



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 55  
NUMBER 7  
JULY 2024

## OPEN HOUSE & ANNUAL MEETING

You're invited to the 2024 MLEC Open House and Annual Meeting Event! Join us at the new headquarters for a free meal, lots of door prizes, facility tours, and the most up-to-date information regarding your electric cooperative.

**If you would like to attend the business meeting in person YOU MUST RSVP (details on pg. 3).** Due to parking, only 200 seats will be available to attend the business meeting in person. However, the meeting will be live streamed for members to watch at home.

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!

### **Free meal & door prizes!**

Members will have their choice of local food vendors including: Log Home Woodfired Pizza, Pit Happens BBQ, and Barajas Mexican Grill.

We have tons of door prizes to give away at the conclusion of the meeting. You do **NOT** need to be present to win!

### **Election of Directors**

Vote for directors in districts 2, 5, 6, and 7 at the event or vote ahead of time via mail or online! Election results will be announced during the business meeting.

**WHEN:** *Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>*

**WHERE:** *MLEC Headquarters*  
23483 US Highway 169  
Aitkin, MN 56431

### **SCHEDULE:**

**Registration & Voting** - 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Open House & Meal** - 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Business Meeting Begins** - 5:00 p.m.

**Receive a plush throw blanket as a free gift!** (One per membership)

### **Questions?**

Call our office at  
218-927-2191.



# 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, 2024.

ENERGY WISE  MN

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

### Mark Anderson - District 1

320/469-0951  
manderson@mlecmn.com

### Carol Pundt - District 2

218/687-3256  
cpundt@mlecmn.com

### Harold Harms - District 3

218/232-2935  
hharms@mlecmn.com  
President

### Aileen DeMenge - District 4

218/768-4900  
ademenge@mlecmn.com  
Secretary/Treasurer

### Don Appel - District 5

218/927-4134  
dappel@mlecmn.com

### Bruce Robinson - District 6

218/851-4760  
brobinson@mlecmn.com  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

### Michael Reem - District 7

218/839-5697  
mreem@mlecmn.com  
Vice President

### Sarah Cron - CEO

218/927-8224  
scron@mlecmn.com

Find minutes from MLEC Board meetings at:  
<http://www.mlecmn.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,  
Marketing & Communications Administrator

## 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 MOVING!

Dear Member:

Reflecting on 2019 – my first year at MLEC – it is incredible to think of everything we have been through together. A new metering system. A multi-year pandemic. Serious weather events that caused nationwide power outages. Record returns on capital credits to you, our members. Multiple FEMA-level storms that severely damaged our service territory. Significant fiber Internet business growth. MLEC Board Member turnover. A vessel incident in the Suez Canal starting a global supply chain disruption that never seems to end. Great River Energy selling their flagship power plant, Coal Creek Station. More Storms. MNDOT claiming a portion of MLEC land to expand Highway 169. Change in MLEC outage dispatch process and after-hours service. Great River Energy announcing major transmission build-out. War in Ukraine causing new energy market volatility. Minnesota State carbon-free mandate. More storms. While the highlight reel seems sizeable, at the beginning of 2020 we also started talking about building a new headquarters building.

Fast forward just four years and we are now on the brink of MOVING into that new building! In four years, your board unanimously voted to build a building, we had a feasibility study conducted, we purchased land, we hired partners, and we built a beautiful new home for Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative. This is a testament to the collective effort and resilience of our staff and leadership. We managed to accomplish this, in the midst of everything I mentioned above and did so ahead of schedule and under budget! You know what, after working with these folks for over five years, I have grown to expect nothing less from them.

Now, what can you expect from us? First off, the same great service we strive to provide to you seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Just 12 miles south of Paulbeck's County Market, on Highway 169, we plan to continue our normal business interactions with our local business partners like usual. And speaking of Paulbeck's, we will have a payment drop box conveniently located at their exit, making it easy for you to drop off a payment. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we plan to take occupancy August 12. During the next seven weeks, we will begin our plans to move our things into our new spaces and open the doors to you, our members. Should that date be delayed for any reason, we will note it on our website, Facebook, and the sign outside our existing facility.

Our new address is 23483 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431. All phone numbers and email addresses will remain the same. We plan to host our official Open House and Annual Meeting at the new facility on September 19. Please continue to watch the Outlet for more details. We hope to see you there!



Sarah Cron, CEO

## SEND YOUR RSVP

You **MUST** send in an RSVP if you plan to attend the business meeting in person. Due to limited parking, only 200 seats are available. Please mail the slip below or RSVP via email.

