

# COMMITMENT TO GRID RELIABILITY FUELS CHANGES TO WINTER LOAD MANAGEMENT



by Craig Buros, CEO & General Manager



**G**rid reliability has been a hot topic since the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (\*MISO) announced potential capacity shortfalls going into this past summer season. Since that time, we have seen a lot of uncertainty in the wholesale power market

and the beginning of what will likely be a period of changes as MISO takes steps to ensure that generation resources are adequately available year-round.

MISO determined that the current process of conducting a planning resource auction based on the estimated peak load on the hottest summer day is no longer adequate. Assuming capacity is available for that hottest day in the summer no longer guarantees that power will be available at other times of the year. Twenty-five of the past 40 maximum generation declarations have occurred outside of the summer months—a sign that reliability issues can occur anytime throughout the year.

MISO attributes the uncertainty and required changes to the rise in intermittent generation resources, transmission constraints, lower reserve margins due to the closure of baseload generation plants, and lack of new generation resources coming on-line. They recently announced they will be moving to a seasonal resource adequacy construct in which wholesale power producers, such as Dairyland Power, will need to ensure that generation resources are adequately available year-round. Adequate capacity and reserve margins will need to be maintained for each of the four seasons: summer, winter, spring, and fall. The value of the capacity for each of the seasons will be determined by the next Planning Resource Auction to be held in April of 2023. Early indication is that the value of capacity during the winter months will likely rise, but the extent is unclear at this point.

So, what does this mean for Vernon Electric and our members? There is still a lot of uncertainty surrounding this topic, but as the new capacity construct rolls out, we can expect to see more of a focus on time-of-use and demand-based rates that better align with the market price of wholesale energy. As we move into 2023 and more information becomes available, Vernon Electric Cooperative will be reviewing our current rate structure. Rates that send price signals which align with wholesale pricing have the potential to allow members to save by using energy at times that wholesale prices are low.

To ensure generation resources are adequately available year-round, MISO recently changed their requirements for power providers, including our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative. This has resulted in modifica-

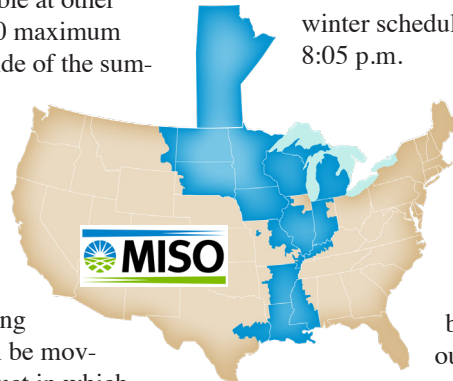
tions to our load management program. The value of load control including water heaters, dual-fuel, and peak-alert accounts will continue to be good for our members, but the times of the control will be shifting to better align with reducing energy use during MISO peak times.

A review of electricity peaks in the MISO system revealed that 60 percent of peaks occurred in the morning. To successfully reduce our electricity needs during the time of highest demands:

- Enrolled interruptible electric heat loads in the Dual Fuel program may be managed in the mornings, beginning at 6:55 a.m., with restoral starting at 10:05 a.m.
- Enrolled dairy water heaters, grain dryers, and manual-start stand-by generators will remain on the traditional winter schedule of 4:55 p.m., with restoral beginning at 8:05 p.m.
- Residential electric water heaters and auto-start generators enrolled in the program can occur at any time at the discretion of MISO with no less than two-hour notification. There will be at least one control each season with a maximum of 16 controls annually. Restoral times will vary based on MISO's needs, but the total continuous control duration will not exceed 4.5 hours.
- Daily Energy Storage programs will not be affected by this control schedule change.

Vernon Electric Cooperative has successfully implemented and managed a load management program for over 40 years, saving members money on their energy bills. Through member participation, we reduce our need for electricity during times of high demand and high electricity prices.

For more information or to enroll in Vernon Electric's load management program, contact Dave Maxwell, director of member services.



\*MISO is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization focused on three critical tasks:

- Managing the generation and transmission of high-voltage electricity across 15 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba
- Managing the energy markets in the MISO region
- Planning the grid of tomorrow

Forty-two million people depend on MISO to generate and transmit the right amount of electricity every minute of every day—reliably, dependably, and cost-effectively. For more information, visit [misoenergy.org](http://misoenergy.org).



# THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE: *A SITE TO BEHOLD*



By Leah Call

The holiday season lifts everyone's spirits. Christmas and the weeks leading up to it are filled with parties, family gatherings, gifts, twinkly lights, and lots of food. Children are busy being good and adults are a little bit kinder, sharing their gifts with those less fortunate. For Christians, the primary reasons for the season are the birth of Christ, a celebration of God's love, and a time of spiritual reflection.

While many churches throughout the Vernon Electric Cooperative service territory host Christmas services and celebrations, one member venue, The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, is worthy of a visit regardless of your religious beliefs—and not just during the holiday season. In fact, the Shrine's busiest months are May through October.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe was founded in 2001 by former La Crosse Diocese Bishop Raymond L. Burke, though discussions of its construction began in 1995 coinciding with the Robert Swing family's donation of 70 acres. Burke was elevated to the rank of cardinal in 2010 and now resides at the Vatican in Rome. The Shrine he founded now sits on 100 acres on Justin Road, off Highway 14 south of La Crosse. It really is a site to behold.



