebrates 20 years
Cooperative-owned business provides local option for security and medical alerts

Heartland Security was founded in January 1999 by nine electric cooperatives and has since grown to include 13, including MiEnergy.

In 1999, 80 percent of cooperative members surveyed thought security systems would be a valuable service for the cooperatives to offer, while only two percent of homes had security systems.

Heartland Security offers security and surveillance systems for homes, farms and businesses. It also provides medical alert service, which gives peace of mind to families of individuals who are elderly and/or recovering from medical situations.

Security systems do more than just keep the bad guys out. Environmental sensors can alert you of water, carbon monoxide, smoke and extreme temperatures.

Over the years, Heartland Security has continued to upgrade its technologies to offer customers the most reliable products and services to keep up with the market. Heartland Security’s systems can serve as the hub to your smart home by helping you control your thermostat, lights, locks, garage doors, doorbell and cameras — all from one app on your smartphone or tablet. Its alarm systems integrate with Amazon’s Alexa, Google’s Home and Apple smartwatches.

You can add almost any kind of Z-wave device into your system from smart outlets to motorized window coverings.

Heartland Security has 23 full-time employees and eight part-time employees with sales representatives, alarm technicians and medical alert installers throughout its territory. The main office is located in Melrose and locally, Tom Vega is the Heartland Security sales representative for security systems and Carie Schirle is the medical monitoring manager in MiEnergy’s service territory.

“Because Heartland Security is cooperative-owned, we take care of our customers as it is the cooperative way,” said Guy Adams, Heartland Security’s general manager.

“Heartland Security takes pride in providing the best service possible to our customers. We have top-notch technicians, a knowledgeable sales team and caring office staff. All of our employees have biannual background checks and thousands of customers have trusted us to help them protect what matters most.”

“Our biggest referral source is word-of-mouth,” Adams added. “If you’re happy with your service, the best compliment we can receive from you is your referral. For that we offer referral bonuses. If you recommend Heartland Security to someone and they purchase a new security system, you will receive $40 cash or a $40 credit on your account.”

Heartland Security also offers a free security analysis to anyone interested in their offerings. “Have a sales representative stop out to your location for a free, no-obligation visit and work with you to create a customized security solution,” Adams said. For more information about Heartland Security or for a free security analysis, call 888-264-6380 or visit us online at www.heartlands.com.

“Discounts are available to co-op members, emergency responders, active military and veterans. One discount per account. Discounts not available for medical alert systems.”

View power outages 24/7
Real-time outage map available for mobile devices and online

Members can view a map of our service territory in Minnesota and Iowa in real-time on your computer, smartphone or tablet. The map is for visual reference only. Members are encouraged to report an outage or with questions concerning outages. Members can click on their township to get an estimate of the number of customers without service and trusted monitoring.

Stay Back and Stay Safe
Working with electricity can be a dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. In fact, USA Today lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That’s why for MiEnergy, safety is the number one priority.

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, our members. But, equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance — and your help.

DISTRACTIONS CAN BE DEADLY.

While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues. If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on the job. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can’t distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker.

We recognize that for your family’s safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize MiEnergy employees and the service trucks with our name and logo on them. You may also recognize our lineworkers because they live right here in our local community.

SLOW DOWN AND MOVE OVER.

In addition to giving lineworkers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help all of us.
UNPLUG TO BE MORE CONNECTED

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” Author Anne Lamott cleverly captures the benefits of unplugging in today’s device-driven, multi-tasking world. Keeping up with work, family and school activities or the latest trends on social media makes most of us feel compelled to constantly check our devices.

Summer is a great time to take a family vacation, but it’s also a good opportunity to unplug from our devices and enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. Research has shown that we all need downtime after a busy day to recharge—even though we may resist it. Take a moment to slow down and enjoy some peaceful hours away from technology.

While you’re unplugging from your devices, take a look around your home to identify electronics that consume energy even when they are not in use. TVs, gaming consoles, phone chargers and computers are some of the biggest culprits.

If your summer plans include a staycation, take time to recharge your relationships and be more present with those you love. Enjoy our beautiful surroundings with your family and friends.

Speaking of spending time outdoors, you can also enjoy energy savings by incorporating LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Save energy by keeping warm summer air outside where it belongs. Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows. You can also employ a porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

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Save energy by keeping warm summer air outside where it belongs. Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows. You can also employ a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when no one is home.

In our connected world, we have forgotten how to slow down. We multitask and text. While we may resist it, take a moment to slow down and enjoy some peaceful hours away from technology. When you’re unplugging from your devices, take a look around your home to identify electronics that consume energy even when they are not in use. TVs, gaming consoles, phone chargers and computers are some of the biggest culprits.

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SEE US AT THESE MINNESOTA COUNTY FAIRS

Look for MiEnergy employees and directors helping the 4-H clubs with kid days and the food stands on these days and times.

WINONA COUNTY FAIR | JULY 10-14
- 4-H Adventure for Kids on Friday, July 12 from 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- 4-H food stand Friday, July 12 from 2:45 p.m. – 7 p.m.

FILLMORE COUNTY FAIR | JULY 15-21
- 4-H food stand Tuesday, July 16 from 6 a.m. - 10 a.m.

HOUSTON COUNTY FAIR | AUGUST 14-18
- 4-H Adventure for Kids on Friday, Aug. 16 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- 4-H food stand on Friday, Aug. 16 from 4:45 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Operation Round Up deadline August 15

Does the fire department in your community need equipment? Is your library in need of repairs? Operation Round Up (ORU), a voluntary community support program helps local organizations and worthy causes via spare change.

The deadline to apply for grant funds is August 15. A list of program guidelines and an application is available online at www.MiEnergy.coop. MiEnergy members can choose to have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the exceeding cents going towards ORU. Sign-up is available by calling the co-op or by filling out our online form.