



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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## SLAM THE SCAM!

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, hang up the phone. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card. MLEC will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact MLEC either in person, or over the phone at 218-927-2191 or 800-450-2191.
- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of MLEC that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.



Other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

- Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up immediately.
- If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email, or send it to your spam folder.
- If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy.

# WI-FI GOT YOU DOWN?

XStream Managed Wi-Fi with our fiber Internet service is one way that you can improve your internet experience while using your wireless devices. At the heart of the service is the XStream GigaCenter. This device provides 802.11ac wireless that will support all your existing devices and many new devices yet to come. With this managed service, MLEC can help troubleshoot most internet difficulties from the office; this gets issues resolved faster and reduces the need to come onsite to fix the problem.

Do you have some areas of your home where the Wi-Fi signal is just not very good? We have a solution for that, too. Our Mesh devices extend your Wi-Fi signal, at fiber speed, to all the corners of your home to make sure your internet experience is the way it should be, fast and reliable.

## Here are just a few benefits of the managed service:

- Software upgrades are performed at regular intervals to make sure that your internet and Wi-Fi are always performing at their best.
- No upfront costs for any hardware.
- If any of the hardware fails, MLEC will replace it at no cost.
- Managed Wi-Fi is only \$7.95 a month.
- Mesh Units are only \$5.00 a month.
- Cloud-based remote Wi-Fi management.
- Call-in technical support to help you optimize your connection.



## Interested in XStream Fiber Internet?

Go to [www.mlecmm.net/xstream-fiber](http://www.mlecmm.net/xstream-fiber) and enter your information in the address bar to see if you qualify for service!

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

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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 Kokesh, Communications Specialist

# GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

## **Stationary Generator:**

An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

## **Portable Generator:**

Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside your home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.

Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.



# STAY SAFE DURING STORM SEASON

As we all know, the fight between summer storms and power lines typically does not end well. At MLEC, we have seen our share of storms in June and July, which is why I want to talk about the importance of power line safety, and how to report your power outage.

While being without electricity is frustrating to say the least, the most important thing to remember during an outage is a power line and your relation to it. **NEVER** go near a downed power line or attempt to cut a tree away from an overhead power line. You should **ALWAYS** assume that a power line is live and transferring electrical current. An accidental contact with a live power line could lead to serious injury, even death. **THINK SAFETY FIRST.**

- If you are experiencing a power outage at your home or business, call MLEC at 927-2191 or 800-450-2191.
- Do not attempt to clear a tree or debris that is in contact with downed or overhead power lines. Even if you think you are helping, you could be putting yourself or the general public in danger.
- Stay at least 30 feet from any downed power lines (or anything touching downed lines) and keep children and pets away.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle, stay inside and call 911 immediately. Electricity is looking for the easiest path to ground. If you exit your vehicle, you could be that path. *NOTE: If your vehicle catches fire, and you must exit, hop out of the vehicle without touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Hop away from the vehicle with both feet together, making sure to stay away from downed power lines or debris touching the lines.*
- Never approach a vehicle that is touching a downed power line. Call 911 immediately.
- Share these tips with your friends and neighbors.

In 2020, MLEC hopes to update our telephone system. Like any technology, our current system is antiquated, and can have difficulty handling the call volume—especially during times like a wide-spread power outage. Some members noticed this in June, when they had to call multiple times to get through to report their outage. Because this is a costly upgrade, and is not in the 2019 capital budget, I would like to remind you about another option you have to report your power outage, MLEC's SmartHub.

SmartHub is not just a way to pay your MLEC bill, view your usage, and communicate with MLEC staff; you can report your power outage straight from your computer, smartphone, tablet, or other smart device. And, signing up is really easy! It literally took me 50 seconds to register. You can register for SmartHub by visiting our website at [www.mlecmmn.net](http://www.mlecmmn.net) or downloading the app from your smartphone or tablet's app store. If you need help, just call us or stop by with your smart device. We will be more than happy to assist you.

***“SmartHub is not just a way to pay your MLEC bill, view your usage, and communicate with MLEC staff; you can report your power outage straight from your computer, smartphone, tablet, or other smart device.”***



Sarah Cron  
General Manager

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you still prefer to report your outage via the telephone, know that our phone system will recognize your phone number if it is the phone number we have associated with your MLEC electric account. If you have changed phone numbers, please contact MLEC and update your phone number. This will make the outage notification process more efficient and accurate.

