



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2023 Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, May 18th, at the Minnesota National Golf Course in McGregor. There were 205 registered members, with a total of 321 in attendance.

As only two members filed for the two open director positions, according to Article II, Section 8 of the MLEC Bylaws, both directors have been elected by acclamation, and no vote is needed. Therefore, Harold Harms and Aileen DeMenge will serve another term in districts 3 and 4.

The theme for the meeting was "Better By Every Measure." Members heard comments from Board President Harold Harms, who talked about the various projects MLEC completed in 2022 and how the cooperative navigated supply chain issues and inflation. CEO Sarah Cron explained the access charge increase and how cooperatives set rates. Accounting and Finance Manager Lincoln Messner presented the financial report to the members.

Special guest speaker David Saggau, CEO & President of Great River Energy, gave a wholesale power report. He discussed carbon-free legislation and rate projections for the future. Kassie Peterson, Communications Specialist, shared results from the Member Satisfaction Survey. Members learned how MLEC compares to other cooperatives and where improvements can be made. Chuck Schotzko, MLEC

Community Trust Board President, thanked members for their generosity of contributions to Operation Round Up, a program in which members' bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar, and the money raised is given back through grants to local organizations.

Committee for the Awareness and Prevention of Suicide was recognized as the statewide Touchstone Energy Commitment to Community Award winner. A 2,000 check and trophy were presented to the organization.

Various questions were answered in the Ask the Co-op section of the meeting. Everyone who attended had the opportunity to submit their questions and have them answered by MLEC staff and board members.

Many door prizes were given away during a drawing for those in attendance. Before the presentations and the official annual meeting, dinner was served by the Minnesota National Golf Club staff.



SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

MLEC recognized for outstanding work among peers at national marketing and communications conference.

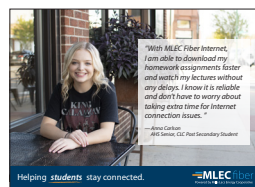
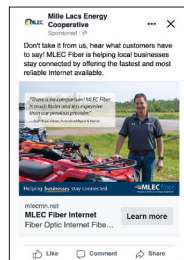
Mille Lacs Energy was recognized in the 2023 Spotlight on Excellence Awards program, a national competition among America's electric cooperatives, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). MLEC received a Silver Award in the Best Ad Campaign category. Kassie Peterson, Communications Specialist, created the award-winning campaign.

Winners were recognized during the Connect Conference, a national communications and marketing professional conference in Jacksonville, Florida, this past May.

"The Spotlight on Excellence Awards Program has been recognizing outstanding co-op communicators and their work for more than 35 years – that work is all the more critical in today's evolving energy industry," said CREC President Scott Gates, senior editor with North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives. "These national awards are highly competitive, and we congratulate those who earned the distinction this year."

The annual Spotlight on Excellence Awards program recognizes the best communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related organizations nationwide. More than 650 entries were submitted across 18 categories, including writing, graphic

design, digital communications, campaign development, etc. Faculty members from the University of Missouri Columbia, as well as noted professionals in the fields of marketing and digital communications and newspapers judged the entries.



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

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

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dmidthun@mlecmm.com

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brobinson@mlecmm.com
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218/839-5697
mreem@mlecmm.com
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Sarah Cron - CEO
218/927-8224
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Find minutes from MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlecmm.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

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Underground power lines are just as dangerous as overhead power lines. Avoid serious injury and property damage by calling 811 before you dig to have underground facilities marked. Call Gopher State One Call or 811 at least two business days prior to a dig. Dial 811 or 1-800-252-1166 during business hours (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. April 1st - October 31st). This service is free for homeowners. Minnesota state law requires you to call. If you damage a line, you will be financially responsible for repairs.

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

Dear Member:

Three hundred twenty-one. That is the number of attendees at this year's annual meeting. With 205 registered members, we far exceeded our quorum requirements for the second year in a row. We want to thank everyone who chose to spend the evening with us; and also, a special thanks to Minnesota National for their excellent job supporting the evening.

