



# THE OUTLET

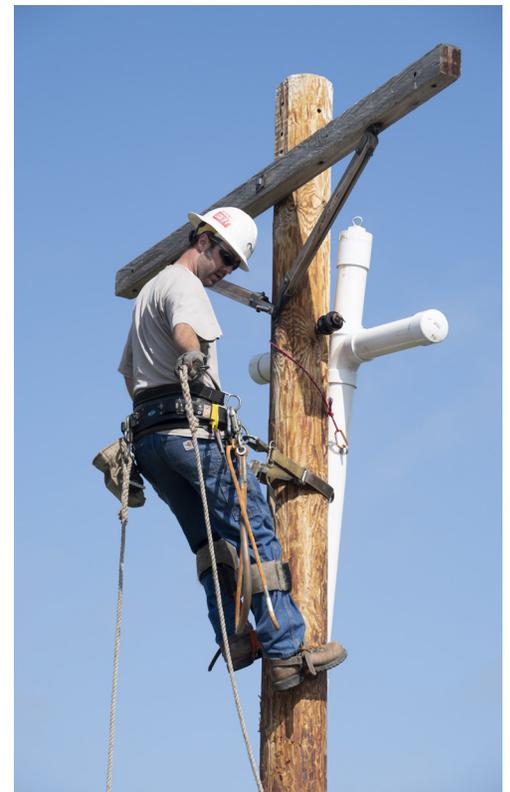
Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

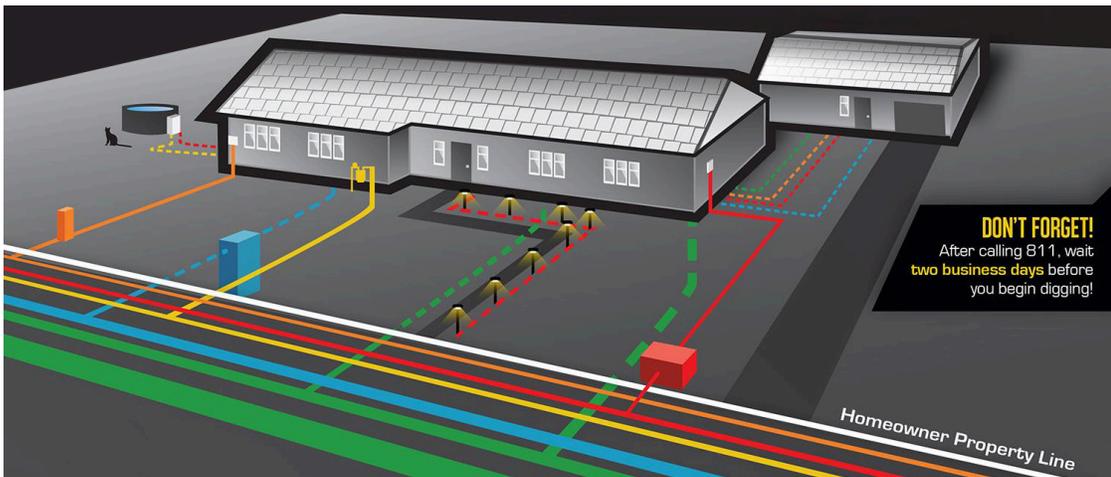
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 51  
NUMBER 8  
AUGUST 2020

## ANNUAL SAFETY TRAINING

MLEC pole top rescue training was held on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Training is facilitated through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA). Each year, our lineworkers, right-of-way workers, and other staff that may assist in storm situations review what to do in case of an emergency that involves a fellow crew member. At this time, lineworkers re-certify their climbing skills and practice different emergency scenarios. If a lineworker was to have an emergency while climbing a pole, the training would ensure another lineworker would be able to rescue them, lower the individual safely to the ground, and begin first aid. Using different rigging combinations lets the lineworkers practice for a variety of situations. MLEC always puts safety first, and by performing safety trainings, the cooperative is assuring that our employees are properly trained to handle any situation.





## 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. When you have a project that requires digging, file a locate request by calling 811 or online at [www.gsocsubmit.org](http://www.gsocsubmit.org).

