

Meter Installation Progressing



Russell Gall
Charles Mix Electric

As each day passes, members of Charles Mix Electric get closer to the day when their meters will be read from the CME office and their bill sent to them. In fact, by the time you read this, close to 200 Charles Mix Electric members will have received their first bill in the mail. Just imagine: no trudging through deep snow to read the meter and digging out billing supplies, only to spend hours poking at the calculator figuring the bill. Okay, maybe it hasn't been *that* bad, but you get the idea.

Hasz Powerline has been on the job since January 20th, installing the new Landis+Gyr Focus meters. Steve Hasz and his wife Rita are hard at it, changing each and every meter on CME's system. The Hasz/Hasz team is refining their meter-changing routine, as they streamline the process. Rita does the paperwork and computer data entry, and Steve concentrates on changing the meters.

However, the purpose of their job is not only to change the meters, but also to verify that other meter components are up to snuff. Loose connections, poor mounting, safety hazards, incorrectly wired equipment, and bad current transformers are all things that are scrutinized with Steve's specialized equipment. Although it may sound like a daunting task, in most cases, a quick inspection and a simple change of the meter will suffice. Rita is also noting the GPS coordinates, pinpointing each meter's location. This data will be available for reference by CME employees, and will become an integral part of the members' information in future billing and engineering software.

Many of you may have already met Steve and Rita Hasz as they have rolled into your yard to do their task. They are friendly people and will be willing to answer any questions you may have regarding the change-out procedure. Although Steve



Steve & Rita Hasz are installing automated meters for CME, and they won't stop until everyone has one!

and Rita will knock on doors before changing the meter, some members may only see tire tracks and a note hanging on the door, indicating that the Hasz team has been and gone.

Once the meter has been changed, members will no longer be required to read their meter. Members who still have their old meter must continue to read their meter and calculate their own bill. As always, questions regarding the AMR system are welcome.

The employees of your Touchstone Energy Cooperative are excited to bring this new technology to your homes and businesses. We ask that our members be patient and tolerant, as will we, during the expected difficulties of this transition. More to come in future issues.

Timely Safety Tip

CLEAR YOUR FURNACE VENT!

If your vent is blocked by snow and ice, your furnace can't operate properly.

ESA
Energy Safety Association of South Dakota

Charles Mix Electric Cooperative Connections

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Regular meetings of the board of directors of this cooperative are held on the third Thursday of each month.

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Co-op News

Youth Tour Sending Two to DC

If you're a high school sophomore or junior living in Charles Mix County, it's possible that you could be chosen to attend the 2009 National Rural Electric Youth Tour, set for June 12-18. CME will sponsor two students, and pick up the tab for their free week-long trip to Washington, DC.

The Youth Tour has been held every year, dating back to the late 1950s. It is sponsored by rural electric co-ops across the nation. Students who participate will gain first-hand experience in learning how our country is governed, will visit many of the historic sites and national symbols of our country, and develop leadership skills while learning about the cooperative way of doing business.

The two winners will have the opportunity to visit historical sites such as the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Wall, Smithsonian Museum, Washington Monument, the White House and Capitol Building, and more.

Featured speakers will provide insight into the important roles that electric co-ops play in their communities. Students will meet with their Congressional delegates in a unique opportunity to "job shadow" during a day in Congress.

Winners will be selected according to scores on a written test

covering the history of rural electric co-ops. Packets containing study materials will be provided. Interested students can pick up a packet from their school counselor and start studying. Tests will be administered in the local schools in mid-March. One winner must be a child of a Charles Mix Electric member; the second winner may be from the community at-large.

Why does Charles Mix Electric support the Youth Tour? Because we believe in the importance of educating youth about the political process, and encourage interaction with your government. Students will walk away from this experience as better leaders, with a sense that they can make a difference. We encourage all area students to pick up a study packet and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.



"Job shadowing in the Capitol Building was an experience I will value forever," said Torey Alberda, shown with Sen. John Thune in 2008.

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

Read meter 1st of each month. Bills due by 6th of month. Add \$2 to any bill paid after the 6th of the month.