

HEADQUARTERS NEXT STEPS

Dear Member:

I want to thank you all once again for attending our Annual Meeting. Being able to see members in-person once again was a wonderful feeling. We were overwhelmed by the number in attendance and loved to see so many dedicated MLEC members. It makes me beam with pride to represent you and our service territory.

During our meeting, we invited Architectural Resources Inc. (ARI) to present to the group and share conceptual drawings of what a new headquarters could look like. MLEC board members and staff have met with ARI several times to make sure that each department's needs are listened to and displayed in these architectural plans. We want to make sure that we are creating a plan for not only our current workforce, but for the future of our cooperative. The entire planning process has been extremely strategic and mindful to ensure that we get it right. ARI has been a joy to work with and they truly understand the scope of the project.

It seems like yesterday that we spearheaded this project when, in reality, it has been two full years. Your cooperative has carefully navigated each step of this process and has done the due diligence required of such an important undertaking. We are planning for the next 80 years after all!

I want to assure you that the budget for this project is at the forefront of every conversation we have – both inside the board room and out. While a new facility is a necessity, we want to ensure we build it in the most responsible and economical means possible, while looking out for the future of both the employees and members of this electric cooperative. So, looking ahead, what happens next? Once architectural drawings are close to being finalized, we can move on to the bidding process. This is where we will find out if building a new headquarters now is financially within reach. If not, the project will be put on hold.

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A few things to highlight about the building design are the flow and deliberate placement of departments and offices, designing spaces for the future, and creating a building that benefits our membership. ARI has helped us visualize how teams within our cooperative can work together more efficiently, using everyday situations as a guide. We have taken into a lot of consideration our warehouse and garage space based on the size of our fleet and revolving inventory. We want to make sure everything is easily accessible and safe for our outside crews. We are also looking closely at our space dedicated to MLEC Fiber and IT. Our fiber service is rapidly expanding, and we want to be prepared for what the future brings. Lastly, we want a new headquarters facility to benefit



Sarah Cron
CEO

our membership. A safe and secure lobby space is of utmost importance. Also, having a community space where we can meet and interact is a must-have item. You are all important pieces of what makes up Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative. Having a space where we can gather and collaborate is what the cooperative spirit is all about.

For those that attended the Annual Meeting, I hope you had a chance to talk to Karl and Katie and hear their insight during our presentation. Always know that I and the rest of the MLEC staff are available to answer any further questions you may have. Always feel free to call or visit the office. Remember, we are here to serve you!