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

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

**Barbara Welty - District 1**  
320/692-4800  
[bwelty@mlecmn.com](mailto:bwelty@mlecmn.com)  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Bill Bernard - District 2**  
218/678-3911  
[bbarnard@mlecmn.com](mailto:bbarnard@mlecmn.com)

**Harold Harms - District 3**  
218/232-2935  
[hharms@mlecmn.com](mailto:hharms@mlecmn.com)  
President

**Aileen DeMenge - District 4**  
218/768-4900  
[ademenge@mlecmn.com](mailto:ademenge@mlecmn.com)  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

**Don Appel - District 5**  
218/927-4134  
[dappel@mlecmn.com](mailto:dappel@mlecmn.com)  
Vice President

**Bruce Robinson - District 6**  
218/851-4760  
[brobinson@mlecmn.com](mailto:brobinson@mlecmn.com)

**Michael Reem - District 7**  
218/839-5697  
[mreem@mlecmn.com](mailto:mreem@mlecmn.com)

**Sarah Cron - CEO**  
218/927-8224  
[scron@mlecmn.com](mailto:scron@mlecmn.com)

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

## SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY

### Why water savers?

Water Savers are designed to provide you with effective strong water streams, while cutting back on additional unnecessary water usage, by having lower flow rates. Flow rate measures how much water flows from your showerhead, faucet aerator or other nozzle each minute, per gallon. The lower the flow rate, the better efficiency—and greater hot water savings—a fixture has. Water Savers have 30-40% lower flow rates than traditional products, helping you reduce water waste and water expenses with each use!

### Shop 50% Off Water-Saving Products!

Offer valid August 1 – September 30, 2020. No coupon code necessary. Shop now at [www.energywisemnstore.com](http://www.energywisemnstore.com).



ENERGY WISE  MN

# PANDEMIC PROTOCOL UPDATE

Dear Member:

As we hear the term “turn the dial” in reference to re-opening businesses, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) has taken a very cautious approach. We have expressed that the safety of our employees, our members, and our community is our top priority. That is why we will continue to keep our offices closed to the public until further notice.

At the time this month's Outlet went to print, nearly 30 states, including Minnesota, are requiring masks or face coverings in public. While we saw a dip in new cases in June, July has seen a dramatic rise, with daily spikes of new cases similar to what Minnesota experienced in May. Rather than open the office and risk infecting our employees and the public, we will continue to operate as safely and effectively as possible - remotely.

One exception we will make in August is that, by appointment only, we will allow members to enter the lobby should they feel that their situation cannot be addressed remotely. These requests will be granted on a limited basis, and must adhere to strict MLEC safety guidelines:



*Sarah Cron*  
CEO

- If you are ill, please do not attempt to make an appointment to enter our facility. Our goal is to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- All members of the public that enter MLEC buildings must have their temperature checked before entering. If their temperature is above 100.4 degrees, they will not be allowed to enter the facility.
- All members of the public that enter MLEC buildings must wear a mask or face covering the entire time that they are in the buildings.
- Admittance to the MLEC buildings will be confined to the front lobby or community room unless authorized by a member of the MLEC Senior Leadership Team.
- Public restrooms are closed to the general public.
- Once inside the facility, please respect the 6-foot social distance boundaries of all employees in the building; and, note that hand sanitizer is available, and use is strongly encouraged.

We want to thank everyone for their patience during this difficult time. We appreciate everyone that has taken advantage of our remote payment options, along with the multiple ways to contact our office. While we remain closed to the public, we strongly encourage our members to continue using the following payment options:

- Use our payment drop boxes located at our Aitkin office
- Use online payment methods (see [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) for all online payment options)
- Pay by phone: 855-385-9813
- Mail in your payment using the stub attached to your billing statement

If you have questions or concerns, please call us at 800-450-2191 or email [mlec@mlecmn.net](mailto:mlec@mlecmn.net).

By utilizing these payment and contact options, you will help us minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19. Stay safe and stay well.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Sm", located at the bottom left of the page.

