



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## IS YOUR HOME READY FOR WINTER?

*5 ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.*

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

**1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly.** If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.

**2. Inspect electrical cords.** We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...

**3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips.**

When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.

**4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency.**

There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.

**5. Practice safety in the kitchen.** As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

MLEC wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) for additional safety tips.

# FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY

## Mille Lacs Energy attends local safety events

Throughout October, MLEC participated in several local safety events, including open houses for the Aitkin and Deerwood Fire Departments and Fire Prevention & Safety Day at Nay Ah Shing Lower School. Kids learned safety tips using a powered tabletop display while linemen Greg Greely and Tony Klee answered questions.



# OFF PEAK HEATING

What is Off Peak Heating? It is a heating system that draws energy during off-peak hours (nighttime) while electricity is in lower demand and, therefore, less expensive. Heating systems that work for this would be highly efficient furnaces or room units that generate the heat at night and store it in ceramic bricks to distribute throughout the day; when the room thermostat calls for heat, the stored heat in the bricks is discharged into the area to satisfy the heating requirements. The amount of heat stored in the brick core of the heater is regulated in relation to weather conditions. When put on a separate meter and load management controls, this heating system allows you to take advantage of a lower kilowatt rate of 5.35¢.



## More than just lowering your bills

- Safe form of heating
- Stable and predictable rates
- No need to remember to fill a tank
- Pay for consumption after using it
- No need for a carbon monoxide detector
- Clean and reliable
- No house chimney or exhaust required

By participating in MLEC's Off Peak program, you not only realize savings on your own monthly bills, but you also contribute to the overall vitality of the cooperative and allow it to continue to deliver on its mission of providing affordable, reliable electricity.

For more information on which home heating system will work best for you, contact the Energy Services Team to assist you at 218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279.

**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



# MLEC LISTS PROPERTY FOR SALE

Dear Member:

The MLEC property at 36559 US Highway 169 will soon be listed for sale. You are getting a sneak peek of the listing here first, but will soon be available on: LoopNet, Global Location Strategies (LOIS), Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Northland Connection, Minnesota Commercial Association of Real Estate/Realtors (MNCAR), and Great River Energy.

This 45,504 square foot property features:

- Highway traffic, visible location
- High-speed Fiber-to-the-Premise Internet
- Spacious yard and maintained landscaping
- Semi truck assessable driveway
- 2 large storage buildings
- Fenced equipment yard
- Recent interior renovations

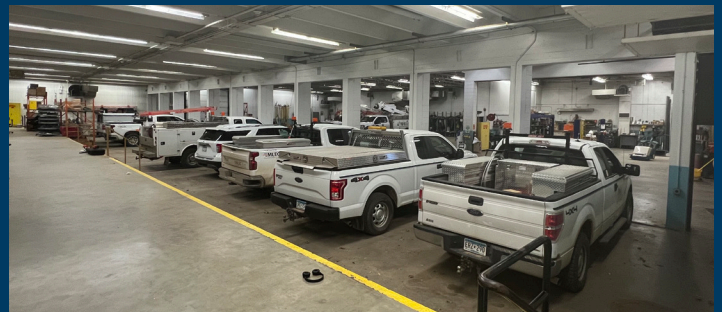


*Sarah Cron*  
CEO

The property will be listed at \$1,500,000. MLEC staff and Board of Directors have received several serious inquiries about the property from the community, and plan to work directly with our System Attorney, Henry Brucker, and Great River Energy Economic Development Lead, Jeff Borling.

MLEC does not plan to vacate the facility until September of 2024; however, we believe the early lead time on the listing will give organizations plenty of time to plan ahead for their development needs.

Should you have a need for a commercial facility of this type, please contact Jeff Borling directly at (218) 355-8088 or jborling@grenergy.com. Further inquiries, facility tours, our sales offers will be forwarded to MLEC management for scheduling and review. Thank you for your interest. We look forward to the next era of growth as your electric cooperative!





# 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@mlecmm.com



Thank you to Glenda Theis of Wahkon for sharing this month's recipe.

