



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 52
NUMBER 11
NOVEMBER 2021

A LINEWORKER LEGACY

The lineworker lifestyle runs in the family for these two MLEC employees.

Lineworkers have a special bond that is often described as a brotherhood, but for these two MLEC employees, it's all in the family. Cory Brix (2nd generation lineworker) and Nikolas Borchert (3rd generation lineworker) both come from families with a long history of keeping the lights on.

Cory Brix, MLEC Line Superintendent, attended Northwestern Technical College in 1990 located in Wadena, Minnesota. Once graduated, he went on to work for Great River Energy (GRE) before coming to Mille Lacs Energy in 2000. Brix's father had also worked for Great River Energy and inspired him from a young age. Going to work with his dad and seeing behind-the-scenes is what made Brix pursue becoming a lineman. Today, Brix's oldest son is also a lineman and works for GRE. Being a part of a three-generation lineworker family is something that Brix takes pride in.



Being a lineworker is a difficult job. When asked what makes him proud to work for MLEC, Brix replied, "When I was on the line crew, the most rewarding part was working storms - turning the power back on, after sometimes hours or days, and seeing how happy the members are!"

Apprentice Lineman Nik Borchert has a similar background. His grandfather worked as a lineman for Northern States Power, which later merged with Xcel Energy, and his father is currently a lineman for Great River Energy. His grandfather often told him stories of his time in the military where he worked as a lineman stationed in Germany. Borchert also enjoyed going to work with his dad and spending time with his co-workers and lineworker friends. Their experiences and stories inspired him to go



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A Lineworker Legacy Continued...

to Northwest Lineman College and graduate from the Electrical Lineworker Program in 2016. Borchert's dad, grandfather, and MLEC co-workers are great resources of knowledge and have helped him gain invaluable experience. Their advice has helped him develop throughout his career. Borchert explained, "My grandpa always told me to watch my feet, lift with my legs, and to save for a rainy day. My dad always reminds me to de-energize, test, and ground. He also tells me to try my best to learn something new every day."

We are incredibly lucky to have both Cory and Nik on our Operations Team. The job of a lineworker is not easy. The risk and danger of the job take a special person. We are thankful for all of our dedicated employees and their commitment to our cooperative members.

FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY

MLEC attends Fire Prevention & Safety Day at Nay Ah Shing School.

On Tuesday, October 19th, Mille Lacs Energy and East Central Energy teamed up for Fire Prevention & Safety Day at Nay Ah Shing Lower School. Each grade level had a different activity and learning opportunity. Ben Smith (ECE) taught students safety tips and tricks using a powered tabletop display. Lead Lineman Dave Wilke (MLEC) answered questions and talked about the bucket truck and equipment needed to work with electricity and power lines.



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

Barbara Welty - District 1
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bwelty@mlecmm.com
Secretary/Treasurer

Carol Pundt - District 2
218/678-3256
cpundt@mlecmm.com

Harold Harms - District 3
218/232-2935
hharms@mlecmm.com
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218/768-4900
ademenge@mlecmm.com
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Don Appel - District 5
218/927-4134
dappel@mlecmm.com
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Bruce Robinson - District 6
218/851-4760
brobinson@mlecmm.com

Michael Reem - District 7
218/839-5697
mreem@mlecmm.com

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

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MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlecmm.net>
under **My Co-op**

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your tax and interest paying
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,
an organization which was
formed to supply you with
low-cost, dependable
electricity when other sources
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Managing Editor: Kassie Peterson,
Communications Specialist

IMPORTANT CHANGES COMING TO MLEC FIBER

Dear Member:

As I open an Internet browser, these are the headlines I see:

“Panic-ordering by Retailers is Making the Supply Chain Crisis Even Worse”, CNBC.com, 14 hours ago.

“Supply-Chain Crisis Fuels Latest Retreat From Globalization”, The Wall Street Journal, 4 hours ago.

“HP CEO: PC Shipments Will be Hampered by Supply-chain Issues into Next Year”, MarketWatch, 46 minutes ago.

In January of 2020, many people across the globe thought COVID – 19 was going to be nothing more than a blip in time. In mere weeks, we would be back to living our close, touching, breathing, and interactive lives. Yet here we are, 23 months later, and nearly 750,000 Americans have died from this terrible disease. The Federal Reserve estimates that nearly 200,000 businesses have permanently closed. And, according to the Department of Labor, nearly 28 million Americans are either on unemployment or have recently applied for unemployment and are waiting for approval. This is just in the United States.

Worldwide, the death toll is creeping up on 5 million people – with nearly half a million new cases being diagnosed daily. This is literally putting a dent in the global supply chain, as the articles above would suggest. Countries like China, Vietnam, India, and Indonesia, worldwide leaders in manufacturing, have had to close their doors due to a worker shortage from COVID – 19. And this worker shortage has had an unbelievable snowball impact on the entire globe. COVID – 19 sent employees from every single sector around the globe scurrying to their home office during the pandemic. This phenomenon created a huge demand for telecommunications and network cable, phones, computers, even cars. Products that are made in the above-mentioned factories.

