



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## 2021 RIVERBOAT HERITAGE DAYS

On Saturday August 7<sup>th</sup>, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative participated in the Riverboat Days Parade. Employees and their families drove MLEC trucks and threw candy to spectators along Minnesota Ave. It was an honor to partner with the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce to organize and execute this year's parade.

All cooperatives – not just electric cooperatives - operate according to the same set of 7 core principles. Principle #7 – Concern for Community – is one of the most well-known. It is also one of the most visible and meaningful to our members and our employees. MLEC is happy to be back volunteering locally amongst our members once again. Thank you to employees, board members, and friends/family for supporting MLEC and our community!

AITKIN MINNESOTA



# 3 FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR SUMMER BILL

Are you surprised by your summer electric bill? If your usage hasn't changed, it is understandable that a higher-than-normal bill might not seem to make sense. Here are a few possible reasons why.



## Air Conditioning

It may seem obvious, but summer weather plays a big role in your electric bill. Air conditioning accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average household electric bill. Maintenance and smart use of your cooling system (such as keeping your drapes closed or planting trees for shade) will help keep your electric bill in check while at the same time, keeping your home at a comfortable temperature.

## Dehumidifiers

Typical dehumidifiers cost about 6-10 cents each hour they're in use. Monthly costs of \$15-\$35 are common in summer, but can exceed \$50 per month if the dehumidifier runs a lot.

## Device Charging

Look around your home at all the technology that uses chargers: cell phones, MP3 Players, iPads or tablets, electric razors, electric toothbrushes, laptops, portable game systems, and similar devices. The more gadget-oriented you are, the more likely you are to have these devices plugged in and sucking energy from your home. Unplug adapters and chargers from outlets when not actively charging a device, as they'll pull electricity simply from being plugged in.

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

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bwelty@mlecmmn.com  
Secretary/Treasurer

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

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brobinson@mlecmmn.com

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

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

Find minutes from  
MLEC Board meetings at:  
<http://www.mlecmmn.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

# STANDBY GENERATOR PROGRAM

Reliability is of utmost importance at MLEC. However, we sometimes experience outages due to a variety of causes, such as weather, animals, or damaged power lines from digging or car crashes. For most members, being without power is merely an inconvenience, but for others, continuity of service is very important. For this reason, we offer a standby generator program that is ideal for members with a home business, sump pump, medical needs, or simply desire to always have the comfort and conveniences that electricity provides. MLEC is now offering Briggs and Stratton standby generators. When the power goes out, the generator automatically takes over. All generators are professionally installed and serviced by MLEC and come with a 10-year parts and labor warranty.

**Call MLEC for more information or a price quote at 218-429-0432.**



# HEADQUARTERS PROJECT UPDATE

Dear Member:

MLEC recently received notification from a member that they were going to send a letter out to their neighbors encouraging them to contact their MLEC Board Member about how they felt about MLEC building a new facility. I would like to touch on a few of the member's concerns – but more importantly – I, too, encourage you all to contact your MLEC Board Member to let them know how you feel.

As I have indicated in the past, the current needs of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative as a business have outgrown our current facility. The services we offer, the size of our staff, the technology necessary to run our business, the number and types of machines and vehicles, environmental requirements, and land rights have all changed to a point that we need to find a new location for our facility.

Determining the qualities and location for a new facility requires much thought about our membership needs for today; and, for the growth and foresight for the next 80 years. The diligence we have assumed has involved many steps. Steps that require the successful conclusion of all prior steps before moving on to the next. We are prudently working through these steps, sharing facts and information with all our members as it becomes available.

It is important to note that early in the discussion of a potential new facility, we hired the engineering firm, Widseth, to complete a feasibility study. Our goals for the feasibility study were to determine: a) can we stay in our existing facility with upgrades; b) can we rebuild a facility on our existing property; or c) should we build a new facility on a new property. Once again, I offer that this feasibility study is available to members should they wish to review it. This document is not online because it is a private work document for members only. The worldwide web is just that – worldwide. We will share it in our offices only.

We have been asked why we can't just move the solar panels and put a new building in their place. The answer is not that simple. There are multiple reasons this will not work, the least of which is determining where they will be relocated. It is easy to look at a snapshot of GoogleMaps and measure out what estimates of facility sizes could fit on our existing property; however, many other considerations come into play – things we have toiled with for over a year.

The wetlands on the current property, required percentages of impervious space, land capacity for storm water run-off and septic sizing, parking space requirements, building code requirements – these things that not a concern when a building was put on this property over 60 years ago.

