

HOT LINES



Midwest Electric, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

419.394.4110 | 1.800.962.3830
www.midwestrec.com

July 2020

News about your community and cooperative

IMPORTANT MEMBER INFO

Annual meeting covers 2021 rate adjustment

First rate change in 10 years, details to be worked out this summer

The 83rd Midwest Electric annual meeting was held online due to the pandemic lockdown and featured a discussion about an electric rate adjustment planned for 2021. It will be the cooperative's first rate increase in more than 10 years.

Annual director elections were conducted by mail and online prior to the meeting, and results were announced at the meeting. [To see the winners, visit \[www.midwestrec.com\]\(http://www.midwestrec.com\).](#)

The COVID-19 lockdown has not caused the 2021 rate increase, CEO Matt Berry said, noting that the Board and staff have been considering the rate change for the past year. "In fact, we're seeing if we can reduce the amount of the needed increase because of the lockdown's impact on people's finances and whether we can push it off longer into 2021," he said. "But we've invested \$30 million in electric reliability and maintenance since our last rate change, and we need to continue investments to keep the lights on."

"I understand with the lockdown's impact on our economy, a rate adjustment is a difficult topic to address," he said. "We really have done everything we can to operate as efficiently as possible. The fact we've gone 10 years without a rate change is proof of our efficiency and productivity. But we need to continue power reliability investments."

Berry said Midwest Electric has spent \$30 million on electric reliability over the past 10 years, without raising rates. Some of the investments include:

- Tree trimming along 1,500 miles of power line - TWICE!
- Pole testing each of our 33,000 poles for reliability
- More than 97 miles of rebuilt power line
- A new substation north of Wapakoneta, new bucket and digger trucks
- Transformers, voltage regulators, switches
- Our advanced digital electric meter system
- Our new distribution automation project to reduce the length of power outages by remotely transferring circuits
- Plus ongoing maintenance, repair, and outage restoration

"Our electric system investment is more than \$4,700 per residential member. That's almost \$1,000 more per consumer than the local investor owned utilities," Berry said.

The amount of the rate adjustment and other details are being worked on this



You can view the annual meeting video on our website at Midwestrec.com, Facebook.com/MidwestElectric, or Youtube.com/MidwestElectric.

summer, with a projected date of early 2021 for the new rates. The co-op's last rate adjustment was Aug. 2010.

Speaking of power reliability investments, work on the Distribution Automation project has started in the Rockford / Jonestown / Spencerville area, and it has already paid dividends, Berry said. "During an early May power outage when DP&L (the transmission provider) lost power to our local station, we used Distribution Automation to remotely transfer load to another station. As a result, the outage only lasted 15 minutes, while DP&L customers were out for hours."

Board President Larry Vandemark expressed gratitude for the cooperative's employees and said 2019 was a record year for Midwest Electric:

- The highest customer satisfaction score in the co-op's history
- The co-op's most patronage cash back paid out to members in any year: \$2.1 million
- Record kilowatt-hour sales

Vandemark ended his remarks by thanking fellow Director Gary Profit, of Ohio City, whose term expired this June and is no longer serving. "Gary has been a dedicated board member for the past six years," Vandemark said. "Prior to that, he served on our charitable board, the Community Connection Fund. He obviously has a passion for your cooperative and a desire to make this cooperative the best it can be for you, the members."

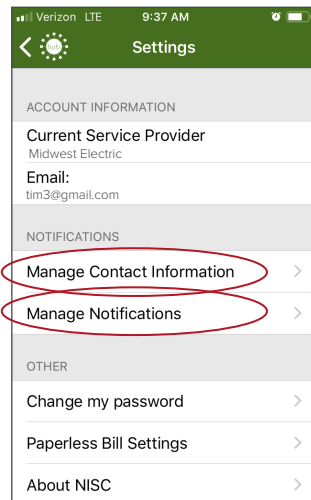


Gary Profit
BOARD DIRECTOR

WANT OUTAGE UPDATES VIA TEXT? SIGN UP NOW TO STAY INFORMED!

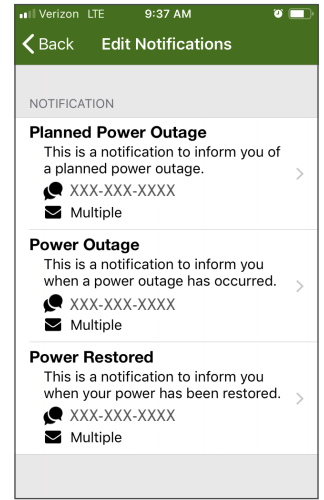


How to set up outage notifications via SmartHub mobile app



Step 1: Tap "Manage Contact Information." Tap "Add e-mail contact." Add email address and click continue. Accept terms and conditions. Enter verification code and tap "save contact." Your email will appear with "e-mail enrolled" directly below it. Tap the back button and add phone numbers in the same manner.

Step 2: Tap "Manage Notifications." Tap "Service" to turn on notifications. Tap the toggle to turn on notifications for email or text messages, under each notification type. Tap the back button. Now your phone number and/or email address should show up below the notification type as shown at right.



Want more? Visit midwestrec.com/outage-notifications or call our office at 800-962-3830 for desktop instructions. Don't forget to sign up for text notifications so you'll be alerted wherever you are!



Did you know that during peak times of 2-6 p.m. on extremely hot days, electricity costs more?

If you can lower your family's electric use during these peak times or delay use of electricity until after the peak times, you can help keep our electric rates stable and save money. We have not changed our distribution rates since August 2010, partly because of our peak load management.

Make sure to turn off things that are not in use or not necessary. Whether you can put off laundry, avoid running the dishwasher, wait to shower, or turn up the thermostat just a few degrees, it all helps immensely. [Watch our Facebook page on extremely hot days to see if a peak alert is issued.](#)

BEAT THE PEAK

Consider medical needs when prepping for outages



If you have special medical needs (such as oxygen, dialysis, etc.), you need a backup plan in case of a power outage. Consider getting a backup generator, make plans for a friend or relative to help care for you, and ensure your county EMA office knows your needs.

We can't restore power for certain members sooner than for others. We follow a restoration plan that gives priority to the greatest number of members first, then works down to individual outages. If your outage is an individual one, we can only repair it after we've fixed main lines.

For more outage tips, visit midwestrec.com.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019

