

NEWSLETTER

Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

January 2017

Todd Howard Retires

"There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction."—Winston Churchill

For 37 years, James Tiberius (Latin for Todd) Howard has been an integral part of the cycle of change at Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative. He's seen the co-op through many changes, from cross country lines, some with poles dug and placed by hand, to today's directional boring under solid granite river beds; from the mapping system, member payments, capital credits, and service information kept on large paper ledgers by hand to a nearly paperless information system run by high-end computers; and even from meters that when Todd started were read by the members once a month to today's meters that send readings daily and provide a multitude of services and information that greatly improved service to members.

Todd started his co-op service as a cashier, taking member payments and questions. He then worked his way through every office position: member services, billing clerk, accountant, office manager—all the way to president/CEO. His motto was to leave each position in better shape than he had found it. Todd worked diligently with co-workers and led the charge to bring the co-op to its very best through streamlining work flow and implementing the latest technologies. Throughout his career, Todd was always working hard on the "next project," yet for a small fee (a can of Coke or handful of Cheetos) he would break away and help whoever needed it.

While you may have found him working in the wee hours of the morning or late at night in the office, Todd was never content to be inside. His real passion was the electrical system that delivered electricity to the members. Often he would sneak out to help stake line, upgrade map locations, or plan line moves that would make them easily

serviced and maintained. In the early days of his career, outages were common and some members complained that they lost power whenever the wind blew.

Todd spent his share of time with the crews restoring power after a storm. In 1991 the co-op experienced a major storm that left thousands of members without power, some of them for up to 14 days. It was this storm and others like it that helped form his determination to upgrade the infrastructure at a much faster pace.

Over the years, Todd spearheaded the effort to improve system reliability. Through well thought out work plans that increased capital investment, adding new tie lines, moving hard to maintain lines out of right-of-way areas, switching heavily wooded overhead lines to underground, and an aggressive brushing and clearing program, the co-op's system steadily became better. Today Chippewa Valley's lines are second to none, and the members enjoy some of the lowest outage times in the state. If the goal was to leave the co-op and its members in better shape than when he started, well then, mission accomplished.

With thankfulness and much appreciation, the board and staff of Chippewa Valley Electric wish Todd and Sue the best in the years to come. Congratulations!

"Change is inevitable—except from a vending machine."—Robert C. Gallagher



A Reminder to Replace Your Thermostat Batteries

When was the last time you changed your programmable thermostat's batteries? If it's been a while or if you can't remember, chances are it's time to have them changed. You don't want to be without heat on cold, winter days. Thermostats with dead batteries will not allow your heating unit to operate. You should replace batteries in a thermostat which operates on battery power whenever you see the "low battery" icon appear on its screen. Otherwise it could stop functioning when you need it most.

Thermostats that do require battery power such as the one shown below are usually rectangular and digital. You can see that there would be room for usually two AA batteries within. It is a simple matter to check for batteries by prying the cover off from the base. Many digital thermostats will have a reading that shows what the life of the battery is on the screen. If you don't know how to access this information read the paperwork provided with the thermostat. If you do not have this paperwork, go to the manufacturer's website and they will have it there for the model of your thermostat.



If you don't have a thermostat which resembles the one pictured above, you may be wondering if your thermostat even has batteries. Read below for additional information that you may find helpful:

Round Honeywell Thermostats

Round Honeywell thermostats (Model T87, shown at right) do not require



batteries whether they are the older gold models or the newer white models. The old models worked by turning the dial which causes mercury in a tube to make a connection between the two wires and activate the burner. Simple system with no extra frills that require no additional electricity.

Digital Honeywell Thermostats

The newer Honeywell thermostats are now digital and require additional electricity but they get it from the control on the burner and not from batteries. (It is not possible to use this type of thermostat with all oil burner controls because some of them do not have a transformer for sending voltage back to the thermostat.)



Save the Cost of a Service Call!

We recommend that you pass along this information to friends and family and save them from having to pay for a service call. Sometimes if you have no heat the solution can be as simple as replacing the batteries in your thermostat. So please help your family, friends, and neighbors stay warm by reminding them of the simple act of checking and/or changing the batteries in their thermostats.

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