But wait, it gets worse. With demand for goods so high, there is a shortage of affordable coal in these countries. Power plants cannot afford the coal they need to produce energy, causing them to shut down power plants, interrupting power supply at these manufacturing facilities. So even when they have workers, they must still shut down because they have no power to run their factories. These shutdowns are disrupting ports, and sea and rail transport. This intermittent manufacturing process is causing bottlenecks here in the United States where we do not have enough staff at the ports to unload shipments and move product to its destination when it finally does arrive.

What does this have to do with broadband? As I indicated, these disruptions are hitting every single segment of our global economy. Not only are we seeing a major increase in the cost of fiber itself, but we are also seeing increases in all affiliated equipment to get fiber connected to the home. We are seeing increases in the cost of installing fiber, the cost of back-office support from our vendor partners, the cost of purchasing fiber backbone (connection to the world-wide web), and our own internal cost increases.

At MLEC, we see bringing true-gigabit fiber Internet to rural America as critical infrastructure, just like electricity was in

the 1930s. We also know that we need to do so at a rate that does not jeopardize the financial security of the electric side of our business. We have researched the types of packages that other Internet service providers are offering, and what they are charging, including our partner, CTC; and, we have determined that we can no longer afford to sustain our business at the rates we are charging our member-consumers. Beginning March 1, 2022, you will see an exciting brand-new offering from MLEC fiber that will fit a broad range of consumers, based on true internet needs and usage patterns. We also believe that these new offerings will help us grow a sustainable business model based on the market we are currently facing, and what we believe the future will hold for us. Our new package offerings will be as follows:

Current Residential Plans		New Plans as of 3/1/ 2022	
100 mbps	\$51.95	100 mbps*	\$50.00
250 mbps	\$85.00	250 mbps	\$59.95
500 mbps	\$100.00	500 mbps	\$79.95
1 gbps	\$150.00	1 gbps	\$99.95

**Low income rate. Households must qualify for this benefit.*

Please continue to watch our Outlook newsletter, our website, and our Facebook page for updated information on our planned roll-out for MLEC Fiber changes. And, as always, do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions. We truly appreciate your business, and look forward to serving you now, and into the future.




Sarah Cron
CEO

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 Cooperative
P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:

kpeterson@mlecmn.com



HOT HONEY RANCH CRACKERS

1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup butter
1 packet ranch dressing seasoning mix
8 cups oyster crackers
Ground cayenne pepper to taste

Heat oven to 300 degrees. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil. Place butter and honey in a small sauce pan and heat over low heat, stirring constantly until melted. Stir in ranch dressing mix and cayenne pepper until thoroughly combined. Place crackers in a large bowl and gently stir in hot honey mixture until the crackers are evenly coated. Pour on to the prepared baking sheet, spreading evenly. Bake for 15 minutes, gently stirring once or twice. Remove from oven and cool on pan. Crackers will be sticky until cooled. Enjoy!

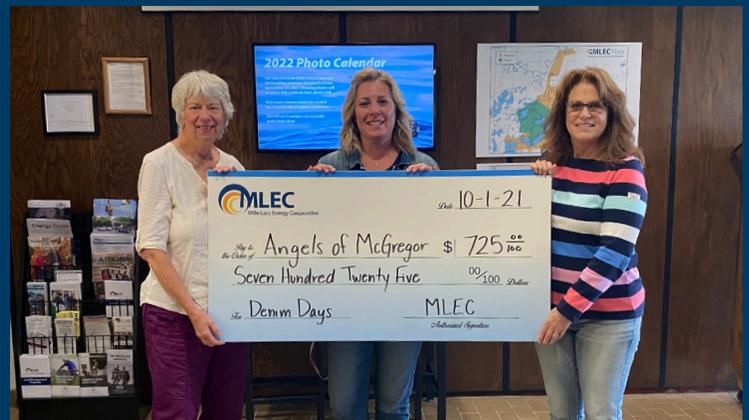
Thank you to Teresa Bunger of Deerwood for sharing this month's recipe.

DENIM DAYS DONATIONS

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative employees raised \$725 through Denim Days, where employees donate quarterly to wear jeans on Fridays. Recipients come from suggestions submitted by MLEC employees. This quarter, the money was donated to ANGELS of McGregor.

ANGELS provides a variety of services to keep local seniors living safely, independently, and with dignity. Their services include transportation, counseling, home visits, socialization, and much more!

ANGELS is always looking for more volunteers! Visit their website at www.angelsofmcgregor.com for more information.