There was a wide range of information shared at this year's event from your MLEC Board Chairman, Harold Harms; Great River Energy President and CEO, David Saggau; MLEC Accounting and Finance Manager, Lincoln Messner; MLEC Communications Specialist, Kassie Peterson; MLEC Trust Board Chair, Chuck Schotzko; and myself. We were also proud to give out the Minnesota Touchstone Energy Commitment to Community Award to Committee for the Awareness and Prevention of Suicide (CAPS) and answer many valuable and insightful questions submitted by our members. We also gave out some great prizes, including a Traeger grill and an electric bicycle!

The biggest question we received was on the access charge – "what is it for?" The access charge is used to recover the cost of providing you with electric service. It includes our investment in equipment like poles, wire, transformers, labor, fleet, right-of-way clearing, maintenance, and administrative functions. It also includes charges from our wholesale power provider that are not encompassed in the per kWh charge, like transmission charges. Essentially, all costs associated with providing you with **access** to the electric distribution grid; thus, the name, access charge. In 2020, MLEC began a cost-of-service study with Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), one of our lenders. At that time, the statistics indicated that we should be collecting \$50 per residential member, per month, for access to the distribution grid. That is the science/logic behind the access charge.

The second biggest question we received was, "why do I have to pay for it twice?" Most people have a second access charge because they have a second **general service** meter. This occurs when properties are metered separately to collect their own meter data. For instance, a member may have a home and a shop building, acquired two or more properties next to each other, or own multiple properties on the MLEC system. Many times, if the property has been acquired, the original owner had requested the property be metered separately. In these cases, homeowners must hire an electrician to re-wire their electrical service to connect all services to one electric general service meter. At that point, you will only receive one access charge. If this is impossible – for instance, the properties are too far apart, you will continue to have two general service meters. Keep in mind the very reason for the access charge. MLEC will still need to maintain and repair electric service to all your properties – regardless of whether you are using service at that property. That is why we are recovering the cost of providing that maintenance service through the access charge.



Sarah Cron
CEO

Several questions were submitted regarding our MLEC Fiber program. Foremost among them were "when will fiber be in my area?" and "is MLEC electric subsidizing MLEC fiber?". My first answer is that we are working to expand our fiber network daily. To determine if fiber is available in your area call our office or view project maps on our website. The second answer I have is that no, MLEC electric is not subsidizing MLEC Fiber Internet. They are two separate business units with two separate ledgers to track profits and losses.

If you were at the meeting and still need to get your question answered, please call our office at 218.927.2191, and someone will be happy to address your concerns. Thank you, once again, for coming to your annual meeting.



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@mlcemn.com



CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI BREAD

2 squares (1 oz. each) unsweetened chocolate
3 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups grated zucchini
1 tsp. vanilla extract

2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
3/4 cups semi sweet choc. chips

Heat chocolate squares until melted, stirring occasionally until smooth. In a large bowl, combine eggs, sugar, oil, zucchini, vanilla, and melted chocolate, then mix well. Stir in flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Fold in chocolate chips. Pour batter into two greased 9x5 inch pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until a toothpick comes out clean. Enjoy!

Thank you to Lori Weidner of St. Augusta
for sharing this month's recipe.

SAVE WATER IN YOUR HOME

Save 30% on Niagara Conservation
water-saving products!

May 1 through June 30, 2023



ENERGY WISE  MN

Visit energywisemnstore.com/water

CAPS WINS STATEWIDE AWARD

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Group named the Committee for the Awareness and Prevention of Suicide (CAPS) as the statewide winner of the 2023 Touchstone Energy Community Award. The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) announced the award at its annual meeting on February 22. The organization received \$2,000 to continue their efforts and help those in need.

CAPS, MLEC's local award winner, was selected amongst all other cooperative winners throughout Minnesota for this special honor.

