

ECE Co-op Advantage

Big changes at Great River Energy Coal Creek Station closing

Our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), has announced plans to transform its portfolio of power supply resources in the coming years, reducing wholesale power costs. GRE plans to phase out remaining coal resources, add significant renewable energy, and explore critical grid-scale battery technology. This includes retiring Coal Creek Station in the second half of 2022.

Along with the installation of a 1-MW long-duration battery demonstration system, GRE intends to add 1,100 MW of wind energy purchases by the end of 2023. GRE's power supply resources will be more than 95% carbon dioxide-free, virtually eliminating carbon risk, thanks in part to the modification of the 99-MW

Spiritwood Station power plant, which will be fueled by natural gas.

GRE is also supporting the repowering of the Blue Flint biorefinery with natural gas. Their renewable capacity is projected to grow from approximately 660 MW in 2020 to more than 1,760 MW by the end of 2023.

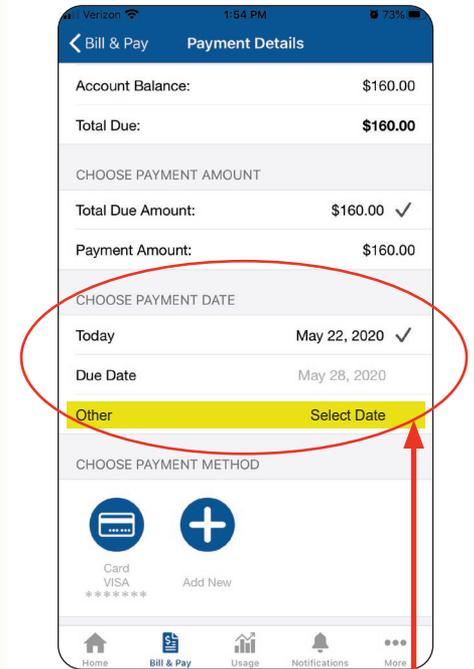
Many ECE members have visited Coal Creek Station and met the people who operate and maintain the plant. To assist the local community during the upcoming transition, GRE plans to make voluntary annual payments of the local government share of Coal Creek Station's taxes for five years after the plant's closure. Visit our website for more information.



Unbeknownst at the time, 2019 was our last tour to Coal Creek Station.



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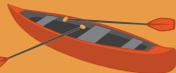
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LOVE THE OUTDOORS? BE SAFE OUT THERE

 **$\frac{2}{3}$** of lightning fatalities are associated with outdoor **recreational activities**.

 Pay attention to weather forecasts **before you go canoeing or boating**. Get off the open water as soon as you **hear thunder**.

 **Do not use generators in enclosed areas.** The same goes for grills, camping stoves or other small appliances that produce carbon monoxide.

 **Look up** for power lines while fishing or sailing.
FACT: Fishing is the most common outdoor activity associated with lightning-related deaths.

 **Going for a hike?** If you hear thunder or see lightning, **do not seek shelter under a tree.**

 **Tent camping?** Plan ahead, seek shelter in a hard-top vehicle or four-sided building during a storm or at the first sight of lightning.

 Safe Electricity.org

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When the skies get dark, System Control shines

As an electric utility, we respond every day to events that can lead to power outages. Summer storms bring potential for damaging winds and dangerous lightning, which can have a significant impact on the electric distribution system. Before our linemen respond to an outage, the system control department is already hard at work. Our six Distribution System Operators (DSOs) work around the clock to deal with power-related issues. Day and night, they use their training, skills, and technology to dispatch crews while working to restore and maintain power to our system.

Preparing for storm season starts with an educated team. Our DSOs are required to have technical knowledge of the distribution system and understand its capabilities and limitations. Watching weather forecasts and system indicators usually gives them a pretty good idea when things are about to get busy. Technology and department processes are designed to collect outage-related details and transfer that information quickly and efficiently between those in the office and those in the field.