**MAIL:**

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

**E-MAIL:**

[annualmeeting@mlecmn.com](mailto:annualmeeting@mlecmn.com)

**Business Meeting RSVP • 5:00 p.m. • September 19<sup>th</sup>**

Name:

Account #:

Phone #:

How many plan to attend?

**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, Sept. 13th. Questions submitted after Sept. 13th will receive a response after the Annual Meeting by phone or email.

# LET'S DISH

Thank you to Sam Hilger of Aitkin for sharing this month's recipe.

## 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



## ZUCCHINI BOATS

- 2 zucchinis
- 1 lb ground meat (turkey, chicken, beef, or venison)
- 1/2 cup buffalo sauce
- Ranch Dressing seasoning
- 2/3 cup shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut zucchinis in half. Use a spoon to scrape out some of the seeds to create a "valley". Place zucchinis on a baking sheet with the valley side facing up. Brown your meat of choice, then add buffalo sauce and Ranch Dressing seasoning powder to taste. Fill the zucchini valleys with the meat mixture and sprinkle shredded cheese on top. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Enjoy!

# 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.





# DIRECTOR FILING

Candidate filing for MLEC director positions from Districts Two, Five, Six, and Seven is now open.

One-year term to complete the remainder of a three-year position in:

**District 2** - includes members whose electric account numbers start with 35, 38, 49 and 50.

Three-year terms in:

**District 5** - includes members whose electric account numbers start with 40, 41, 45 or 46. The present director is Don Appel of Aitkin; Don does not plan to run for re-election.

**District 6** - includes members whose electric account numbers start with 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26 or 27. The present director is Bruce Robinson of Palisade.

**District 7** - includes members whose electric account numbers start with 39, 47, 48 or 53. The present director is Michael Reem of Aitkin.

If you are an MLEC member receiving electricity in one of the districts listed above and are interested in filing for a director position, call Kassie Peterson at 927-8243 or 800-450-2191 or, email [kpeterson@mlecmn.com](mailto:kpeterson@mlecmn.com) for director election filing forms and a complete information packet.

**All filings must be received at the Cooperative by July 15, 2024.**

You can find additional district and annual meeting information on the MLEC website [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net). If you have any questions about applying, please contact Kassie Peterson at 218-927-8243.

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](http://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 320-470-9688

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

Find load control schedule at [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) under Quick Links.



Visit our website - [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net)  
E-mail us - [mlec@mlecmn.net](mailto:mlec@mlecmn.net)

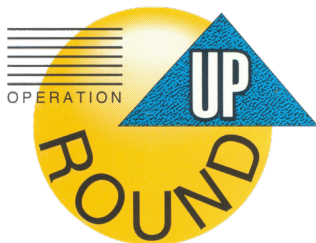
# TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This June, the board awarded \$20,000 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Aitkin Area Team for Alzheimer's, Aitkin Area Youth Baseball Association, Knights of Columbus - Cuyuna Range, Lakes Area Chaplaincy, Lakes Area Music Festival, Lakes Area United Way, Long Lake Conservation Foundation, McGregor Young Life, Monday Lunch Bunch - St. Vincent de Paul, Quarterbacks Club (Aitkin Public Schools), Reading Early Assists Development (READ), and the Riverwood Foundation.

The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has surpassed \$1.5 million!

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 the funds raised go into the trust fund which is donated back to the community. Board members include: Lisa Anderson, Kim Waffensmith, Mavonne Prokop, 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.



Photographed: Jackie Larson, Jack Larson, Kathy Hachey, Stella Larson, Irmgard Boyer, Jan Burt, Cindy Roden, Elaine Hill, Paula Fisher, Tanya Pietz, Abbie Christian, Gary Tibbitts, Amy Dotzler, Tate Dotzler, Dave McMillan, Roland Hill, Mark Greninger, Ron Christenson



Outdoor Wi-Fi

# Lakeside



# MLEC fiber

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# MLEC fiber

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## 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 31<sup>st</sup>**.

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

**OR E-MAIL:**  
[kpeterson@mlecmmn.com](mailto:kpeterson@mlecmmn.com)

When is MLEC's Open House and Annual Meeting Event?

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Name:

Address:

*Congrats to Thomas, the May gift card trivia winner!*

# MLEC MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • [www.mlecmmn.net](http://www.mlecmmn.net)

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