News for Wright-Hennepin members

August 2016

Wright-Hennepin completes two landmark solar projects

It’s been an eventful summer for solar energy construction for Wright-Hennepin (WH), as the cooperative brought its first-ever utility-scale solar project online, as well as its third solar community.

The energization of the utility-scale solar project located south of Buffalo is a landmark event for WH and Great River Energy (GRE). GRE is one of WH’s wholesale power providers, and they will own the Dickinson solar array. It consists of 8,360 solar panels that will provide approximately 2.25 megawatts of electricity and is the largest solar project in the state completed by an electric cooperative.

“This project provides another example of how Great River Energy’s power supply continues to evolve and include more renewable resources in response to member demand,” said project manager Andy Bergrud of GRE. “It has also been an opportunity for us to expand our knowledge and experience with utility-scale solar development in collaboration with one of our member cooperatives.”

WH also completed its third community solar array located at its Rockford campus. This array provides members participating in the program with clean renewable energy while WH covers maintenance and upkeep of the system. This community solar garden consists of approximately 500 panels that produce 225,000 kWh per year – enough to power approximately 19 homes.

“Bringing these two arrays online is another example of WH responding to our members’ desire to bring renewables into the mainstream,” said Steve Nisbet, WH’s vice president of external relations and power solutions.

Also in the works is a fourth community solar array in Medina near the cooperative’s Willow Creek substation that WH anticipates to be online this year. This solar community will mirror the specifications and output of the third array.

With the recent solar moratorium passed in Wright County, it’s worth noting that WH’s solar projects are much smaller in scale than those that raised concerns (about one-eighth the size), have minimal or low impact on farm land and are supported locally.

As a local leader in solar production, WH is committed to working with officials, landowners and others to develop solar in a thoughtful, prudent way. As always, WH’s overall objective is to provide safe, reliable, affordable and increasingly clean energy.

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The Dickinson Solar Project (above) south of Buffalo was energized earlier this month. The 8,360 panels that make up this array are expected to add 2.25 megawatts of solar electricity to Wright-Hennepin’s energy mix.

Wright-Hennepin’s third solar community is mounted on the north side of the cooperative’s campus in Rockford, Minn. This project was energized earlier this month, and consists of approximately 500 panels that produce 225,000 kWh to members who subscribe to the program.
During summer storms, our priority is you

Summer is thunderstorm season, and that means power outages. Sometimes those outages are more widespread or prolonged than any of us like. As a member-owned organization, we take our commitment to deliver reliable energy very seriously. That commitment is especially acute when our membership is without power and the co-op’s outage response becomes critical.

As you know, Wright-Hennepin’s (WH) system saw extensive outages the evening of July 5 through July 6. We went from zero outages to 160 and from zero members without power to almost 11,000 in less than an hour. While the vast majority of our members had their electricity restored by the next morning, some of you had to wait a bit longer – and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

Given the importance of storm response, we thought you might appreciate a brief behind-the-scenes look at how WH prepares for, responds to and restores service during outages.

Before outages occur
We’re proud of WH’s grid, which is a very modern, technologically advanced system:
- All of our substations are not only metered but constantly communicate with us in real-time.
- All of our service trucks have Global Positioning Systems (GPS) so we know where they are at all times.
- Crews in the field have real-time access to the most updated electronic outage maps.

We invest in these technologies so we can restore power as quickly and safely as possible, while keeping our entire team and membership informed. That’s no small task: WH serves 50,000 members and 65,000 meters across 681 square miles and 3,871 miles of line.

Preparation begins before the first light goes out. For example, on July 5, we put our operations crews, dispatchers and member communications team on notice that we expected a major weather event. Even on alert, there’s no way to predict the size and scale of damage until it occurs and often we don’t have a complete picture until crews are personally on scene.

Responding to outages
When faced with multiple outages, we try to prioritize the largest outages first – particularly substations. On July 5, the debris from 60-80 mile per hour winds knocked four substations offline. We immediately dispatched all line crews and also brought in contractors for extra help. We fully staffed our dispatch center and member service representatives began taking calls immediately. We updated our situation as close to real-time as possible using our outage map and social and traditional media.

In part, this means posting estimated times of restoration (ETOR). While we strive for best-information-available accuracy, it is not always possible to be 100 percent right, often because a detailed assessment in the field is required first. The assessments themselves are often made under challenging conditions, including rain, sleet, darkness and hazards like broken trees, poles and downed electric lines.