Kelly, one of our DSOs, has been with ECE for 10 years.

When a major outage occurs, we work hard to minimize interruptions to our members. At the core of the restoration process is communication. System Control communicates with meters and substations in real time, giving us an idea of how widespread the interruptions are and the number of resources that might be needed to get the lights back on. Details are then communicated to field employees by radio and assigned on their handheld devices. Every step of the restoration process is communicated in an effort to keep the public and employees safe.

Please keep your contact information current, since our DSOs can send important messages about outages. And if you haven't downloaded the SmartHub app, you're missing out on a lot of information right at your fingertips— including a live outage map.

If you have a power concern, we want to know about it

Low levels of A/C (alternating current) voltage on the grounded conductors of an electrical wiring system are a normal and unavoidable consequence of operating electrical equipment. This voltage, sometimes called stray voltage, is referred to as neutral-to-earth voltage (NEV) when it can be measured between two objects which may be simultaneously contacted by livestock.

If you suspect NEV or other electricity related issues, such as low voltage, electromagnetic

fields, or power quality concerns, contact us. We have qualified employees who can answer your questions and investigate any suspected problems.

Please note: if a person feels an uncomfortable tingling sensation, the condition is probably not NEV but a serious problem with your wiring system or faulty equipment. This situation requires immediate attention and an electrician should be contacted to investigate and correct the problem.

Your bill is getting a makeover

Beginning in August your bill will have a fresh new look! Simple enough to read at a glance, with the details you need to understand what you're paying for.



1.800.254.7944 3



Q&A with Mark Broman Warehouse Assistant



We have warehouses and pole yards at all our locations; three employees keep them stocked, cleaned, and organized. As he approaches retirement, we asked Mark Broman, our Warehouse Assistant, to shed some light on life in the warehouse area.

What are some things you do in the warehouse?

Our group stocks and delivers a wide range of materials across five different locations. We test older transformers for PCBs (an older oil additive) and aid in the recycling and disposal of these units. We make sure our linemen have what they need to safely do their job. We also do pole yard maintenance as well as the recycling and disposal of used line materials. Each November, we inventory the warehouses to ensure member dollars are being used wisely.

How do you stay safe each day?

It's important for us to stay aware of our surroundings, from wearing a seat belt, to carefully strapping loads down, to clearly marking hazardous areas. We also have monthly meetings that cover a wide variety of safety-related topics. We do daily inspections of our trucks, forklifts, and warehouse equipment. Each month, we inspect fire equipment and first aid kits. We also take the time to stay aware of road and weather conditions.

What do you find most challenging about your job?

Like many jobs, the warehouse to-do list never ends. Just like at home, we often need to readjust our daily expectations and reprioritize as we go along. There is always more we would like to get done in the day, but the variety of tasks helps me stay motivated and look forward to coming into work.

What do you think will change about your job over the next five years?

Our industry is constantly changing. Materials, products, and practices are evolving. For example, we used to see a lot of glass and ceramic insulators, which have been replaced with lighter-weight plastics. Transformer oil tanks are getting bigger for the same kW needs, with the aim of making them more durable and efficient. Our team works hard to stay informed on what's next, and as I retire, I know our members can continue to rely on ECE's high standards, both in and out of the warehouse.

Fun fact:

Mark worked in collections and was also a meter technician before moving to the warehouse. You can still find him wearing his signature engineer hat every day to work. After 23 years of service, his last day is August 3. We wish Mark the best in his retirement!



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East Central Energy
P.O. Box 39
Braham, MN 55006

Service Center locations:
Braham, Milaca, and Finlayson
Monday-Friday
Hours vary by service center.

1.800.254.7944

General business calls are answered from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Email: info@ecemn.com

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call Executive Administrator Julie Johnson at 763-689-8046 to confirm meeting information. Monthly board meeting highlights and board operating policies can be found on SmartHub.

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, your not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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eastcentralenergy.com



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