

# Midwest Energy, Inc. Current Comments

November 2020

Making energy work for YOU

## Midwest Energy Coordinates \$50,000 in Donations to Area Mental Health Agencies

Midwest Energy is coordinating a total of \$50,000 in donations to improve telehealth infrastructure for area mental health providers, enabling them to better meet clients' mental health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Agencies receiving the grants include:

- \$25,000 to High Plains Mental Health Center, Hays (serves 20 Midwest Energy counties), with funds to be used to purchase iPads for providers, protective cases and Ethernet adapters to enable remote video conference appointments.
- \$12,500 to Compass Behavioral Health, Garden City (serves nine Midwest Energy counties), also for iPads, cases and Ethernet adaptors for remote video appointments.
- \$12,500 to Center for Counseling and Consultation Service, Great Bend (serves four Midwest Energy counties), to purchase software allowing electronic prescriptions for clients reducing their need for office and pharmacy visits.



"We were able to make this donation by leveraging matching funds from our industry partners," said Pat Parke, Midwest Energy's CEO. The \$50,000 total is made up of \$15,000 from Midwest Energy's Community Fund, matched by \$10,000 from Denver-based CoBank, one of Midwest's lenders, through its Sharing Success program. The final \$25,000 contribution comes from Xylem, a global water technology company headquartered in Rye Brook, NY, which is the parent company of Sensus, which

makes Midwest's automated meters. Through their corporate social responsibility program, Watermark, Xylem coordinates a Partner Matching Contributions program in which they join together with partners such as Midwest Energy to support communities that have been impacted by COVID-19.

"Meeting the mental health needs of our clients these past six months have been a challenge," said Walter Hill, Executive Director of High Plains Mental Health. "This grant will help our 65 providers to continue providing services, while reducing potential COVID-19 spread in our communities."

Xylem (XYL) is a leading global water technology company committed to solving critical water and infrastructure challenges with technological innovation. With more than 16,000 diverse employees, Xylem delivered revenue of \$5.25 billion in 2019. The company is creating a more sustainable world by helping communities in more than 150 countries become water-secure.

CoBank is a \$152 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving more than 70,000 farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

## Carbon Monoxide: The Silent Killer

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), carbon monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America. Commonly known as the "silent killer," its presence is usually not known until symptoms are experienced. Many confuse the symptoms with the beginning signs of the flu or a cold. However, it typically affects all people within a home or building (and often pets) simultaneously.

Carbon monoxide is the byproduct of incomplete combustion of any burning fuel. Natural gas-fueled kitchen stoves, furnaces, gas or wood fireplaces, gas or charcoal grills... all can release carbon monoxide into the environment.

To prevent CO poisoning, **familiarize yourself** with the symptoms of CO poisoning for early detection. The most common

*Continued on next page*



# Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

symptoms include headache (throbbing), dizziness, weakness, nausea and vomiting, and visual changes. More severe symptoms can include fainting, confusion, irregular heartbeat, and seizures.

**If you suspect CO poisoning** or if the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to fresh air outdoors. Call 911 and do not re-enter your home until emergency responders have given the all clear.

## Help prevent CO poisoning:

- Have your gas heating system and fireplace inspected annually, and cleaned as needed. Metal flue liners should be clean and the joints well aligned. Tile or masonry flue liners should be solid and free of cracks. Any needed repairs should be done by a certified professional.
- Make sure your fireplace chimney is unobstructed of leaves and other debris that may have fallen into the chimney. Chimneys are also favorite nesting places for birds and squirrels, even if it's only been a few months since the fireplace was last used.
- Have your gas appliances (stove, furnace, fireplace, etc.) inspected annually by a qualified plumber or HVAC specialist. All gas flames in your kitchen range should be blue in color. A yellow flame or a flame that is excessively tall, noisy and sputtering indicates improper combustion.

*It's recommended that you replace batteries twice a year in carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.*



**MERRY, BRIGHT AND EFFICIENT HOLIDAY LIGHTING**  
Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

- Consider replacing older light strands with new ENERGY STAR LED® lights. LED strands are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than the age-old standard bulbs.
- You can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs. Just look for "warm white" on the label.
- Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids and pets (and reindeer).
- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you typically go to sleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy

- Inspect vent covers on your roof for damage before each heating season, or after major storms. Damaged vents can prevent gas appliances from venting, forcing CO back into the home.
- Do not use appliances and equipment such as grills and gas ovens to heat your home or a garage - they are not designed as heat sources.
- Never use a portable generator inside your home, basement, or garage. Keep generators at least 20 feet from any window, door or vent.
- Install battery operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home. Detectors should be placed at least 15 feet from the furnace. Multi-level homes should have a detector on every level to provide extra protection. Detectors are essential in homes with fuel source heat including space heaters, wood burning stoves and fireplaces.

For more tips on preventing CO build-up, visit [www.cdc.gov/co](http://www.cdc.gov/co).

## Midwest Customers Care

The need has never been greater! You can help your neighbors in need. Pay their energy bills with a monthly \$1, \$2 or \$3 donation on your energy bill. Just call Midwest Energy at 1-800-222-3121 to sign up today!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

Atwood, KS • Colby, KS • Great Bend, KS • Hays, KS

Hoxie, KS • Phillipsburg, KS • Scott City • WaKeeney, KS

**1-800-222-3121**  
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