Restoring power
Our first priority when restoring power is always safety – for our crews and for our membership. Beyond this, our objective is to restore power as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Most of the outages on July 5 were caused by fallen trees, branches and wind damage. Given the large amount of debris, individual wood-cutting crews often were required to clear paths just to get our line crews to the site. We also had a large transmission line from Xcel Energy collapse on top of WH lines at our Trail Haven substation, complicating matters further. A couple of other factors influence response:
- While we take pride in our tools and equipment, our trucks may not always carry all the components necessary for a specific job. If a specialty part or extra equipment are required, the crew may need to return to the Rockford headquarters first to obtain it.
- During extended outages, our crews will often work through the night, as they did July 5-6. In turn, this means we need to cycle crews the next day, so their colleagues can get some sleep. We also evaluate

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Maple Grove’s Mina Yuan was one of more than 1,700 students who flocked to the nation’s capital June 11-16 as part of the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Wright-Hennepin sponsors one student each year for the event, which was established to help educate youth about the political process and allow students to visit national monuments and interact with U.S. government officials.

Yuan, a Wayzata senior, and the group visited multiple historical sites and monuments, including: the Jefferson Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Marine Corps War Memorial, World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Holocaust Museum, Smithsonian Museums, Pentagon and the White House. Yuan most enjoyed the Smithsonian Museums, particularly the exhibits on rebuilding a war-torn village in Afghanistan, African and Dutch art, and American history.

“I have dreamt of visiting D.C. for years. I am a total history geek … Therefore, an opportunity to geek out with similar-minded peers for free in the nation’s capital for a week was obviously perfect for me,” Yuan said of the trip. “Walking on the streets, I stumbled upon sights I could never encounter in Minnesota. It opened my mind and inspired me to continue working to improve our world so that American history may be a happier and more successful story in the future.”

The experience also broadened Yuan and students’ knowledge of electric cooperatives.

“Cooperatives offer teens opportunities in terms of volunteering, internships, and community building that are unique and enriching,” Yuan said. “This greatly emphasized to me that cooperatives provide more than electricity – they provide a community.”

When she wasn’t touring D.C. and all it had to offer, Yuan enjoyed spending time with other high school students, and said hearing from other rural American teenagers was a truly wonderful experience.

High school juniors interested in applying for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour can fill out an application and learn more at http://goo.gl/S1gttM.

Winds gusted up to 70 miles per hour on the evening of July 5. The damage from those winds caused widespread outages across the service territory, leaving 11,000 Wright-Hennepin (WH) members without power. Here’s a glimpse at some of the damage.

The sheer strength of the storm is conveyed here, as an irrigation system near Monticello was thrown and tangled into WH’s lines.

The photos above were taken near our Trail Haven substation. Xcel Energy’s lines fell on WH’s, leaving many in the area without power.

WH crews worked round-the-clock to repair damaged poles and lines, and restored power to all members by July 7.

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Wayzata student Mina Yuan was pictured here at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arlington National Cemetery as part of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

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whether to bring in outside crews. Case in point: in the early July storm, we were assisted by Connexus Energy, our sister co-op to the north.

As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts during a widespread outage. I know you join me in thanking our crews, member services, communications and dispatch staffs who work so hard to restore power and to keep in touch with you during outages.

Thank you too for your many kind words of appreciation, whether voiced on Facebook or in dozens of personal exchanges with our field crews. It is your encouragement that reminds us of how special it is to work for a cooperative – and spurs us to get your lights back on as quickly and safely as possible, no matter the challenges or conditions.
If you’re still looking to improve your home, or in the process of building, be sure to check out these energy-saving programs and rebates available to all Wright-Hennepin (WH) members.

WH is offering massive savings on numerous energy-efficient technologies that benefit you and your cooperative! Replacing an outdated system with a more energy-efficient model means savings for you and WH, because it decreases demand, especially during peak hours.

Shown below are available programs and rebates. For some rebates you must participate in the corresponding energy-saving program. Rebates are paid in the form of a bill credit. Additional rebate money is also available through the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). Call (763) 477-3000, email info@whe.org for additional details, or visit WH's rebate page at: http://goo.gl/bRPdDt. Certain restrictions and agreement lengths may apply. Rebates are for new installations only.

WH Energy-Saving Rebates/Program
- **Ground Source Heat Pump:** Up to $750 Energy-saving rate of $0.099/kWh
- **Air Source Heat Pump:** Up to $900 $20 credit per year
- **Quick Cash Water Heating:** Up to $750 $120 credit per year
- **Quick Cash Air Conditioning:** Up to $200 $20 credit per year
- **Electric Thermal Storage:** Energy-saving rate of $0.054/kWh
- **Dual Fuel:** Energy-saving rate of $0.054/kWh
- **Electric Vehicle Charger:** $200
- **Electric Vehicle Storage Charge:** Energy-saving rate of $0.054/kWh 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

CIP Rebates
- **Ground Source Heat Pump:** Up to $1,200
- **Quick Cash Air Source Heat Pump:** 13 SEER - $50; 14.5 SEER - $480; 15 SEER - $580; 16 SEER - $630
- **Ductless Air Source Heat Pump:** $200
- **Quick Cash Water Heating:** Up to $300
- **Quick Cash Air Conditioning:** 15 or 16 SEER - $25
- **Electric Thermal Storage:** $5/kW
- **Dual Fuel:** $5/kW
- **Electric Vehicle Charger** – Up to $500
- **HVAC Electronically Commutated Motor:** $50 per ECM
- **Variable Speed Pool Pumps and Pool Air Source Heat Pumps:** $400 for pool air source heat pump; $200 for variable speed pool pumps

2016 rebates are still available!