The aggressive right-of-way clearing practice that MLEC undertook in 2017 has paid dividends. Our data shows that the outages we have experienced could have been more severe and lasted for longer durations had we not gotten a plan in place to clean these severely neglected areas. With that said, I want to thank you, our member, for your patience during these outages. I also want to thank the MLEC line crews for their safe, and tireless efforts to get the lights on, and the office staff for their support. At a cooperative, we are all in this together.

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

### OR E-MAIL:

kkokesh@mlecmn.com



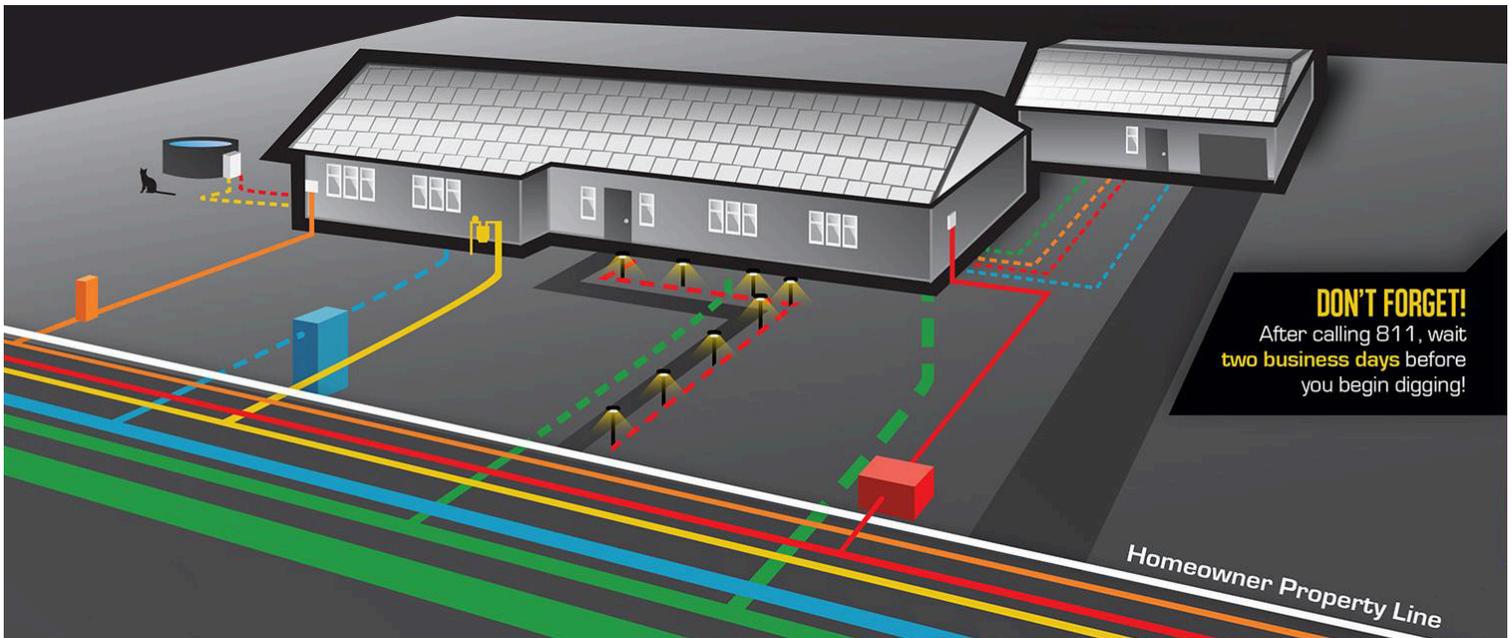
Thank you to Dorothy Hautman of Chaska for sharing this month's recipe.

## LEMON RHUBARB BUNDT CAKE

1 box lemon cake mix  
3 cups rhubarb (thinly chopped and sprinkled with 1 Tbsp sugar)  
1/2 cup buttermilk  
1/2 cup oil  
3 eggs

Glaze:  
2 cups powdered sugar  
2 Tbsp soft butter  
juice and zest of 1 lemon

Mix all ingredients and pour into a greased and floured bundt pan. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Let stand for 10 minutes then gently remove from pan. Mix the glaze ingredients into a thick icing and spread onto the hot cake. Enjoy!



# LOCATE LINES FOR FREE

Water, natural gas, and residential electric lines are usually owned by the utility up to the meter. Some sewer districts own only the mains; others extend their ownership to laterals up to the property line. The customer typically owns everything beyond these points.