## PUMPKIN PIE WITH PECAN CRUNCH TOPPING

### Cream Cheese Layer:

8 oz. block cream cheese (softened)  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp vanilla  
1 egg  
1 - 9 inch pie crust (unbaked)

### Topping:

3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans  
3/4 cup brown sugar  
3 Tbsp butter

### Pumpkin Layer:

1 1/4 cups pumpkin (canned or cooked)  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 tsp ginger  
2 eggs (slightly beaten)  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1/4 tsp nutmeg  
1 cup evaporated milk

Combine cream cheese layer ingredients and pour into pie crust. Combine pumpkin layer ingredients and pour on top of cream cheese layer. Bake at 350 degrees for 65-70 minutes or until a knife comes out clean. Cool until set. For the topping, combine ingredients, then spread gently over the pie. Place under broiler for 2 minutes or until mixture begins to bubble. Allow the pie to cool. Enjoy!

# TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This September, the board awarded \$20,500 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Advocates Against Domestic Abuse (HOPE), Aitkin County Search & Rescue, Crisis Line & Referral Service, Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project, Mille Lacs Area Health Foundation, Mille Lacs Trails, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, South Aitkin First Responders, and Wealthwood Rod & Gun Club. The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,508,979!

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

*First Row L to R: Mary Marana, Beth Swenson, Lorna White, Darla Blegen, Rachel Beaufaux, Paula Fisher*

*Second Row L to R: Chuck Schotzko, Kevin Pullis, Brian Andrews, Phil Tange, Jim White, Todd Brown, Scott Van Hatten, Jim Stigen, Peggy Larsen, Scott Gale, Bob Nelson*



# FIBER HOMES

MLEC Fiber has partnered with Fiber Homes, the nation's first fiber Internet search service, to give people looking to buy or rent a home in our service area a convenient way to determine the quality of Internet available at any given address.

MLEC Fiber has certified nearly 3,000 fiber serviceable addresses with Fiber Homes locally. MLEC Fiber joins over 150 other fiber providers from around the country in Fiber Homes' database of over 7 million certified fiber addresses from both independent and national providers. The database is updated in real time, ensuring that when new homes are connected to a fiber network, consumers consulting FiberHomes.com are the first to know.

Additionally, Fiber Homes is actively working with MLSs around the country to add this crucial information to the property listings.

If you are a real estate agent or shopping for a new property, make sure to check Fiber Homes to view all of the Internet options available.



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 320-277-6277

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

Find load control schedule at  
[www.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)

# 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 an 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.



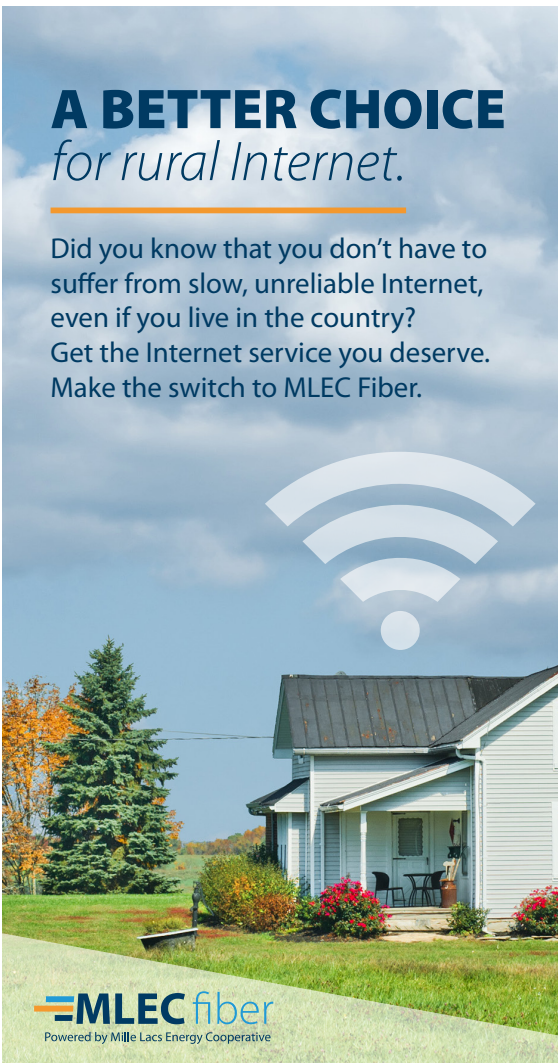
# STRAY VOLTAGE

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**.







## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen. When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy.

When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

Source: Dept. of Energy



## 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

Fill in the blank.

Avoid \_\_\_\_\_ electrical outlets and power strips.

Name:

Address:

Congrats to Jim Lease, the September gift card trivia winner!



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.