



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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JULY 2023

KEEPING THE LINES CLEAR

As the MLEC line crews head into the busy summer months, the Right-of-Way (ROW) crew is doing the same. Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our members. MLEC has taken an aggressive approach to clearing ROW and operates with a four-man crew. You may find Mille Lacs Energy in your neighborhood identifying and addressing hazardous trees and vegetation. We ask that you give the crew room to work, so all can stay safe. If you need to pass the bucket truck, please do so with care.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as Right-of-Way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Are you planning on planting some trees this summer? There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening, and shade. Consider the types of trees that coexist well with power lines and the environment to avoid the need for line clearance trimming.



TUNE-UP THIS SUMMER

The best way to ensure efficient operation of your cooling system is by having it tuned-up every two years. A tune-up by a service expert can improve your unit's efficiency by as much as 20 percent, extend its life, and help protect the environment.



To qualify for a \$25 tune-up rebate:

1. Tune-up must be conducted where electricity is supplied by MLEC.
2. The CAC or ASHP must be in operating condition, over three years of age, and not had a tune-up in the last two years.
3. Rebate submittal must follow the guidelines as listed.
4. Program is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Call MLEC to verify rebate status.
5. Program is for tune-ups only; it does not cover the cost for repairs of the air conditioner or heat pump.

Contact a local HVAC contractor and receive the rebate!

- Hire the contractor.
- After completing the tune-up, have your contractor fill out the contractor portion of the coupon below.
- Complete the member portion of the coupon.
- Return the coupon to MLEC along with a copy of the contractor invoice.
- The rebate option is available to members through Dec. 31, 2023.

ENERGY WISE  MN

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

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manderson@mlcmmn.com

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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

Member Information

Member name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Contact phone number _____
Account number _____
I certify that a tune-up has been performed at the residence above by a HVAC contractor.
Member signature _____

Mail to:
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
PO Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431



Contractor Information

Equipment brand _____
Model number _____
Serial number _____
Approx. age of unit _____ yrs. SEER rating _____
I certify that I have completed the following on this unit:

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> clean condenser coil | <input type="checkbox"/> check belt, if needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check coolant level | <input type="checkbox"/> lube motor, if needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check coolant pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> visually inspect the entire system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> test all controls | <input type="checkbox"/> blow out drain lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check indoor furnace filter | <input type="checkbox"/> educate homeowner on system operation |

Contractor signature _____
Contractor company _____

WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU

Dear Member:

"We're here to serve you." We've all heard this phrase countless times. These words may sound generic, but to us – your local electric cooperative – they mean everything.

MLEC was created to serve our community. Back in the day, neighbors banded together and formed our co-op for the common good. In our case, it was the only way the community could bring electricity to the area where there was none. In doing so, MLEC helped the community thrive. That mission-focused heritage is the golden thread that is woven throughout our history.

Today, we are continuing to power the community. While our focus has remained steady on providing reliable energy to our members, today's energy landscape and consumer expectations are far different than they were decades ago. That's why we're adapting, to keep pace with changing technology, evolving needs and new expectations.

Serving as your trusted energy advisor means we want to help you save energy (and money) and provide advice and information on a broad range of energy topics. For example, if you're looking for ways to save energy, check out our website and Facebook page for energy-saving tips and ideas to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Consider scheduling a free energy audit with one of our energy experts to identify ways you can save energy at home. Understanding how your home uses energy can help determine the best ways to modify energy use and thereby keep more money in your wallet.

If you're considering a rooftop solar installation, our energy advisors would be happy to give you an unbiased view of the pros and cons. Investing in a solar system is a major decision, and it's important to fully understand the costs, responsibilities and potential energy savings. Unlike a solar company that has one objective—to sell their products and services—we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. We understand that homeowners must undertake their due diligence, and we're here to help you through that process.



Sarah Cron
CEO

In a similar vein, we recognize that many members are considering electric vehicle options. MLEC provides information about EV charging and electrical requirements for our members so you can make informed decisions about EVs. We can provide a candid assessment of residential and business charging requirements for all types of EVs. MLEC is also offering ways to save on EV charging. No matter what our members drive, we want to help you achieve energy savings.

So, the next time you hear MLEC use the phrase "we're here to serve you," we hope you know that we mean it. Service is deeply ingrained into who we are. We continue to evolve with the times, and in return, we've found additional ways to serve you and provide more options for you to power your life.

We're here whenever you need us. Connect with us online, via phone, or in person. However you choose to connect, please let us know how we can serve you better.

WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

Take advantage of these hot promo rebates when you install a qualifying, energy-saving air source heat pump!

For a **LIMITED** time, if installed in June, July, or August, you can double your rebates on ducted air source heat pumps when installed by a qualified contractor and put on our dual fuel program.

Call MLEC at 218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279!

| Air Source Heat Pump | Regular Rebate | Promo Rebate |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| SEER 14.5 | \$480 | \$960 |
| SEER 15 | \$580 | \$1,160 |
| SEER 16+ | \$630 | \$1,260 |

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@mlccmn.com



SWEET & SOUR BEANS

10 slices bacon
4 large onions
1 tsp dry mustard
1 tsp garlic powder
1 cup brown sugar
1 tsp salt

1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
1 - large can (3lbs 7 oz) baked beans
1 - 15 oz. can butter beans (drained)
1 - can green lima beans (drained)
1 - can kidney beans (drained)

Fry the bacon in a pan until crispy then set aside. Cut onions into rings and add to pan with bacon grease. Add dry mustard, garlic powder, brown sugar, salt, and apple cider vinegar to pan. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Next, add baked beans, butter beans, lima beans, and kidney beans to mixture. Crumble bacon and add to mixture. Pour into baking dish and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

Thank you to Joni Murphy of Aitkin
for sharing this month's recipe.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Big things are happening across MLEC's service territory. Last month, the McGregor Fire Department unveiled its new Fire Hall to the community during the open house event. All were welcome for a night of food and fun. At the same time, Garrison Bay Resort has broken ground and began construction on its 22 camping spot expansion. The project will bring tourism to the Garrison area and allow more people to enjoy Mille Lacs Lake.