DUAL FUEL VS. FREEDOM HEAT

A Dual Fuel system is used in a home that has electricity as their main heating source with a fuel oil, propane, or natural gas back up. The electric heating is controlled during "high demand" periods when the call for heating is at its highest and the cost of power is at its highest. These are usually the coldest days of the winter. During times of high consumption and higher electric prices, Great River Energy will interrupt the home's electric heat and switch the home over to the non-electric heat source.

The most that it can be controlled is 400 hours during one heating season, which runs from October to May. The control hours usually occur 4:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. and can possibly last up to 12 hours a day, if needed. The benefit to this program is that in exchange for allowing us to control your electric heat you will have a kilowatt-hour rate at 6.54 cents, much lower than the main meter rate of 11.74 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Another option for heating is Freedom Heat and it is

comparable to Dual Fuel but is controlled for a shorter time period and no back up is required. The kilowatt-hour rate for Freedom Heat (7.98 cents per kilowatt) is slightly higher than Dual Fuel.

Both are cost-saving alternatives that help decrease your monthly electric bill. You can check when we will be controlling at our website: www.mlecmn.net and in the upper right-hand corner click the Load Control button - you'll see what is going to be controlled that day. Contact your Energy Services Team at 218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279 for more details.

ENERGY WISE  MN

RED FLAGS RULE

As many as nine million Americans have their identities stolen each year. As a result of that startling statistic, the Federal Trade Commission has developed a regulation called the "Red Flags Rule." The Red Flags Rule requires businesses to develop a program to detect, prevent, and minimize the damage that could result from identity theft.

The data privacy of our members is important to us, and as a MLEC member, you may be asked to provide additional information and identification when you make inquiries on your account, such as verifying the last four digits of your social security number.

A member may complete an Authorized Contact Agreement form to allow us to give account information to anyone other than the member. This permits an

Authorized Contact to make inquiries on the account to which they are authorized. The Authorized Contact must provide their name, date of birth, and the last four digits of their social security number in order to receive account information. While these practices may seem intrusive, please understand that these procedures are in place to protect your member data and prevent the occurrence of identity theft.



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
Nathan Readle 218-537-8419

Northern Crow Wing County
Jeff Overmyer 218-252-0919

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

TV & MOVIE STREAMING 101

MLEC Fiber Internet makes it easy to cut the cord on traditional cable and satellite TV. With fast fiber Internet speeds, you can stream video to your Smart TV or streaming device without any buffering or delays. Here are three simple steps to get you started.

1. Having fast and reliable Internet is the key to successful streaming.

Other Internet services such as satellite, simply can't keep up or have data caps that slow you down after a certain amount of usage. MLEC Fiber offers a variety of plans to best fit your needs and lifestyle.

2. Make sure you have a Smart TV or are using a streaming device.

Streaming devices like Roku and Amazon Fire TV cost around \$40, plug into your TV's HDMI port and give you access to every streaming service imaginable. The breadth of streaming apps available is the main draw. They also provide an easy-to-navigate interface and the ability to search for titles across every streaming service.

Smart TVs are the most popular way for Americans to access streaming services. If you've bought a TV in the past 10 years, chances are it's considered "smart" — that is, it connects to the internet and has streaming apps built-in.

Gaming consoles are another popular method of streaming, but it's really a secondary use.

3. Lastly, you'll need to decide what you want to watch.

With streaming there are many services to choose from such as Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, and Prime Video. Even though these streaming subscription services come with a monthly fee, it is often less than the monthly cost of a traditional cable service.

Are you in a MLEC Fiber project area? Go online to view project maps or give our office a call at **218-429-0433**. Sign up today to guarantee service to your home, cabin, or business.



HAPPY
Thanksgiving

**MLEC WILL BE CLOSED ON
NOVEMBER 25th & 26th
TO CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING**

Honoring All Who Served
THANK YOU VETERANS!

***MLEC will be closed
November 11th***



SIGN UP TODAY! Call our office at
218-429-0433 or 800-497-5310



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STRAY VOLTAGE

Electrical supply systems delivering power to farms, homes, and businesses are grounded to the earth to make them as safe as possible and to ensure their reliability. The ground of these electric systems results in some current flow through the earth. Animals sometimes respond to the voltage differences between two points, a condition commonly referred to as stray voltage.

Help with stray voltage problems can come from many sources: veterinarians, dairy field representatives, electricians, county agents, and your electric cooperative. If you suspect stray voltage may be a problem on your farm, the first step is to have your electrician check your equipment in the barn and balance the load, if possible. If the problem continues, contact MLEC at **218-927-2191 or 800-450-2191**.



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 **November 30th**.

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

OR E-MAIL:
kpeterson@mlcmmn.com

What two heating systems are both cost-saving alternatives that help decrease your monthly electric bill?

Name:

Address:

Congrats to Tony Dressen of Shakopee, the September gift card trivia winner!

 **MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

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