We have also been asked why we can't deconstruct the existing facility in phases and rebuild a little bit at a time. Your MLEC staff works very hard to work efficiently and effectively to keep things running smoothly. We have a system in place that keeps lights on, takes in revenues, pays bills, and returns capital credits to our membership. Please do not underestimate the impacts a multi-year rebuild-in-place construction project will have on the efficient day-to-day operations of MLEC, let alone the potential for increased response times in the event of a major outage or storm.

There is a saying in the electric cooperative industry, "if you've seen one co-op, you've seen one co-op." The number of consumers, miles of line, outposts, employee count, unions,



*Sarah Cron*  
CEO

terrain, board members, cooperative philosophy, ancillary services offered, management style, local government agencies, even the current political climate, all impact how an electric cooperative is run. To ask how one cooperative built their facility and assume we could or should do it the same way is like asking why an orange does not taste like an apple. We are defining the needs of our members, our employees, and our fleet. It is our obligation to you, our member, to design a facility that will meet those needs now and into the future.

We are still many steps from completing our process. Know that our decision will be made only after a complete analysis of our needs, with recommendations from professional engineers and architects that know building codes, land requirements, required setbacks, and efficient workflows has been made. MLEC serves seven districts that include Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs Counties. Our board members and leadership team are keeping the needs of our entire membership at the forefront of all discussions. If and when we move forward, we intend to launch a section of our website dedicated to information about the facility project. If and until that time comes, I do not have any further details to give.

Again, I encourage you to contact your MLEC Board Member to share your thoughts about the potential project.

Until next month,

# 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



## SPICY SLOW COOKER BEEF BARBACOA

3 lbs. beef cubes	3 bay leaves
4 cloves of garlic (chopped)	1 Tbsp. cumin
1 Tbsp. Adobo sauce	1 Tbsp. oregano
1 small can of green chilis	1/4 tsp. salt
1 medium-sized onion (chopped)	1 tsp. black pepper
1/4 cup fresh lime juice	1/4 tsp. cloves
2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar	1/2 cup beef stock

Layer in slow cooker according to recipe order. Cook for 5 hours on high setting or 7 hours on low setting. Serve in taco shells of choice and add favorite fixings such as rice, beans, lettuce, tomato, cheese, sour cream, or guacamole. Enjoy!

Thank you to Cynthia Scott of Otsego for sharing this month's recipe.

# 2022 MLEC FIBER PROJECT

*The fastest and most reliable Internet service in our area could be coming to you!*

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) is happy to announce that MLEC Fiber Internet will become available for more customers in 2022. High-speed Internet — or the lack thereof — is an issue in many areas of rural Minnesota. MLEC has provided advanced technology, like electricity back in the 1930s, to areas in Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs Counties for decades. MLEC Fiber Internet is the latest example as it gives rural residents access to the kinds of super-fast service to which city dwellers are accustomed.

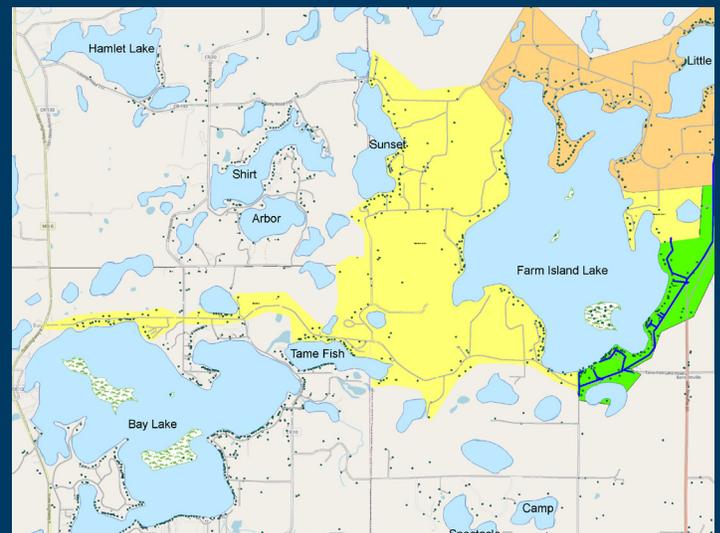
The Phase 5 project will pass approximately 300 homes and businesses and will provide up to 1 Gbps symmetrical Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) Internet service. FTTH is the fastest and most reliable Internet available. We are excited to, once again, partner with Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) on the construction of this project and expand our MLEC Fiber Internet network. The project area includes the west side of Farm Island Lake, runs east to Sunset Lake, then along Tame Fish Lake Road all the way to Highway 6. The Phase 5 project will create a redundant link to CTC's existing infrastructure. This will make our fiber network stronger and prevent Internet outages.