CAPS began with an invitation from the Minnesota Department of Health to apply for a Suicide Prevention grant due to the high rates of suicide in Aitkin County. CAPS raises awareness, understanding of mental health issues, and suicide making it ok to talk about mental health problems and prevent future suicide attempts.



*Harold Harms presented
Stacey Durgin Smith with a
commemorative award at the
MLEC Annual Meeting.*



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.



JULY SCHEDULE

July 6 - Benny's Hotdogs & Lemonade

July 13 - Theresa's Wicked Tasty Food

July 20 - Crabby Dale's BBQ

July 27 - Barajas Mexican Grill

** 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.

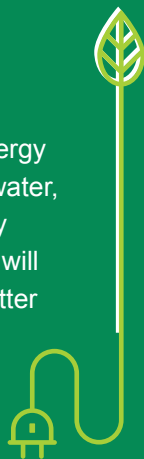


Visit our website -
www.mlecmm.net
E-mail us - mlec@mlecmm.net

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can.

Source: Dept. of Energy



HIGHWAY CLEAN UP

In May, MLEC employees participated in the Adopt-a-Highway spring clean-up south of Aitkin. Thank you to Johnston, Daryl, Adam, and Matt for volunteering and keeping our roadsides clean!



First Quarter Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Comparative Operating Statement for the Quarter Ending March 31, 2021 & March 31, 2022

	2022	2023
OPERATING REVENUE	8,663,733.11	8,125,542.12
COST OF PURCHASED POWER	5,225,543.93	4,667,004.19
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-OPERATION	268,930.30	432,570.69
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-MAINTENANCE	461,381.76	495,000.15
CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS EXPENSE	192,559.52	240,251.00
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATIONAL EXPENSE	-4,188.89	168,762.00
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSE	519,250.49	511,764.65
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	1,437,933.18	1,848,348.49
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	6,663,477.11	6,515,352.68
DEPRECIATION	534,703.25	561,399.62
TAX EXPENSE	1,360.00	1,358.00
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	311,084.62	290,830.40
INTEREST EXPENSE-OTHER	128.74	3,379.53
OTHER DEDUCTION	-	-
TOTAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICE	7,510,753.72	7,372,620.23
OPERATING MARGINS	1,152,979.39	752,921.89
NON OPERATING MARGINS-INTEREST	13,245.99	107,436.24
NON OPERATING MARGINS-OTHER	(118,416)	(118,416)
GENERATION & TRANSMISSION CAPITAL CREDITS	-	-
OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	84,944.56	71,493.77
NET MARGINS	1,120,493.31	837,579.77

REPORTING OUTAGES

COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

MLEC, P.O. Box 230, Aitkin, MN 56431
or return with your next payment.

Update your contact information!

The technology we use for communication can change every day, even at your house. Are you using a cell phone? A landline phone? Both? MLEC wants to keep up with you. 24/7 - we have a system to get the power back on...with up-to-date information, you can make it go faster.

When you report an outage after hours, your phone number is a critical step in restoring power. Our automated system can identify your service by the number you are calling from (if it matches the number(s) listed on your account). Please let us know the numbers you would most likely use to call in an outage and we'll update your account.

Name _____

Service Address _____

Account Number _____

Phone #1 _____

Identify where the call comes from: ☐ cell ☐ residence ☐ business

Phone #2 _____

Identify where the call comes from: ☐ cell ☐ residence ☐ business

A BETTER CHOICE for rural Internet.

Did you know that you don't have to suffer from slow, unreliable Internet, even if you live in the country? Get the Internet service you deserve. Make the switch to MLEC Fiber.



MLEC fiber
Powered by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
TUESDAY, JULY 4TH
HAVE A SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAY!

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 **June 30th**.

MAIL TO:

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

OR E-MAIL:

kpeterson@mlcmmn.com

What food truck will be at MLEC on July 20th?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Congrats to LeAnn Christenson , the April gift card trivia winner!



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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

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