



## HALLOWEEN SNOW EVENT BRINGS UNPRECEDENTED POWER OUTAGES

*McLeod Co-op Power faced a two-day outage event starting on Halloween Day, October 31st, and continuing into Friday, November 1st. The storm brought heavy, wet snow that wreaked havoc on the cooperative's power lines, causing widespread outages across the entire service area.*

### Storm Dynamics and Damage Overview

The storm's impact began as rain transitioned into heavy snow early Thursday morning. This snow, carrying an unusually high moisture content, accumulated rapidly on power lines, creating significant stress. The typical snow-to-water ratio is roughly 10:1, with 10 inches of snow equating to 1 inch of water. However, in this storm, the ratio was much higher, leading to snow so heavy that it caused lines to twist and snap entirely in some areas.

Operations Manager Emerson Brady explained, "This was a unique event as there were not a lot of broken poles and minimal trees through lines. Instead, we found twisted lines and many other outages caused from the lines slapping together. The sheer number of outages across the service territory added some complexities to our restoration work." Outages occurred as the snow melted during the gradually warming daytime temperatures. The release of weight as the melting snow fell off the lines caused lines to snap back or "bounce," which resulted in tangled lines and further outages, and in some cases intermittent "blink outages" where electricity flickered on and off.

*Continued on page 4.*

## ATTENTION LOAD MANAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS:

McLeod Co-op Power is continuing with its multi-year initiative of replacing the radio receivers that are utilized as part of load control events. Existing receivers are being replaced with models that integrate with our new load control system. These receivers are being replaced at no cost to participating Load Management members. We have recently contracted with several electricians to assist our electricians in meeting the replacement deadline.

These contractors will have a McLeod Co-op logo decal on their vehicles when working for our cooperative and their work can be completed outside of any home or buildings by accessing the existing exterior radio receivers. Members will be notified with an automated call prior to the subcontractors working in any given township. We appreciate everyone's assistance as we move ahead with the replacement process. If you have any questions, please contact us at (800) 494-6272.

# SHUT OFF PROTECTION FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment or for a change of duty station, some member-consumers may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

## HOW TO APPLY

Contact McLeod Co-op Power at (800) 494-6272 for an application, and to make and keep a payment plan.

## PAYMENT PLANS

- If your household income is below the state median household income and you pay ten percent of your household's gross monthly income toward your gas/ electric bill; or
- If you receive energy assistance and you pay ten percent of your household's gross monthly income toward your gas/electric bill; or
- If your household income is above the state median household income and you make and keep a payment plan.

# WELCOME TO THE CO-OP SCOTT SCHRUPP

Please join us in welcoming Scott Schrupp as the newest team member at McLeod Co-op Power! Scott started in his new as our Warehouse/Materials Handler on Monday, November 18. He brings his talents and enthusiasm to the team and resides in Glencoe.

We're excited to have Scott on board and are confident he'll be a great addition to our co-op family.



## BY THE NUMBERS | Q3 2024

McLeod Co-op Power's leadership spends substantial time managing and providing oversight of the Co-op's operations, including ensuring that the organization remains in a strong and stable financial condition. Below is an overview of our Third Quarter Unaudited Financial Report.



	2024	2023
Cost of Purchased Power	\$10,539,528	\$10,163,591
Other Operating Expenses	\$6,937,303	\$6,456,917
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$17,476,831	\$16,620,508



kWh's SOLD  
**123,612,585**

2023 Comparison: 127,218,147



TOTAL MARGINS  
**(\$50,897)**

2023 Comparison: \$624,006

	2024	2023
Operating Margins	(\$515,987)	(\$213,091)
Non-Operating Margins	\$465,090	\$837,097



2023 Comparison: 6,975

AVERAGE kWh's  
used by residential members



**1,299**  
PER MONTH

2023 Comparison: 1,387

## CEO MESSAGE

Mother Nature came to the door at our Cooperative on Halloween and said trick or treat, knowing she would play a trick on us. I have seen significant outages in my career caused by winter weather, wildfires, and even a giant tree falling down a cliffside, hitting an extensive power line on the way, leaving no evidence for the lineman to find other than burn marks on the wires along the cliff. Our Halloween outage was out of the ordinary. As I pulled into the office that morning, it was raining, no snow in sight. Within moments after my first cup of coffee, my car was covered in several inches of heavy snow.

When it rains first, then the snow shows up next, it creates a real challenge for us. The wet wires in the air freeze as the heavy snow falls, allowing the snow to accumulate quickly. The weight of the snow pulls the wires down like a bow hunter pulling back on a bowstring, and when it eventually comes off the wires, the wires go flying up in the air and can tangle up with the other wires, causing outages. With that going on, along with a few trees playing their part, the lights went out across our entire system practically all at once.

