

Mike's New Adventure



Russell Gall

Charles Mix Electric

The installation of the automated meter reading system is progressing nicely as the Hasz Powerline team steadily installs the new meters

(see last months issue). With over 600 meters installed at the time of this

writing, many members are expressing joy at being relieved of the monthly billing chore.

As the installation of meters progresses, it is becoming obvious that the training of the Charles Mix Electric personnel is very important. Tracking and searching for the new meters, updating the billing files, and watching out for a very few meters that turn up bad, keeps the employees hopping.

From the start, it was known that someone would have to spearhead the future maintenance of the Automatic Meter Reading system (AMR). Mike Dangel, journeyman lineman for CME, has stepped up to provide that technical expertise. Mike, along with a few other CME employees, has traveled to St. Louis twice to learn the details of the TWACS system.

Mike's initial training was a week-long session on the computer aspect of the TWACS system. This was to familiarize him with how the system operated, how to set up the communications between the substation and the server, and how to make the computers recognize meters as they are installed.

During his second trip to St. Louis, Mike was treated to detailed schooling on the installation, maintenance and troubleshooting of the substation control equipment (SCE). Since the SCE is the backbone of the AMR system, it was important that Mike took the hands-

on training to get a good sense of how everything worked. Since then, Mike has been keeping a watchful eye on the many different functions of all the AMR equipment.

Although a few glitches have been encountered thus far, Mike has been impressed with the system. "All of the installed meters have consistently reported in," says Dangel. "It's a good sign of things to come."

Mike checks the AMR servers daily, watching for failed meter searches, low voltage events, or even meters that may be turning backwards. As Mike learns more about the capabilities of the AMR system, features will be added to provide more information about the distribution system. This will allow the employees of your Touchstone Energy Cooperative to provide better service to the members.

Greg Farke, who researched the several available Automated Meter Reading systems, chose Aclara's Two-Way Automatic Communication System (TWACS), primarily because of its reliability in returning readings and data. Thus far, his choice has not disappointed. "A consistently high percentage of meters returning



Mike Dangel's computer skills get a workout these days! Here, he sits before three computers which are used to manage the automated meter reading and billing systems for Charles Mix Electric.

reliable data is what made this system desirable," said Farke. "We look forward to the day in the very near future when the entire system is monitored."

Keep an eye out for the Hasz team as they traverse the county on their meter-changing quest.

"What's This New Fee?"

A few members who are now receiving their monthly electric bills have called to ask an interesting question: "Why is there a new \$25 charge on my bill?" We are glad to report that this is not a new charge. The service charge has always been included in the rate, and is on the rate chart that is sent out to members for calculating their bill. This can be seen by looking at the charge for 0 kWhs, which is shown as \$26 (includes 4% sales tax).

Since we feel it is important that members see each segment of the rates that make up their electric bill, the charges are now itemized for you. Members can see not only the service charge, but also the charges for kWh's, late charges, and kWh use on the heat meter, as well as credits for water heater control or overpayments.



Charles Mix Electric Cooperative Connections

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Co-op News

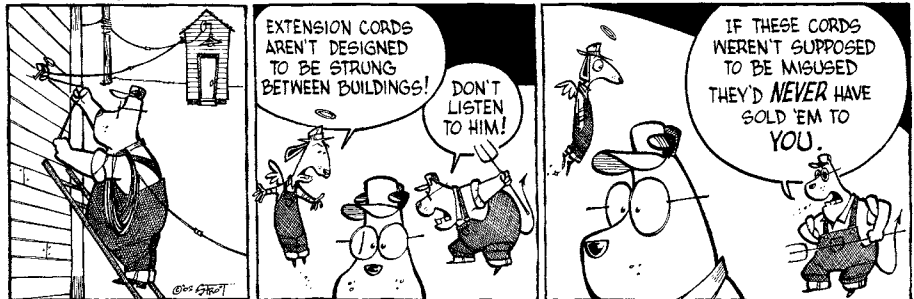


The economy. Saving energy. Climate change. All the things
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT
we're already working out.

At your electric co-op we don't simply send electricity to your home. We look out for you and your entire community. And we do so for a very simple reason—it's our community too. That's why we are always working to keep the lights on and our costs down. Because we pay the same bills you pay. Your hometown is our hometown. And together, we can't go wrong.



Murphy



Office Hours
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Open over noon hour
Closed Saturday, Sunday & Holidays

Read meter 1st of each month. Self-read Bills due by 6th of month. AMR-generated bills due by 15th. \$2 fee for late payments.