



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

VOLUME 50
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APRIL 2019

ENERGY SAVING EXCITEMENT

Do your appliances have the ENERGY STAR label?

Check for the ENERGY STAR label when you shop for new appliances and you'll be guaranteed a high-performance product. ENERGY STAR is the national label identifying energy-efficient products that meet guidelines set by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy.

- ENERGY STAR clothes dryers use about 20% less energy than conventional models without sacrificing features.
- ENERGY STAR certified dehumidifiers have more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors, and fans than conventional models, which means they remove the same amount of moisture, but use nearly 30% less energy.
- Freezers that have earned the ENERGY STAR certification are at least 10% more energy efficient than the minimum federal standard.

Go online to www.mlecmn.net for rebate forms or call us at **218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279** for any further information. Return your completed form(s) and a receipt dated within 90 days of purchase and we will credit your electric bill for your rebate.

These are exciting facts. In addition to saving energy, you can receive rebates from MLEC with ENERGY STAR appliance purchases.

A \$50 rebate is available for ENERGY STAR refrigerators and freezers; \$25 for dryers and dehumidifiers.



SYSTEM-WIDE METER UPGRADE

New technology to help us serve you better!

MLEC is in the process of making a substantial investment in infrastructure, building one of the most technologically advanced power control systems. Using a meter data management system (MDMS) to optimise data collected from an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) will provide members with the latest metering technology. MLEC plans to implement AMI in early 2019 and install an MDMS in the spring.

AMI, or smart meters, automates metering functions and reduces read times from 27 hours to 30 minutes. AMI meters read up-to-the-minute electric energy use information and allow members to track their electricity use online. The AMI system also is upgradable to accommodate additional and future technologies. "Having AMI means more data, more often," said our own Ann Espeseth, AMI/O&M/DIS Specialist. "The MDMS will enable us to manage that data more efficiently."



Frequently Asked Questions

Why is MLEC installing new meters?

MLEC is installing new meters to enhance efficiency, improve reliability, and help keep future costs down for members and the cooperative. Meter technology has changed industry-wide.

What are the benefits?

The new meters will help us respond more quickly to outages, resulting in shorter restoration times. They will also provide better tracking of momentary outages, helping us to address power concerns. The meters will give you the information you need to use energy wisely.

Will you notify me when my meter is going to be installed?

Yes, an MLEC representative will knock at your door in an attempt to notify you before the install. A door hanger will be left at your location informing you of the meter exchange.

Will my service be interrupted while you install the new meter?

Unfortunately, yes, there will be a brief interruption of service while the new meter is installed.

Will the new meter automatically notify MLEC about a power outage, or should I still call?

The new meters are designed to alert MLEC about outages. Members should continue to contact MLEC to report an outage and any immediate hazards. The new metering system will help us verify the location of the outage.

Please call 800-450-2191 if you have additional questions about advanced meters.

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

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Find minutes from
MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlecmn.net>
under **About Us**

*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 Kokesh,
Communications Specialist*

EFFECTS OF THE POLAR VORTEX

March definitely came in like a lion, and I am sure we are all ready for her to go out quietly like a sweet little lamb. The utter ire of January and February is still too fresh in all of our minds. In Aitkin, January and February temperatures reached below zero 35 times, the worst of it hitting us for nine days in a row at the end of January. Three straight days were well below -30 degrees (the coldest day was -38 degrees) with wind chills exceeding -55 degrees. We can thank the polar vortex for these record-breaking low temperatures.

So, what happened when the temperatures got that cold? Load control receivers began to fail, getting stuck in the on position, causing our members' heating systems NOT to re-start in the extreme cold. Diesel fuel gelled, rendering many consumers' diesel-powered emergency back-up generators useless. And, finally, our low-cost, abundant wind resource failed to produce energy at those temps, spreading concerns of potential energy shortages.

Great River Energy (GRE), our wholesale power provider, worked closely with the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and neighbouring utilities to prepare for possible scenarios. This preparation helped ensure that their 28 member cooperatives, like Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC), could reliably meet member-owners' demand for energy.

On January 28, MISO issued a cold weather alert, and followed that up with a maximum generation emergency event on January 30. Essentially, this emergency event was telling us that in order to meet the consumer energy demands of the Midwest region, energy generation companies, like GRE, must be prepared to have all of their generating resources available to put into the wholesale market. With 25% of their generating resource coming from renewables (much of that wind) GRE had to rely on its two most trusted methods of providing reliable energy to the marketplace, fossil fuels and load control.

Coal Creek Station and Spiritwood Station operated well in the extreme cold; and, when MISO called on GRE to run their natural gas peaking plants, GRE employees worked through the night to ensure that there was enough fuel to keep them running. Additionally, GRE's demand response programs played a critical role in this cold weather event. GRE dispatched dual fuel and peak-shave water heaters on January 29, resulting in a demand reduction of 359 megawatts. GRE also dispatched full load control including commercial and industrial generators on January 30, resulting in a demand reduction of 459 megawatts.