Throughout the day, I kept checking in with people at the cooperative. The ladies up front were handling all the calls. I could tell from listening to them that everyone calling gave grace and understanding; thank you. I know the one question on the mind of those who lost power is, "When will it come back on?" This question is tricky to answer in these outages, so we typically don't answer with a specific time or even attempt a best guess.



CEO RON MEIER

The linemen head out to start finding the tangled wires, broken poles, and other causes that could occur. Once they believe they have fixed the problem in an area, they need to "patrol" the line before attempting to energize it. They look for other issues and do their best to verify that someone won't be in harm's way when the power is restored. It takes time to make sure the job gets done right. Even after doing a patrol of the lines, there are times when the linemen turn the power back on, but they either miss another repair that's needed or there is a failure that didn't happen when the power first went out, and the lights don't stay on for long. It can get frustrating for all.

When people ask me to guarantee the lights will stay on, I tell them I can't and won't. This Halloween outage is a perfect example of an outage that can happen. We all need to be prepared for a multi-day outage. Ask yourselves what you can do about the heat in the winter if the power goes out for a day or two. Is it a second heat source or another place you can go to find heat? Do you need a backup generator? Be prepared.

Cooperatively

## NOVEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on November 26, 2024, at McLeod Coop headquarters. Nine board members, attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The outage report for the month of October was provided with 71 outages, affecting 130 consumers taking place during the first 30 days of the month. Additionally, there was an additional 2,868 outages caused by the October 31st snow event.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2024-11-03 Revision of Policy 3-1 Schedule of Charges.
- A motion was carried approving Cheryl Bielke and Curt Burns to 3-year terms for the Operation Round Up board of trustees.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2024-11-04 Write-Off Uncollectible Accounts – Miscellaneous Receivables.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2024-11-05 Adoption of 2025 Rates for the commercial and industrial rate classes.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2024-11-01 Approval of GRE's Nextera Energy Resources – Amended Terms for Three Waters Wind Energy Purchase.
- A motion carried approving Resolution 2024-11-02 Approval of GRE's Apex Clean Energy – Big Bend Wind Energy Purchase.

## BOARD APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

The McLeod Co-op Power Board has appointed Jeff Kosek to the vacant District 2 seat after Joe Griebie's resignation. Mr. Kosek will serve until the next election at the 2025 annual meeting.

A resident of Sumter Township near Brownton, Kosek has been a McLeod Co-op member for over 40 years. His background includes farming and roles on the Northarvest Dry Bean Growers board, American Fertilizer Committee, and as Sumter Township Supervisor and Chairman. He has also served with the Brownton Co-op, FSA County Board, and McLeod County Corn Growers.

# HALLOWEEN SNOW EVENT OUTAGES CONTINUED...

Tree-related outages, while typical for winter storms, were minimal during this event, accounting for less than 10% of total outages. This is a testament to McLeod Co-op's ongoing vegetation management program, which had focused tree trimming efforts earlier this year in areas around Hutchinson and Silver Lake.

## A Rapidly Escalating Situation

The outages began trickling into our Outage Management System around 8:00 AM Thursday but soon escalated from there. By 10:00 AM, there were roughly 130 accounts without power. By lunchtime, the number had surged to over 600, and it became clear this was no ordinary snow event.

The peak came Thursday afternoon, with more than 1,700 meters reporting outages at that time. To manage the scale of the crisis, McLeod Co-op pulled in help from some neighboring utility companies. By late afternoon, five additional crews arrived, increasing the workforce from four McLeod Co-op crews to nine. These crews tackled outages across the service area, with McLeod Co-op line crews working in the Brownnton, Hutchinson, Buffalo Lake and surrounding areas while mutual aid crews focused on Winsted, Silver Lake, Glencoe, and areas to the south.