**Truth, Goodness, and Beauty** “In the Catholic faith, we have three transcendentals: truth, goodness, and beauty,” noted Becket Ghioto, director of communications for the Shrine. “When the Shrine was founded, when it was built,

we wanted to give it beauty, goodness, and truth, because those are the qualities of God... Many people come here to see that goodness, to see that beauty.”

The grounds of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe include a Pilgrim Center, Votive Candle Chapel, gift shop, restaurant, and the Shrine Church. The church's stone exterior contrasts with the ornate interior, artistically designed with stained glass windows, mahogany woodwork, and marble and granite features. Stars and constellations on the 98 ft. dome imitate the sky over Mexico City in December 1531 where Catholics believe a miracle occurred.

The Shrine's namesake miracle took place during a time when King Charles of Spain was sending troops to Central America to convert the Aztecs to the Catholic faith. It is believed that the Virgin Mary appeared to a peasant named Juan Diego requesting that a shrine be built and leaving behind her image on his cloak. That image on Diego's cloak is still present today and can be viewed at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

“When the blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, she initiated a different kind of mission to convert people—through what we believe to be a miracle that only came through the will and hand of God,” explained Ghioto.

**Pilgrims Welcome** Anyone coming to the Shrine is deemed a “pilgrim”. The Shrine annually draws thousands of pilgrims: 86,000 in 2021. They come in cars, on buses,





individually, in small groups, and in large groups. Catholics, non-Catholics, even atheists can visit the shrine and make the 1/2-mile pilgrimage to the Shrine Church.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a Vatican-approved official place of pilgrimage, with affiliations with the Basilica in Mexico City and with the Pope’s Basilica in Rome. “So when a pilgrim comes on pilgrimage here, they receive the same graces and blessings—if they bring an intention to Our Lady of Guadalupe asking her to pray for them—as if they had gone on pilgrimage to the Basilica in Mexico or to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome,” explained Ghioto.

To make the Vatican-approved pilgrimage, one doesn’t need to sign up—just show up. Set in the wooded hills of the Driftless region, the 1/2-mile walk/pilgrimage uphill to the Shrine Church begins at the Pilgrim Center. Golf carts are available for those physically unable to walk, but walking the official Vatican-designated pilgrimage route is highly encouraged. Ghioto noted that individuals and groups wanting a guided tour can contact the Shrine’s pilgrimage coordinator, Rubeen Mendoza.

The Culina Mariana Café and the Flores Mariae Gift Shop are located inside the Pilgrim Center—the portal to the Shrine’s grounds. The Café offers soups, salads, sandwiches, and baked goods. Friendly staff and volunteers are always on hand and happy to answer pilgrims’ questions.

**Holy Holiday Happenings** In addition to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, December events at The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe include a Rorate candlelight mass at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 3. On December 10, Cardinal Burke himself will lead a pontifical high mass in Latin at 11 a.m. Then on December 12, the Feast Day begins



at 6 a.m. with traditional Mexican Marian Mariachi music, Spanish morning mass, pastries, and a bilingual afternoon mass.

“In the Catholic church, we have what we call a plenary indulgence,” explained Ghioto. “That simply means a special remission of temporal punishment for sin. If people come on December 12, they do receive a Vatican-approved plenary indulgence. That is very important for Catholics.”

Find more details on these and other events on the Shrine’s website, [www.guadalupe Shrine.org/events](http://www.guadalupe Shrine.org/events).

Whether attending mass, embarking on a pilgrimage, or just strolling through the grounds, anyone can enjoy the beauty and peaceful surroundings at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. And everyone is welcome.

Ghioto’s hope for pilgrims visiting the Shrine is first that their prayer is answered. “But for the most part, what we hope for all pilgrims is what our Lady of Guadalupe hopes for all souls, which is to unite their hearts to the sacred heart of Jesus—in other words, a deeper relationship with God.”

## MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC CELEBRATES MEMBERSHIP

Our Member Appreciation Picnic was held from 4–7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 26 at our office in Westby. Thank you to all members who attended.

The following members each won a \$25 bill credit:

- With the correct wire length guess of 76 feet: Mark Boland and Myrna Ottum
- With the correct pumpkin weight guess of 28 pounds: Sue Onshus and Roger Wangen
- Random attendance winners: Mike Breckel, Steve Larson, Denise Lepke, David Olson, Terrance Rasque, and Agnes Schmitz



Clockwise, starting top: Members enjoy a meal, conversation with VEC representatives, various displays, and activities for youth. VEC employees and board members serve loaded baked potatoes, pulled pork sandwiches, desserts, drinks, and more. Kids of all ages enjoy hand and face paintings.



Happy Holidays!



from Vernon Electric Cooperative

## 12 Days of Holiday Safety

Day 1

**What a shocker!** Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.

Day 2

**What's that noise?** Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.

Day 3

**Kids eat the darndest things!** Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.

Day 4

**Escape route ready.** Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.

Day 5

**Don't overdo it.** Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.

Day 6

**Lights out!** Unplug your tree lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

Day 7

**Ouch!** Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.

Day 8

**Nice and warm.** Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, such as decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.

Day 9

**Can't touch this!** Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.

Day 10

**Caution! Hot!** Keep children away from cooking areas. Use back burners when possible, and turn pot handles inward and away from little hands.

Day 11

**Thirsty?** Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green, well-watered tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

Day 12

**Make a wish!** Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

There's no greater gift you can give your family and friends than a safe and happy holiday season!

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