Sarah Cron
General Manager

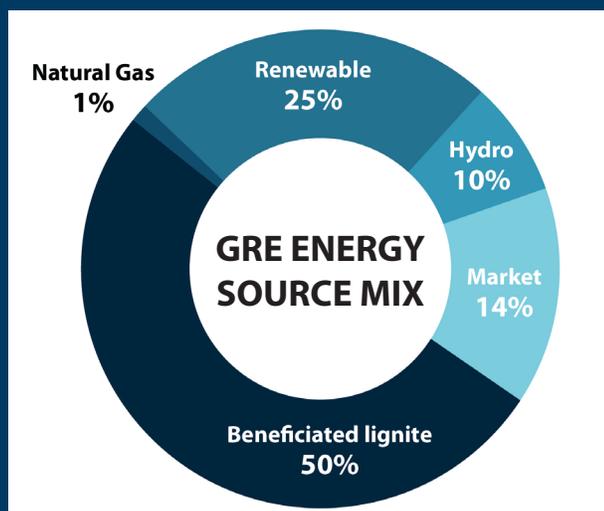
"The polar vortex reminded us that current technology cannot always keep up with the consumer demands of the energy market; and, a one-size-fits-all approach to solving our energy concerns is not going to work."

Over two days, GRE realized an estimated load management impact of 3,112 megawatt-hours of load control, which is enough load to equal the power of 300 homes.

Why is this important to MLEC and you, our member-owners? First, working together, we helped GRE avoid having to make real-time, expensive purchases from the energy market. This directly impacts your monthly MLEC electric bill. Second, the polar vortex reminded us that current technology cannot always keep up with the consumer demands of the energy market; and, a one-size-fits-all approach to solving our energy concerns is not going to work.

It is important to remember that GRE met the state-mandated renewable energy standards of 2025 years ahead of schedule, and they made a voluntary pledge to have 50% renewables by 2030. Regardless of the percentage of renewables in the generation mix, until technology can properly integrate them into the energy market, we are still going to have to rely on coal and natural gas as part of the equation to deliver reliable electricity to our homes and businesses.

Until next month,



LET'S DISH

Thank you to Patricia Murray of Coon Rapids
for sharing this month's recipe.

SEND US YOUR RECIPES!

We'll credit your account **\$5.00**
if it's printed in THE OUTLET

MAIL TO:

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

OR E-MAIL:

kkokesh@mlecmn.com



CHUNKY POTATO SOUP

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 medium red potatoes | 3 Tbsp all-purpose flour | 1/2 tsp sugar |
| 2 cups water | Crushed red pepper flakes | 1 cup shredded cheese |
| 1 small onion (chopped) | Ground black pepper | 1 cup cooked ham (cubed) |
| 3 Tbsp butter | 3 cups milk | |

Peel potatoes and cut into 1-inch cubes. Bring water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add potatoes and cook until tender. Drain, reserving liquid. Set aside potatoes. Measure 1 cup cooking liquid, adding water, if necessary; set aside. Melt butter in saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped onion to saucepan; cook, stirring frequently, until tender. Add flour to saucepan; season with pepper flakes and black pepper to taste. Cook 3 to 4 minutes. Gradually add potatoes, reserved 1 cup cooking liquid, milk, and sugar to mixture and stir well. Add cheese and ham. Simmer over low heat for 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Enjoy!

COAL CREEK TOUR 2019

July 31st - August 2nd 2019

\$135 per person (paid with registration)

\$200 for single occupancy room

What's Included:

- Transportation
- Lodging (2 people per room, 2 nights)
- All meals except breakfasts and Thursday dinner

For more information, contact Lori at (218) 927-8239



Attention high school students!

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative offers a FREE tour to four high school students. Any sophomore, junior, or senior next year is eligible. A drawing will be held to determine the trip winners.

Adult Registration Form
Coal Creek Tour
July 31- August 2, 2019

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Student Registration Form
Coal Creek Tour
July 31- August 2, 2019

Name _____

Grade _____ Male _____ Female _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Parent's Name _____

Registrations are due June 10th! Complete and return to: MLEC, Attn: Lori Packer, PO Box 230 Aitkin, MN 56431

GO PAPERLESS!

Go green by using SmartHub to pay your bill.

Go paperless with SmartHub for convenient access to your bill anytime, anywhere. Going paperless isn't only going to save you trips to the mailbox, it also helps save the environment. View and pay your bill on your mobile device or on the web by going paperless with SmartHub.



