



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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APRIL 2023

THANK A LINEWORKER

Celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 10th!

You've likely noticed MLEC's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough—but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. This month, we celebrate our lineworkers. In honor of our line crews, here are some interesting facts about electric lineworkers.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours, outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know that becoming a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (approx. four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, MLEC's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave

the comfort of their homes and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, sometimes days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community. Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. Please join us as we recognize them in April!



2023 ANNUAL MEETING

You're invited to the 2023 MLEC Annual Meeting! Join us at the beautiful Minnesota National Golf Course for a free meal, lots of door prizes, and the most up-to-date information regarding your cooperative.

Members will hear from MLEC leadership and learn important information about the past year and what lies ahead for MLEC.

We hope to see you there!

WHEN: *Thursday, May 18th*

WHERE: *MN National Golf Course*
23247 480th Street
McGregor, MN 55760

SCHEDULE:

Registration & Meal - 4:00-5:45 p.m.

Business Meeting - 5:45 p.m.



Election of Directors



Per MLEC Bylaws, Article II, Section 8, Harold Harms of District 3; and Aileen DeMenge of District 4 shall be reelected by acclamation.

No voting is needed for these uncontested positions.

Pasta dinner & door prizes!

The talented staff at Minnesota National are preparing Chicken Parmesan over penne pasta with a Caesar salad and breadstick. A cash bar will be available!

We have tons of door prizes to give away at the conclusion of the meeting. Must be present to win!

Receive an insulated cooler tote as a free gift!

(One per membership)

Great for groceries, events, camping, or a day on the lake!



Questions or concerns?
MLEC's Board of Directors represent you!

Mark Anderson - District 1
320/469-0951
manderson@mlcmmn.com

Derik Midthun - District 2
218/821-4349
dmidthun@mlcmmn.com

Harold Harms - District 3
218/232-2935
hharms@mlcmmn.com
President

Aileen DeMenge - District 4
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ademenge@mlcmmn.com
Secretary/Treasurer

Don Appel - District 5
218/927-4134
dappel@mlcmmn.com

Bruce Robinson - District 6
218/851-4760
brobinson@mlcmmn.com
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Michael Reem - District 7
218/839-5697
mreem@mlcmmn.com
Vice President

Sarah Cron - CEO
218/927-8224
scron@mlcmmn.com

Find minutes from MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlcmmn.net>
under **My Co-op**

This newsletter is the voice of your tax and interest paying RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, an organization which was formed to supply you with low-cost, dependable electricity when other sources failed to do so.

Managing Editor: Kassie Peterson,
Communications Specialist

SEND YOUR RSVP

*This RSVP is meant to aid us in the planning process.
Seats will not be specifically reserved for you. First come, first served.*

Name:

Account #:

How many plan to attend?

MAIL:

Kassie Peterson
Mille Lacs Energy Co-op
P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

E-MAIL:

annualmeeting@mlcmmn.com

Submit your questions!

Have a question for the co-op? We encourage members to submit their questions ahead of time via email or mail. To be addressed at the Annual Meeting, questions must be received prior to Friday, May 12th. Questions submitted after May 12th will receive a response after the Annual Meeting by phone or email.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS OF THE GRID

Dear Member:

Our homes are outfitted with more devices that require electricity than ever before as life has become increasingly dependent on them to function. As this demand for electricity rises, MLEC must continue providing the same affordable, round-the-clock service to its members — regardless of market conditions, or in Minnesota's case: weather conditions.

Demand for electricity regularly fluctuates as people move throughout their homes and businesses on a normal day-to-day basis. But on extreme weather days when everyone is either trying to keep cool or stay warm, the electric grid experiences periods of high stress while attempting to meet members' comfort needs.

These times are when Great River Energy, MLEC's wholesale power provider, deploys its demand response (DR) strategy to relieve the electric system of this strain. This ability to respond to the needs of the electric system is made possible by members like you.

Residents and businesses have the option to sign up for DR programs through their cooperative that allow Great River Energy to "control" or "cycle" their air conditioner, water heater, heat pump or other electric devices for a period of hours on high demand days in exchange for a reduced electric rate.

When the time comes for these appliances to be used for DR — typically on hot summer days or during a polar vortex when energy prices increase — Great River Energy flips a switch to alleviate demand. This strategy not only reduces sometimes hundreds of megawatts of electricity demand, but it also helps the cooperative avoid making expensive purchases from the energy market, ultimately saving members money.

Great River Energy recently used its DR strategy as Winter Storm Elliott brought blizzard conditions and subzero temperatures to the Midwest in the days leading up to Christmas. The region's grid operator issued an emergency alert late on Dec. 23 that triggered utilities to deploy their DR resources.

Great River Energy, in partnership with its member-owner cooperatives, has the largest demand response program for a

utility of its size in the country according to data collected by the Energy Information Administration. This means its system operators were able to dispatch up to 370,000-plus appliances enrolled in DR programs to manage reliability during the winter storm.

It takes a collective effort from the cooperative and its membership to maintain a healthy, reliable electric grid. If you are interested in signing up for a DR program or hearing more about your options to enroll in one for a reduced electric rate, contact MLEC at 218-927-2191.



Sarah Cron, CEO

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Sm'.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Appliances and electronics don't use energy when turned off.

FALSE. Computers, printers, TVs, cell phone chargers and more may continue to consume electricity, when turned off, sometimes just as much as when they're turned on. Consider purchasing a smart strip (more advanced than a traditional power strip) that cuts off power to appliances that are powered off.

Bigger heating and cooling equipment is not always better.

TRUE. When buying new heating and cooling equipment, proper sizing and quality installation are critical to your home's energy efficiency and comfort. Oversized equipment can cause reduced comfort and excessive noise. Oversizing can also shorten the life of equipment by causing it to cycle on and off more frequently than a properly-sized unit.