In addition to Phase 5, MLEC Fiber has continued construction on our Phase 3, Phase 4, and East Lake projects. If you live in one of the project areas, there is still time to sign up! Crews are working hard to get as many customers connected as possible before winter comes.

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is always searching and applying for grant opportunities to help bring our members fast, reliable, and local Internet service. Residents in these project areas will have expanded educational, economic, and health care opportunities. MLEC understands that having an Internet connection is more important than ever before. Please

continue to read the Outlet, Facebook, and our website for more information and updates on our upcoming fiber projects.

For more information on MLEC Fiber Internet call our office at 218-429-0433 or visit our website at [www.mlecmn.net/fiber](http://www.mlecmn.net/fiber). Project area maps, Internet plans, and service agreements can all be found online.



\*Phase 5 Project shown in yellow\*

**MLEC** fiber  
Powered by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative



# SMART PAYMENTS

*Save time & eliminate late fees!*

With SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and can pay securely online or in the app, anytime, anywhere.

Sign up for autopayments, set up your secure, preferred payment method and let account management go into autopilot.

All in the palm of your hand and online!



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  
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](http://www.mlecmm.net) under *Quick Links*.



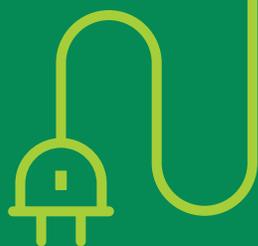
Visit our website -  
[www.mlecmm.net](http://www.mlecmm.net)  
E-mail us - [mlec@mlecmm.net](mailto:mlec@mlecmm.net)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly  
installed exterior doors can  
waste energy and money.

Shut the door on wasted  
energy by weather stripping  
and sealing all exterior doors.  
If you have an old exterior door,  
consider replacing it with a  
newer, energy efficient model.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



### Second Quarter Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

#### Comparative Operating Statement for the Quarter Ending June 30, 2020 & June 30, 2021

	2020	2021
OPERATING REVENUE	13,461,590	14,559,913
COST OF PURCHASED POWER	7,467,101	8,435,898
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-OPERATION	681,730	712,945
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-MAINTENANCE	1,209,800	1,259,648
CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS EXPENSE	415,750	414,497
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATIONAL EXPENSE	309,130	53,105
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSE	801,214	865,416
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	3,417,624	3,305,611
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	10,884,725	11,741,509
DEPRECIATION	1,146,140	1,017,912
TAX EXPENSE	1,330	-
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	721,385	695,971
INTEREST EXPENSE-OTHER	1,790	124
OTHER DEDUCTION	-	400
TOTAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICE	12,755,370	13,455,916
OPERATING MARGINS	<b>706,220</b>	<b>1,103,997</b>
NON OPERATING MARGINS-INTEREST	56,060	56,507
NON OPERATING MARGINS-OTHER	(24,663)	(150,961)
GENERATION & TRANSMISSION CAPITAL CREDITS	-	-
OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	83,394	85,105
NET MARGINS	<b>821,011</b>	<b>1,094,648</b>



### Unclaimed Capital Credits Checks

You can see the list on our website at [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) under My Co-op and choose Capital Credits on the drop menu.

A hard copy is available at MLEC's office. Maybe a check is waiting for you! If you know someone and how to contact them, please call MLEC at 218-429-0431.



# Viasat™

### Unlimited data plans

Starting at just \$64.95/mo. Get the Internet service you need now.



**CALL TODAY FOR DETAILS**

218-429-0433 or 800-497-5310

# PHOTO CALENDAR

See your photo in MLEC's 2022 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 27, 2021. Winning photos will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Voting will take place after the deadline on the MLEC Facebook page. The 12 photos with the most likes will be featured in the calendar.

**Photos must be emailed to: [photos@mlecmn.com](mailto:photos@mlecmn.com) by 11:59 p.m. on October 27, 2021.**

*Winning photographers automatically give MLEC permission to use the photos in the calendar, in other publications, member presentations, or electronically online.*



# 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 **September 30<sup>th</sup>**.

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

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

When is the deadline for the 2022 photo calendar contest?

---

Name:

Address:

*Congrats to Jeanne Varland of Garrison, the June gift card trivia winner!*



## MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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