With SmartHub you can:

- Pay your bill
- Manage your account
- Report an outage
- Get account updates
- Monitor usage



Regular office hours are
Mon-Fri 8:00 to 4:30
927-2191 or
800-450-2191 (toll free)

811 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
Scott Nutting 218/927-6922

Northern Crow Wing County
Bradley Rasmussen 218/543-1023

Mille Lacs County
Tim Emery 320/692-4104

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

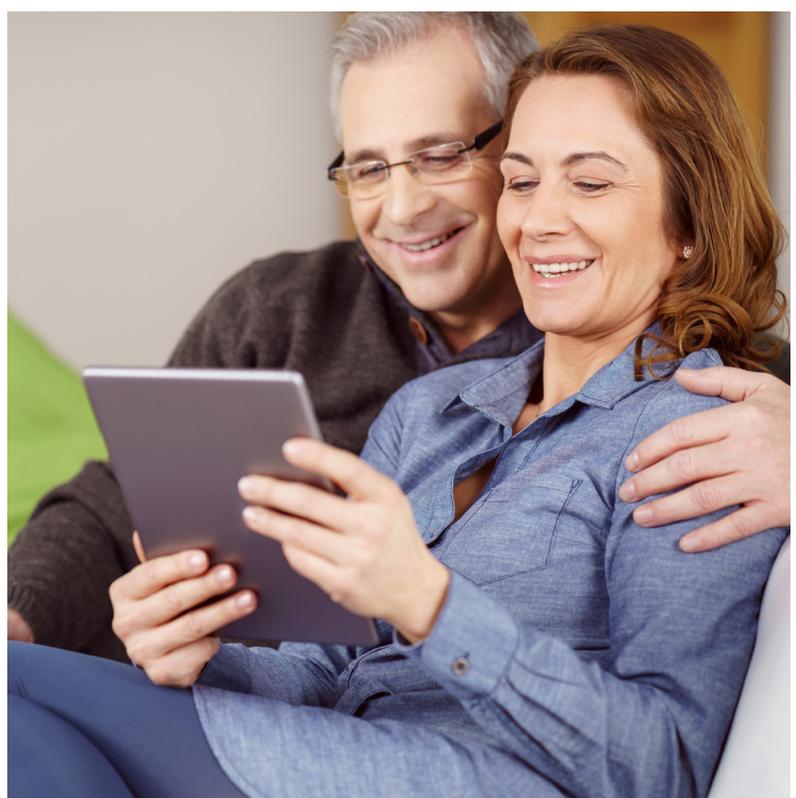
INVESTED IN FIBER

Are you located in our Phase II Fiber Internet area?

MLEC is bringing XStream Fiber Internet to more members! Fiber Internet is the fastest and most reliable Internet available. Fiber-to-the-Home (Ftth) utilizes optical fiber cable to provide unprecedented high-speed Internet access to your home!
XStream Fiber has many benefits, with speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second, fiber Internet delivers faster downloads and uploads with no buffering. This means you can Facetime and video chat with your loved ones without pausing or a blurry picture!

Invest in never missing a thing.

#InvestedInFiber



Find a map and the Fiber Internet Agreement at www.mlecmm.net

LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

April 18th is Lineman Appreciation Day! If the power is on where you are, you likely have a lineman to thank.

From the power plant, the grid crisscrossing the country both above and underground and right up to the meters on our homes, these men and women build and maintain the system that keeps our nation running.

When mother nature destroys what our linemen have built up, they are on call to build it back up again as quickly as possible. These men and women work tirelessly to get emergency systems back in working order and urgently return service to remaining areas. Often times in dangerous conditions.

You can celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day by thanking your local lineman and using #thankalineman on Social Media.

THANK YOU MLEC LINEMEN!



FREE FIRST MONTH & INSTALLATION
Limited time offer - CALL TODAY FOR DETAILS!
218-429-0433 or 800-497-5310



Unlimited data plans
Satellite Internet
available just
about anywhere

Viasat

RATE INCREASE

Rate information was published in the February Outlet newsletter and will be effective on your April bill. Rates and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available on our website at www.mlecmmn.net.

We are here to help! Call MLEC at 1-800-450-2191 with any questions.

POLICY UPDATE

At their March 15th board meeting, the Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) Board of Directors voted to revise MLEC's Cogeneration Policy and Rules adopting the Cooperative Minnesota Distributed Energy Resource Interconnection Process. The interconnection process for distributed energy resources has been updated by the State of Minnesota Public Utilities Commission; and under Minnesota Statute 216B.1611 cooperatives shall adopt an interconnection process that addressed the issues addressed in the Commission's order. MLEC has updated the Cogeneration Policy to reflect the adoption of the Cooperative Minnesota Distribution Energy Resources Interconnection Process, (C-MIP); and all new distribution energy resources shall follow the C-MIP interconnection process beginning May 1, 2019.