What do both of these projects have in common? MLEC's revolving loan fund has helped them come to fruition. The MLEC Board approved the interest-free loans totaling \$660,000.

"When interest rates increased in 2022, we had to put our expansion project on hold. Thanks to the MLEC Economic Development Loan, we are breaking ground and will save \$80,000 on interest expenses over the next ten years," said Andy Weitnauer of Garrison Bay Resort.

The MLEC revolving loan fund originated from a grant provided through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program, which provides loans and grants to rural cooperatives for specific economic development purposes. As these initial loans are paid back, the revolving loan funds are intended to grow and provide financing for further qualifying economic development projects over time.

Scott Turner addressed the crowd at the McGregor Fire Hall event, "In order to not raise our budget and complete the project, we needed some additional funds. Thank you to Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative for helping us bridge the financial gap."

The MLEC revolving loan fund accepts applications on an ongoing basis, from private businesses, public entities, and non-profit organizations, for projects that will significantly benefit rural areas in Aitkin, Mille Lacs, and Crow Wing Counties

and the surrounding region. Eligible projects must create or retain employment or provide needed community facilities and services.

For more information on how to apply for an MLEC revolving loan fund loan, please contact Logan Stall at (218) 927-2191.



Duane (Bucky) Weitnauer, Susan Weitnauer, Andy Weitnauer, Sarah Cron, Lincoln Messner, Logan Stall



James Carr, Dake Olson, Lincoln Messner, Aileen DeMenge, Jeff Borling

FOOD TRUCK DAYZ

Tasty lunch options are coming to MLEC this summer!

We have a full schedule of food trucks coming to Mille Lacs Energy. Stop by during your lunch break or make a plan to grab something on your way up to the cabin. Food Truck Dayz are open to everyone so bring your family and friends to try some new cuisine! Stay updated by following MLEC on Facebook.



AUGUST SCHEDULE

Aug. 3 - Benny's Hotdogs & Lemonade

Aug. 10 -Teresa's Wicked Tasty Food

Aug. 17 - Barajas Mexican Grill

Aug. 24 - Crabby Dale's BBQ

Aug. 31 - Pit Happens BBQ

** Dates are subject to change. Follow the Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative Facebook page for updates/ cancellations**

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

TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This June, the board awarded \$18,200 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Aitkin County Historical Society, Aitkin Farmer's Market, Alzheimer's Association (Aitkin Team), Crow Wing County Victim Services, Knights of Columbus, Cuyuna Range Council, Lakes Area Chaplaincy, Lakes Area Music Festival, Lakes Area United Way, Long Lake Conservation Foundation, Lunch Bunch Mondays (Society of St. Vincent de Paul), Quarterbacks Club, and Riverwood Foundation.

The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,488,479!

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative where our generous members

round-up 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. The Trust Board meets the second Wednesday in March, June, September and December. Applications are accepted at any time. Those submitted a week before the quarterly meetings will go to the board. Anything submitted after will be seen at the next board meeting.

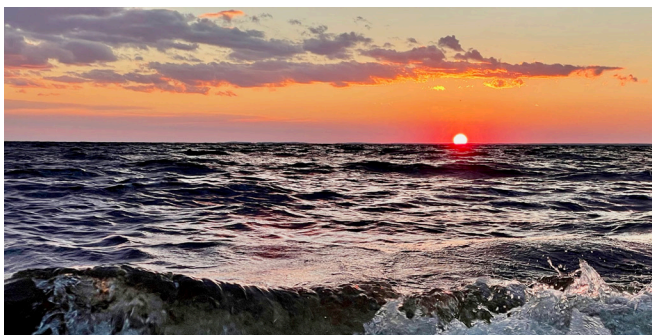


Front row left to right: Rich Peterson, Alyssa Neistadt, Jackie Dilley, Paula Fisher, Kim Waffensmith

Second row left to right: Ellen Brandt, Steve Harrison, Mark Greninger, Gary Tibbitts, Irmgard Boyer, Jon Aga.



Submit your calendar photos!



See your photo in MLEC's 2024 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 27, 2023. Winning photos will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Voting will take place after the deadline on the MLEC Facebook page. The 12 photos with the most likes will be featured in the calendar.

Email photos to: photos@mlecmn.com

RADIO RECEIVER REPLACEMENT

MLEC will be doing a system wide load management radio receiver replacement this summer and into the fall. This project began in June, and will be completed (approximately) by the end of October. An outside contractor will help with this equipment replacement. All the work should be outside near the meter or controlled equipment location. Contractors working with MLEC will have an MLEC logo on their vehicle. If you are part of one of our Dual Fuel, Off-Peak, Peak Shave Water Heat, or Air Conditioning programs, you can expect to have your radio receiver replaced within the next few months. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please feel free to contact MLEC at 218-927-2191.

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!



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 **July 31st**.

MAIL TO:

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

OR E-MAIL:

kpeterson@mlecmn.com

Fill in the blank.

The best way to ensure efficient operation of your

is by having it tuned-up every two years.

Name:

Address:

Congrats to Glen Suess, the May 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.