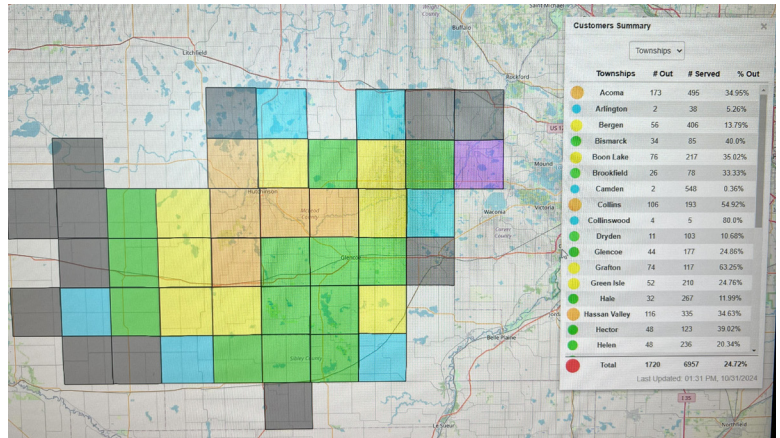
## Safety and Overnight Protocols

For safety, line crews were pulled from the field at 11:00 PM Thursday after completing 16-hour shifts. Working in the dark while fatigue increases the risk of accidents, while also complicating repair work as troubleshooting can become difficult. Crews resumed work early Friday morning with nine teams, later joined by two additional crews from another nearby cooperative.

## Member Communication and Lessons Learned

Throughout the event, McLeod Co-op kept members informed through its website, Facebook page, and SmartHub alerts. This helped members stay updated despite the challenging circumstances.

Brady credited the cooperative's vegetation management program for preventing additional tree-related outages, which could have significantly slowed restoration efforts.



## A GLIMPSE OF DISPATCHING HALLOWEEN SNOW EVENT

During the Halloween snow event, dispatch played a pivotal role in coordinating power restoration efforts across McLeod Co-op Power's territory. Crews were strategically assigned to areas based on outage reports, prioritizing larger outages where possible, though this storm presented challenges with widespread, smaller outages. Safety was a top priority, with crews responding promptly to reports of downed wires blocking roads. Additional crews were called in and guided by McLeod Co-op employees, known as "bird dogs," to navigate outage areas effectively.

Dispatch also focused on relaying calls from members with any medical needs, responding to overflow calls, and keeping internal staff updated. As restoration efforts progressed, crews were reassigned to consolidate resources, and dispatch verified remaining outages by cross-checking meter data and contacting members. After power was restored, follow-up tickets were created for further fixes, outage reviews, and map corrections. Importantly, dispatch consistently monitored crew movements and well-being, aided by GPS tracking, ensuring efficient and safe restoration efforts throughout the storm.





The relatively mild temperatures also played a role in how we were able to respond. “Although it was damp, we didn’t face the challenges of extreme cold that often come with winter storms,” he noted.

### Looking Back and Moving Forward

By the end of the event, McLeod Co-op crews, along with support from the City of Chaska, Steele-Waseca Cooperative, Minnesota Valley Electric, and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, restored power to all affected members. Over 2,868 meters experienced outages during the storm, but the cooperative’s swift coordination and mutual aid worked efficiently to restore power.

“I want to thank our members for their patience during this challenging event,” Brady said. “We also owe a great deal of gratitude to the crews who came to assist us. Their support was invaluable.”

The Halloween storm served as a reminder of the challenges posed by extreme weather and the importance of preparation, cooperation, and clear communication in managing large-scale outages.



## UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

At McLeod Co-op Power, data drives our operations, and we need your help to ensure its accuracy. By providing your most current and complete contact information, we can continue delivering the reliable, high-quality service you expect. Accurate information helps us improve customer service, enhance communication, and efficiently report and repair outages. It also allows us to keep you informed about essential programs, events, and activities.

Up-to-date contact details can significantly speed up power restoration during an outage. The phone number you provide links your service address to our outage management system. When you call to report an outage, our system identifies your phone number, matches it to your account, and predicts the outage’s location and cause. This information streamlines the process, helping our crews address issues more efficiently.

While we strive to maintain uninterrupted service, planned outages occasionally occur for equipment updates, repairs, or replacements. With your updated contact preferences, we can notify you in advance. Additionally, accurate information allows us to reach you if questions arise about your energy use or billing.

Your contact information is kept private and used solely by McLeod Co-op for essential communications. Please update your details by calling us at (800) 494-6272 or logging into your SmartHub account. Thank you for helping us serve you better!

## POWER WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

**Protect your home and family from the expense and inconvenience caused by power outages.**

McLeod Co-op Power offers a “turn-key” sale and installation of fully automatic standby generator systems.

- Residential
- Farm
- Business
- 12-200 KW
- Turn-Key Installation
- Annual Maintenance

An automatic generator can operate your sump pump, furnace fan, lights, refrigerator, and more. McLeod Co-op Power sells and installs automatic generator systems by Briggs and Stratton. We also offer an annual maintenance program for generators.

**Call (800) 494-6272 for more info!**



# NOTICE OF FEE CHANGES

An updated Schedule of Charges was approved by the McLeod Co-op Power Board of Directors at its November meeting. The increased fees will be effective February 1, 2025.

## Disconnection Fee:

\$100.00

\*McLeod Co-op does not charge for member requested temporary disconnections scheduled during business hours.