Leaving your computer on saves energy.

FALSE. If you're going to be away from your desk for a long period of time, and particularly after hours, you should turn off your computer, monitor and peripherals using a smart strip.

Check your heating and cooling system's filter once a month.

TRUE. You should also have a pre-season checkup of your system by a licensed contractor in the spring and fall to ensure all parts are working properly, and to avoid early system failure. If your furnace is more than 15 years old, or your A/C unit is more than 12 years old, consider replacing it with a properly-sized, more efficient unit.



LET'S DISH

SEND US YOUR RECIPES!

We'll credit your account **\$10.00** if it's printed in THE OUTLET

MAIL TO:

Kassie Peterson
Mille Lacs Energy
P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:

kpeterson@mlecmn.com



NO BAKE ENERGY BITES

1/2 cup peanut butter

1/3 cup honey

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 cup rolled oats

2/3 cup shredded coconut

1 cup mini chocolate chips

1/4 cup slivered almonds

1/2 cup dried cranberries

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Freeze for 15-20 minutes until firm. Roll into bite size balls. Enjoy!

TRUST BOARD GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This March, the board awarded \$15,550 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair, Aitkin Grad Blast, ANGELS of McGregor, Crosby-Ironton Grad Blast, Food Shelves (Aitkin Area Food Shelf, Aitkin Community Food Shelf, Cuyuna Area, Garrison Area, McGregor Area, Family Pathways @ Onamia, Palisade Area, St. James Food Shelf), Jaques Art Center, Lakes Area Interfaith Caregivers, Mille Lacs Area Social Concerns, and Relationship Safety Alliance – Louise Seliski Shelter. The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,470,279!

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative where our generous members roundup their electric bill payment to the nearest dollar. All of the funds raised go into the trust fund which is donated back to the community. Board members include: Lisa Anderson, Kim Waffensmith, Darlene Stigen, Bethany Sellers, Charles Schotzko, Becky Joerger, Bob Nelson, and Doyle Jelsing. To receive a Trust application, contact Deb Chute at 218-927-8221 or 1-800-450-2191.

Photographed L to R:

*Front Row: Jenny McGuire, Brooke Nelson, Alex Dominguez
Back Row: Chuck Schotzko, Kyle Fredrickson, Kelli Nelson, Carol Wihersk, Jill McKenzie*



YOUTH TOUR WINNER

Congrats to Sophie Morris!

The Washington D.C. Youth Tour is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors in MLEC's service area. This trip gives young people the opportunity to watch history come alive, explore museums, memorials and monuments, make friendships that will last a lifetime, and be part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life, including U.S. Senators and CEOs.

The Youth Tour program continues to foster the grassroots spirit of the rural electric cooperative by demonstrating how our government works and what the electric cooperative business model is all about.

This year, Sophie Morris was chosen to represent our cooperative and join the other students from the state of Minnesota. Sophie is the daughter of Donald and Sarah Morris and is a junior at Aitkin High School.



Sophie Morris



Regular office hours are
Mon-Fri 8:00 to 4:30

927-2191 or
800-450-2191 (toll free)



48 hours before you dig
Dial 811 - Gopher State
One Call or log on to:
www.gopherstateonecall.org

Then contact a licensed electrician
to locate your secondary wires.

MN Electrical Inspectors

Aitkin County &
South East Crow Wing County
Jeff Larson 320-227-3009

Northern Crow Wing County
Nathan Readle 218-537-8419

Mille Lacs County
Benjamin Husom 320-277-6277

Off-peak and dual fuel system
consumers should call an
electrician or heating contractor for
service or repairs.

Find load control schedule at
www.mlecmm.net under Quick Links.



Visit our website -
www.mlecmm.net
E-mail us - mlec@mlecmm.net

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when they're not in use, eliminating phantom- and standby-
power losses without ever unplugging the equipment.

ENERGY WISE  MN

Offer valid March 1
through April 30, 2023.

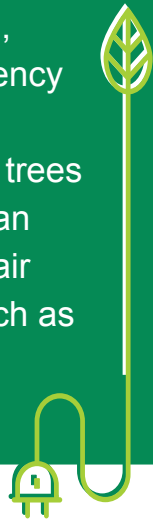
No coupon code necessary.
Discount applied at checkout.
Customer assumes responsibility for
all sales tax. While supplies last.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees.

Source: energy.gov



WE'RE LOCAL *just like you!*

Our team of employees are based here in Central Minnesota. We believe that customer service takes on a whole new meaning when you live and work with the people you serve!



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will be held at Minnesota National Golf Course, 23247 480th Street, McGregor, Minnesota, on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Registration will begin at 4:00 P.M. and the annual business meeting will begin at 5:45 P.M. The purpose of the meeting is:

1. Election by Acclamation
 - a. Harold Harms was re-elected in District 3 and Aileen DeMenge was re-elected in District 4 by Acclamation in accordance with Article II, Section 8 of the Cooperative's Bylaws.
2. Transaction of any other business that may properly come before this meeting.

By Order of the Board of Directors
Aileen DeMenge, Secretary

GIFT CARD TRIVIA!

Correctly answer the question below for your chance to win a gift card from a local business within our service area. The answer can be found within this issue of The Outlet. You must be an MLEC member to participate. Be sure to include your name and service address! Entries must be received by **April 30th**.

MAIL TO:
Kassie Peterson
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:
kpeterson@mlecmn.com

What day is the 2023 Annual Meeting being held?

Name:

Address:

Congrats to John Kinzel, the February gift card trivia winner!



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • www.mlecmn.net

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.