



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

# WHAT'S A FACILITY CHARGE?

## A fair and equitable way to recover costs

Each month, you see a \$37 facility charge on your electric bill. Members with dual fuel will see an additional facility charge of \$4.25 for their dual fuel meter. These are monthly charges that all Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) members pay to help cover the basic cost of bringing electricity to their location. It covers expenses the cooperative incurs regardless of how much electricity is sold. The facility charge covers such things as:

- Trucks, wire, transformers, meters, and power poles needed to build and maintain the electric distribution system
- Labor to build and maintain the lines
- Operating costs

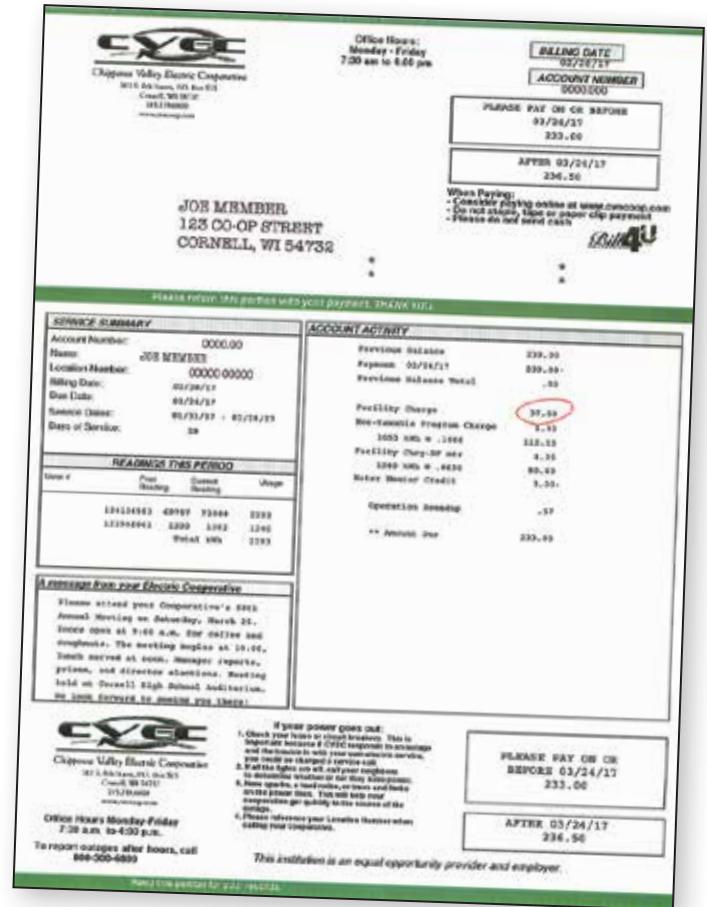
### Comparison to Other Utilities

Members sometimes ask why CVEC's facility charge is higher than other places. It's because of our low consumer/member density. CVEC serves an average of six members per mile of line. Compare this to a city where the average density is easily more than 30 customers per mile of line. It is always more economical to serve areas of higher density.

### All Members are Created Equal

All cooperative members benefit from having reliable electric service available when they need it, and the facility charge ensures that everyone pays their fair share of the basic costs. Like most utilities, CVEC has one facility charge that is collected from residential and seasonal consumers. Some of our members use a lot of electricity all year long, and some may use electricity only one or two months per year. Whether you use a little or a lot, the cost of getting

electric power to your home remains the same. That is why your electric bill has two separate charges: the facility charge to cover basic costs and the per kWh charge for the actual amount of electricity consumed.



MY CO-OP



## ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

### Charles Van Sickle Scholarship

The Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) is taking applications for the second Charles Van Sickle Scholarship, to be awarded prior to the Fall 2017 semester. Eligibility is limited to pre-law or law students who are Wisconsin residents and have an interest in cooperative law. To be considered, applications must be received at the FYF office no later than June 1, 2017.

The \$2,000 scholarship is made possible by an endowment established in 2013 to honor Wisconsin's renowned electric cooperative lobbyist and attorney, the late Charles Van Sickle. Details and application materials can be obtained by contacting Ethan Giebel at 608.258.4405 or by email at ethan.giebel@cooperativenetwork.coop.



# RECOGNIZE, RESPECT, REPORT

## Brothers learn dangerous lesson about transformer safety

On an early spring day 20 years ago, Aaron and Brett Studer anxiously awaited the opportunity to play outside.

“We had just moved into a new house and everything was kind of new,” explains older brother Brett. “We were still getting the feel for everything, and it felt like every nook and cranny of the property needed to be explored. So we were trying to get into whatever we could.”

The brothers, only 5 and 8 years old, were innocently unaware of what they would get themselves into this particular day.

It was the day before Easter, and while their parents entertained visiting family inside the home, the boys ran outside to play with wooden swords. Aaron remembers, “We had these wooden swords and we would always pretend to be medieval and do sword fights.”



**“I saw sparks coming out of the green boxes and both of my boys running toward me and screaming.”**

**—Meg Studer**

As the boys staged a play fight with their wooden swords, they made their way toward the back corner of their new home’s yard. However, they didn’t know anything about the green metal boxes around which they would soon be playing. Brett found one of these metal boxes unlocked and pulled the top off. Aaron spied a big stick nearby

that he thought would make a great backup sword. After picking it up, he stuck this wet stick inside the open box.

Immediately, there was a flash and a loud explosion. Meg Studer, the boys’ mother, recalls, “The lights flashed in the home and the TV went on and off.” The power went out for multiple houses on the block.