## Reconnection Fee:

Mon. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

\$100.00

Mon. - Thur. 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

\$200.00

\*No reconnects Saturdays, Sundays, or Holidays.

\*In addition to the base reconnection fee, disconnects beyond 30 days will be assessed the equivalent to the monthly System Delivery Charge for the applicable rate sheet. This portion of the reconnection fee is limited to the initial 12 months that the account is disconnected and only applies to the account holder that requested the disconnection.

## Account Statement Retrieval Fee:

(past 6 months no charge)

\$2.00 per statement

## Lineman Service Calls:

(includes minimum charge of 2 hours)

Business Hours 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

\$390

After Hours & Saturdays \$585

Sundays and Holidays \$780

## Electrician Service Calls:

(1st Hour/Add'l Hours)

Mon. - Sat. 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

\$145/\$105

After Hours & Saturdays \$215/\$160

Sundays and Holidays \$285/\$210

## Labor Line Work:

Regular Time Rate per Man-Hour \$120

Overtime Rate per Man-Hour \$180

Double-Time Rate per Man-Hour \$230

Electrician Time per Man-Hour \$105

## Vehicle Charges:

Plow \$120

# POWERING POSITIVE CHANGE: 2B CONTINUED WINS 2024 TOUCHSTONE ENERGY AWARD



McLeod Co-op Power is proud to announce 2B Continued as the recipient of the 2024 Touchstone Energy Community Award. This award honors a local non-profit or community group that has made a meaningful impact within our service area over the past year.

2B Continued has been recognized for its commitment to suicide prevention and mental health awareness, offering essential resources for both prevention and recovery. The organization actively works to foster wellness and reduce the stigma around mental health challenges through advocacy, education, and outreach.

Over the past year, 2B Continued has trained educators, school staff, and community members through its Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) programs. The organization's reach extended to students from 16 area high schools. In addition, they successfully hosted their second annual Training Day and their third annual Suicide Prevention Continuing Education Conference. Altogether, their programs and training sessions impacted an impressive 22,415 people in the past year.

As the recipient of this year's award, 2B Continued will receive a \$500 donation from McLeod Co-op. They will also compete for the statewide Touchstone Energy Community Award, with the statewide winner receiving an additional \$2,000. The Minnesota Rural Electric Association will recognize the statewide winner at their annual meeting in 2025.

This year, McLeod Co-op received five nominations for the Touchstone Energy Community Award. We commend these groups and everyone working tirelessly to enhance their communities.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are part of a national alliance of over 750 electric cooperatives across 46 states, upholding the values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and community commitment.



# STAYING SAFE: DOWNED & DANGEROUS

**Accidents happen.** Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

**IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS NO FIRE:** Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted. Call 911 for help immediately.

**IF A POWERLINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS A FIRE:** Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire. To exit safely jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and the vehicle at the same time. Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 feet away from the vehicle to reduce the risk of electrical shock.

**Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous.**



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products. This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

### OFFICE PHONE

(320) 864-3148  
(800) 494-6272

### 24-HOUR OUTAGE PHONE

(800) 927-5685

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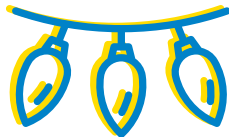
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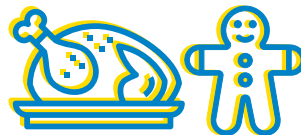
## BRIGHT IDEAS: ENERGY-SAVING TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season brings warmth, joy, and festive traditions—but it can also bring higher energy bills. By making a few simple adjustments, you can keep your home cozy and bright without breaking the bank. From smarter lighting choices to efficient cooking practices, these energy-saving tips will help you enjoy the season while conserving energy and protecting your wallet.



### SWITCH TO LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Replace old incandescent string lights with energy-efficient LED lights. They use up to 80% less energy, last longer, and stay cooler, reducing fire hazards. Use timers to ensure lights turn off when you're sleeping or away, saving energy and adding convenience.



### BAKE SMART

Plan your holiday baking to make the most of your oven's heat. Bake multiple items at once or consecutively to avoid reheating the oven. Use smaller appliances like slow cookers and air fryers for smaller dishes—they consume less energy than a full-sized oven.



### MANAGE YOUR THERMOSTAT

Lower your thermostat during gatherings; body heat and cooking will keep your home warm. When traveling, set it lower to save energy, but not low enough to risk frozen pipes. A smart thermostat helps maintain efficient temperatures.



wishing you a  
**WONDERFUL  
HOLIDAY SEASON  
AND A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

from all of us at  
**MCLEOD CO-OP POWER**