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SAVE MONEY WITH CO-OP CONNECTIONS!

From prescriptions to pizza, the Co-op Connections Card helps you save on things you buy every day.

The One Card That Does It All.
Find all the ways to save at www.connections.coop.

All Wright-Hennepin members received a Co-op Connections card in their welcome packet, or were mailed one in 2005.

Need a new card? We'll send you one free of charge. Call (763) 477-3000, or email info@whe.org
Back-to-school safety tips

It's hard to believe that the school year is rapidly approaching. But now is the time for parents to talk with their kids about safety precautions before shipping them off for the first day of school. Here are some tips to help keep your kids safe and secure for the year:

Walking/biking safety:

- Walk on the sidewalk if one is available. When on a street with no sidewalk, walk facing traffic. When biking, stay on the right side of the road with traffic single-file.
- Look left, right, then left again before crossing a street. When on a bike, come to a complete stop before crossing, and walk your bike across the street.
- Do not walk or ride a bike with headphones on.
- Make sure to wear a helmet when riding a bike.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Plan and practice a safe walking/biking route with your child.
- Talk to your child about what to do if approached by a stranger.

Bus safety:

- If it is your child’s first time riding the bus, go to the bus stop with them to teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus.
- Stand six feet away from the curb.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the bus, or getting out of your seat.
- Always cross in front of the bus; you should always be able to see the bus driver, and the bus driver should always be able to see you.
- Keep aisles clear.
- Stay in your seat, and do not put your head, arms or hands out the window.

Other tips:

- Don’t overstuff your child’s backpack; it should weigh no more than 10 to 20 percent of your child’s body weight.
- Use both straps on a backpack to evenly distribute weight.
- Post an emergency phone list in your home where your child can find it.
- Make sure at least one approved smoke alarm is installed and operating on each floor of your home.
- Keep a fully stocked first aid kit and make sure your child knows where it is.
Receive a $5 bill credit!

WH is offering a one-time, $5 bill credit if you sign up for all of the following three items:

- EZ Pay (automatic payments from checking, debit or credit card)
- E billing (bill amount is delivered via email each month)
- Paperless (no paper bill - your bill amount will be delivered via email only)

Call today to sign up! (763) 477-3000 or (800) 943-2667. One $5 bill credit per member.

Stay active and safe with SentryPal

Do you have an active loved one who could benefit from a mobile GPS solution? SentryPal, from WH Security, is a new tool that gives your loved one the independence they desire, and you the peace of mind that they will receive help should they need it.

SentryPal is a mobile alert system powered with cellular and GPS technology, allowing your loved one to go wherever they like with the confidence that help is available at the touch of a button. Coverage is nationwide and it communicates through a two-way, water-resistant pendant, so it’s perfect for the user on the go.

This product is professionally monitored by WH International Response Center (WHIRC) – a national leader in central station security monitoring. The addition of GPS also means that WHIRC can locate your loved one in the event of an emergency.

For more information on this mobile alert system from WH Security, call (763) 477-3664. We have options for every individual, so you and your loved one can rest assured that help is available at the push of a button!
Hotline Update
August News for Wright-Hennepin members

Member Call Center Hours (all year):
7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday - Friday
(763) 477-3000 or (800) 943-2667

Office Hours:
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday
(Labor Day - Memorial Day)
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
(Memorial Day - Labor Day)

To report an outage:
Electric dispatchers are available 24/7
Call: (763) 477-3100 or (888) 399-1845

WH Security monitoring:
Security dispatchers are available 24/7
Call: (763) 477-4275 or (800) 858-7811

Website: www.whe.org
Email: info@whe.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/WrightHennepin
Twitter: @WrightHennepin

Vehicle up for sealed bid auction

Wright-Hennepin (WH) is selling a used vehicle “as is” by sealed bid. The vehicle can be seen during regular business hours at WH’s office in Rockford. For more information about the vehicle, please call Jeff Hofford at (763) 477-3126.

Bids must be received by September 9. Bids can be mailed or faxed to: Wright-Hennepin, Attn: Ken Kvam, PO Box 330, Rockford, MN 55373; fax (763) 477-3054. There is a minimum bid. WH reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The winning bidder will be notified by phone after September 13.

For sale as is:
2011 Honda Civic, 4 cylinder automatic, 97,000 miles.

Periodicals

Mailing information goes here
6800 Electric Drive
Rockford, MN 55373