“I saw sparks coming out of the green boxes,” continues Meg, “and both of my boys running toward me and screaming. Right away we saw that Aaron’s face was black, and I thought that it was soot.”

While Meg attended to her son’s injuries and waited for paramedics to arrive, her husband ran outside to deal with

a small fire that had started around the boxes. “My husband went rushing out there to see what was going on and decided he would try to put the fire out with a metal shovel. He didn’t realize it was an electric fire, and once he hit the fire with a metal shovel, it flew out of his hands,” says Meg.

Aaron was rushed to the hospital. There, it was determined that he had not received an electrical shock. However, he did suffer second- and third-degree burns on his face.

Meg remembers her son in the hospital after the accident, “His entire face was completely bandaged, not recognizable at all.”

“I couldn’t really cry at all either, because my face was just smoldering,” recalls Aaron. Fortunately, he did not have any permanent scarring. Brett luckily escaped with no injuries.

Both boys learned important lessons about electrical safety that day. Brett remembers seeing the live wire after removing the top cover on of the box. “It was fortunate that I didn’t touch it,” he explains. “To a kid, you don’t even know what a power box is or what it holds.”

The Studer family is now partnering with Safe Electricity’s “Teach Learn Care TLC” campaign to share their experience in hopes of helping others stay safe. “I had no idea. It wasn’t even anything that I really ever thought about,” reflects Meg.

Electricity gets to your home in one of two ways: overhead or underground. If the distribution lines are underground, service pedestals and equipment may be housed in these outdoor boxes or cabinets.

Safe Electricity urges you to:

- Recognize that these boxes contain electrical equipment.
- Respect the equipment and the boxes—do not open, tamper with, or obstruct access to them.
- If there is any damage, such as a hole or broken lock, immediately report it to your utility. ►



Familiarize yourself and family members with any electrical boxes on your property. Meg advises other parents, “Look at the electrical boxes in your back yard, and check to make sure that they’re secure and locked.”

Pad-mount transformers often require larger enclosures. The transformer reduces the voltage of incoming electricity to a lower voltage for household use. While some homeowners consider pad-mount transformers an eyesore, it is important to not obstruct access to them.

Do not bury, install fences around, or plant immediately around electrical boxes in an effort to disguise them. These barriers may make the cabinet difficult to find and block access, should routine maintenance need to be done or an emergency occur. While specific regulations vary by location, it is a good idea to maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet to the front of the transformer and 2 to 5 feet to the rear and each side. Check local municipal or county codes as well as utility codes regarding how to landscape around this equipment.



The Studers are very lucky that their situation was not worse. “That could have been the end of my story right there that day,” says Brett.

From his close encounter with electricity, Aaron advises, “You know, you’ve got an electrical box in the back and nobody really thinks to go check to see if it’s got a padlock on it, and that’s definitely something that I recommend doing. I know I sure will when I have my own home.”

Learn more about safety around electricity and see the Studers’ story at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



Our office will be closed on Good Friday, April 14, 2017.

Happy Easter!

## 2017 REBATE PROGRAM

Once again, we are offering rebates and incentives to help you improve energy efficiency and comfort in your home, while lowering your electric bills.

Rebate forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than three months after purchase date. Rebates are in place through December 31, 2017, or until funds, by incentive or in total, are depleted.

Some rebates include:

- Agricultural, Commercial & Industrial
- Appliance and Appliance Recycling
- Home Energy Audit Recommended Improvements
- HVAC and Geothermal Systems
- Lighting
- Water Heaters

For additional information, forms, or a complete list of rebates offered, please visit [cvecoop.com](http://cvecoop.com) or call our office at 715.239.6800.

MY CO-OP



# We have expanded our Med-A-Lert offerings to better meet the needs of our clients!

Today we are introducing three new offerings to our Med-A-Lert service.



## Med-A-Lert *in case of emergency*

We still have our **Basic** package, with Linear equipment, tried and true, and only **\$25/month**.



We have added an option with **Fall Detection**. We still use the Linear system, but have added a pendant that has a Fall Detection feature. The Linear system with Fall Detection is only **\$27/month**. This pendant is water resistant (not waterproof as with the Basic package), and has a replaceable battery.



Two-way voice is now an option with our **Enhanced** system. This system has all the features of our Basic package, but in addition allows you to communicate with the Response Center directly via the pendant. This is a great option for those who are frequently outside of the home, gardening, doing yardwork, or even going to the mailbox. A spare rechargeable battery for the pendant is kept charged in the base unit. The Enhanced system is only **\$30/month**.



*All of the above systems have the basic requirements: Working landline phone jack & power receptacle*

Complete mobility is available for the active individual with the **mobile mySHIELD** option. The mySHIELD is a cellular device, about 2 inches square. Pressing the alert button on the unit immediately puts you in direct contact with the Response Center. Your location is sent along with the call. Alerts can be sent as a text message to a number you choose to notify of an event, low battery, or power on/off. The cellular service provider is Verizon. The mySHIELD is an option wherever there is reliable Verizon cellular coverage. The mobile system is **\$35/month**.



Installation is available with all of our systems for a one-time fee of \$38.50. During the installation we will review all of the features of the system, place a test call, and verify the list of responders.

**CALL TODAY – 715.239.6800 or 800.300.6800**

### Dean Ortmann, President/CEO

317 S. 8th St., P.O. Box 575, Cornell, WI 54732  
715.239.6800 • 1.800.300.6800  
www.cvecoop.com

**Nicole Whipp Sime, Editor**



**Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative**

*CVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*