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through Gopher State One Call applies ONLY to facilities owned by utilities. The diagram above shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the homeowner. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.

	<b>WATER</b>
	<b>SEWER</b>
	<b>GAS &amp; OIL</b>
	<b>ELECTRIC</b>
	<b>PHONE &amp; CABLE</b>



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our recipe box is getting low! Send in your favorite recipes for a chance to win a \$10 credit on your electric bill.

### Send recipes to:

kkokesh@mlecmn.com  
Mille Lacs Energy Coop  
Attn: Kassie Kokesh  
36559 US Highway 169  
Aitkin, MN 56431



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  
Mike Wenzel 218/270-2265

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.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)

## BEAT THE HEAT & CUT COSTS

Don't let your monthly electric bill put a damper on the joy of summer. Below are some tips for keeping your home cool and your electric bill in check.

### Adjust the thermostat

Set the temperature between 78 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and you could save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills. Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering pre-programmed settings to regulate your home's temperature throughout the year.

### Keep air moving

Fans won't replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, but they move the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On milder days when an air conditioner may not be needed, fans can save as much as 60 percent on electric bills. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

### Regular maintenance is essential

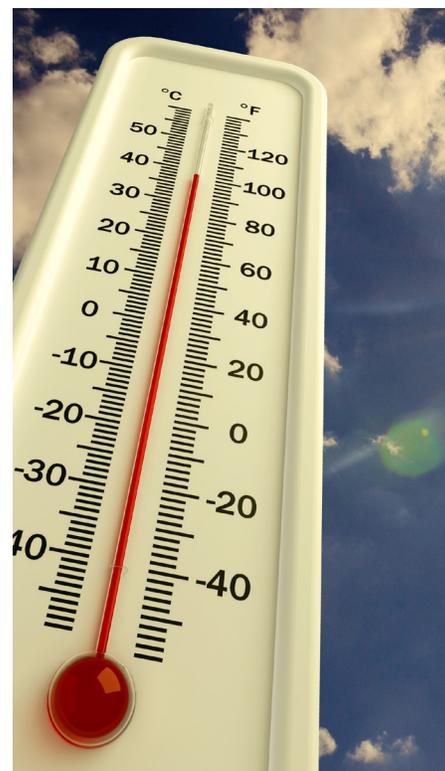
Maintenance is the most important factor in ensuring your system remains energy efficient. We recommend that members have their HVAC systems serviced annually or semi-annually by a certified technician. These HVAC professionals will check the entire system to make sure it is running efficiently. This will help extend the life of the system and save money.

### Efficient equipment

When it's time to replace a cooling system, purchase an ENERGY STAR-qualified model. This could reduce energy costs by as much as 30 percent. Tax credits and/or rebates on qualifying ENERGY STAR models may be available so check with us for more information.

### Size it right

Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and could lead to higher electric bills. A unit that is too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors. That's why it is important to talk with the professionals.



**MLEC will be closed  
Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**\* H A P P Y \***  
*Labor Day*

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# PHOTO CONTEST

See your photo in MLEC's 2020 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 28, 2019. 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.

**PHOTO CONTEST GUIDELINES**

- Only MLEC members are eligible for the contest.
- Photos must be electronic.
- Photos should capture the beauty of the areas we serve, if possible, but any Minnesota photos are acceptable.
- Pets, animals, food, etc. are acceptable.
- **PHOTOS MUST NOT INCLUDE PEOPLE.**
- The photos should be taken by the member.
- Please include the name of the member submitting, location taken, and a title for each photo.
- You may submit up to 8 photos each year, but we limit each photographer to no more than two winning entries each year.
- Entered photos must be in color and appropriately sized for printing at 12 inches wide by 9 inches high (300 ppi resolution).
- Only horizontal photos will be accepted. Vertical photos do not qualify.

Photos must be emailed to **photos@mlecmn.com** by 11:59 p.m. on October 28, 2019.

*Winning photographers automatically give MLEC permission to use the photos in the calendar, in other publications, member presentations, or electronically online. The 2019 calendar is available at our office.*

# SYSTEM-WIDE METER UPGRADE

MLEC is in the process of making a substantial investment in infrastructure, building one of the most technologically advanced power control systems. MLEC plans to implement AMI and install an MDMS throughout 2019. The new meters will improve reliability and give you more tools and opportunities to manage and save energy.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**(218) 927-2191 • (800) 450-2191 • [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net)**



**MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

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

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