# 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@mlecmn.com



## CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE COOKIES

4 (1 oz.) squares unsweetened chocolate, chopped	1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips	2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
6 tablespoons butter	1/4 teaspoon baking powder
3 eggs	1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup white sugar	1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract	

In the microwave or in a double boiler pot, melt unsweetened chocolate, 1 cup of the chocolate chips, and butter, stirring occasionally until smooth. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. In a large bowl, whip eggs and sugar until thick and pale, about 2 mins. Stir in the vanilla and the chocolate mixture until well mixed. Combine the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt; gradually stir into the chocolate mixture. Fold in remaining 1 cup chocolate chips. Cover dough and chill for at least an hour or overnight. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Roll chilled dough into 1 inch balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheets so they are 2 inches apart. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Thank you to Pauline Anderson of Aitkin for sharing this month's recipe.

# TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This June, the board awarded \$11,500 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Advocates Against Domestic Abuse (HOPE), Aitkin Alzheimer's Team, Aitkin Area Youth Baseball Association, Aitkin County Search and Rescue Volunteers, Knights of Columbus Cuyuna Range Council, Lakes Area Chaplaincy, Onamia Friends of the Library, and Wealthwood Rod and Gun Club.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative where our generous members round-up 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, Carol Pundt, Loren Larson, Pat Scollard, Diane Landstad, Linda Weimer, Jack Gilbertson, and Lowell W. Larson.

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.

**THANK YOU MEMBERS!**

# MAINTAINING YOUR EQUIPMENT

Dirt and neglect are the top causes of heating and cooling system inefficiency and failure. To ensure efficient system operation, it is important to perform routine maintenance.

## Change your air filter regularly

A clean filter will prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system, which can lead to expensive maintenance and/or early system failure. Check your filter every month, especially during winter and summer months, when use tends to be heavier. Change your filter if it is dirty – or at least every three months.

## Tune up your HVAC equipment

Proper maintenance by a qualified technician is one of the most important steps you can take to prevent future problems. Contractors tend to be busier in the spring and fall. Plan the check-ups around the beginning and end of daylight savings

time each spring and fall. For a list of qualified contractors, please visit our website [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) under the Quick Links tab. There is also a \$25 A/C or Air Source Heat Pump Tune Up rebate available until the end of September 2020. The rebate form is also available on our website, or call our Energy Services Team for more information at 888-433-4279.





Plans start at  
**\$50**  
per month

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

**Learn more about MLEC Fiber and stay updated on expansion projects!**  
**(218) 429-0433 • [www.mlecmn.net/fiber](http://www.mlecmn.net/fiber)**

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  
Benjamin Huson 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)

## STANDBY GENERATOR REVIEW

This May, MLEC launched the standby generator program in which members can purchase Briggs and Stratton standby generators directly from the cooperative. 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.

Maurice and Pamela Brule of Aitkin decided to invest in the program when they saw an article in The Outlet newsletter. They both work remotely and wanted to have a plan B in the event of a power outage, regardless of duration. The couple said the process went smoothly and quickly, and trusted that MLEC provides a reliable generator. Maurice said, "From the site survey to the scheduling and notifications of work to be performed, the process went very fast."

When asked what advice they would give to someone interested in purchasing a standby generator through MLEC, Maurice responded, "Pamela and I both grew up on a farm and are very familiar with advantages of doing business with cooperatives. This program is one example of the value a cooperative provides its members. I know when I need service or have questions, MLEC will be there to help me, be it today, next month, or five years from now. With this kind of investment, we want a partner we can rely on consistently. Thank you for taking care of us, your co-op members. We would encourage other MLEC members to take advantage of this valuable program."

Thank you Maurice and Pamela for investing in the program and providing your feedback. MLEC values your membership! Enjoy your new generator!

**Call Mille Lacs Energy for more information or a price quote at 218-429-0432.**



**STANDBY POWER**



# 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 **August 31<sup>st</sup>**.

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

**OR E-MAIL:**  
 kpeterson@mlecmn.com

All Briggs & Stratton standby generators are professionally installed and serviced by MLEC and come with a \_\_\_\_\_ year parts and labor warranty.

Name:

Address:



**Viasat**<sup>™</sup>

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

**SPEEDS NOW UP TO 30 Mbps**

**CALL TODAY FOR DETAILS**

218-429-0433 or 800-497-5310

## 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 an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and install a meter data management system (MDMS) throughout 2020. 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)