



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 50
NUMBER 12
DECEMBER 2019



BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

MLEC is now accepting donations for the 2nd Annual Mitten Tree!

The cold winter weather is upon us and it is once again time to decorate the Mille Lacs Energy Mitten Tree. Throughout December, we will be accepting donations of new and homemade mittens, gloves, hats, or scarves to decorate the tree. All contributions will be donated to a local food shelf or school. Last year was a great success and we are hoping to get even more donations in 2019.

Donations can be delivered to the cooperative's office at 36559 US Highway 169 in Aitkin. Donations will be accepted through the holidays and distributed shortly after.



XMAS TREE RECYCLING

Drop off your real Christmas tree at the MLEC office for chipping.

This year, MLEC will be offering free Christmas tree recycling for members. Drop off your tree at the Aitkin office in the member parking lot. There will be signs to direct you to the drop off spot. To prep your tree for chipping, please remove all decorations and lights.



CAPITAL CREDITS

When dealing with a business or a service, how many times do you get part of the profit? At MLEC, you do because you're an owner.

In December, MLEC will distribute capital credit refunds totaling \$823,680. The refunds are based on electric accounts that were active with the Cooperative in 1979-1983 (\$137,011) and 2001-2002 (\$686,669).

If your account is still active, you will see the refund on your December electric bill. If not, you will receive a check.

The 2019 payment brings the total dollars refunded by your Cooperative through the years to over \$18 million. Just another example of the Cooperative difference.

How Do Capital Credits Work?



1 MLEC tracks how much electricity you use throughout the year.

2 Each year, after expenses are paid, MLEC calculates margins (leftover funds).

3 MLEC uses the margins to pay down debt, invest in facilities and improvement projects, and allocates to members as capital credits based on their usage of electricity.

4 MLEC retires (returns) capital credits to members.

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

Barbara Welty - District 1
320/692-4800
bwelty@mlecmn.com
Secretary/Treasurer

Bill Bernard - District 2
218/678-3911
bbernard@mlecmn.com

Harold Harms - District 3
218/232-2935
hharms@mlecmn.com
President

Aileen DeMenge - District 4
218/768-4900
ademenge@mlecmn.com
Vice President

Don Appel - District 5
218/927-4134
dappel@mlecmn.com
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Bruce Robinson - District 6
218/851-4760
brobinson@mlecmn.com

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

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

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

FILLED WITH GRATITUDE

Dear Member:

We have all heard the saying “it’s lonely at the top”. As a leader of any organization, employees, customers, vendors, business partners, and other key stakeholders all turn to our leaders for the answers and expected outcomes. Leaders receive the complaints, the criticisms, and pent up anger. At times, it is hard not to take it personally. As I write this month’s column, I look outside at the unusual sunshine in the sky, think about the upcoming holiday season, and I choose to be filled with gratitude.

I am grateful for my enormous and funny family. My husband, seven siblings, and gaggle of nieces and nephews supply me with more love than any one person should every be allowed in one lifetime.

I am grateful for my job, talented co-workers, and seven bosses. Together, we are learning, growing, and changing to make MLEC an efficient, innovative, and stalwart organization. MLEC has experienced a lot of change in the last six years, and we are all looking forward to watching the change bear the fruits of its efforts.

I am grateful for living in such a beautiful part of the world. Despite the cold weather, we have the finest that nature has to offer. Boating, bicycling, skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, hiking, whatever your outdoor recreation choice is, we can experience it here.

I am grateful for my challenges. For the complaints and the criticism. I am grateful because moving to Aitkin and facing these things has made me a better person.

As we enter the season, I wish you and your families the happiest of holidays and a prosperous 2020. I wish you safety. I wish you peace.

Until next month,



Sarah Cron
CEO

Happy Holidays!

FROM ALL OF US AT MILLE LACS ENERGY 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 Kokesh
Mille Lacs Energy, P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:

kkokesh@mlecmn.com



WALNUT PUMPKIN PIE

1 - 15 oz. can pumpkin
1 - 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1 egg
1 1/4 tsp. cinnamon (divided 3/4 & 1/2)
1/2 tsp. ginger
1/2 tsp. nutmeg

1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
2 Tbsp. flour
2 Tbsp. butter
3/4 cup chopped walnuts
1 graham cracker pie crust

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Mix together the pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, egg, 3/4 tsp. cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and salt. Pour into the pie crust. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Remove from oven.

Reduce oven temp. to 350 degrees. Combine brown sugar, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, and flour. Cut in butter until crumbly. Stir in walnuts. Sprinkle the walnut mixture evenly over the pie. Return pie to oven and bake 40 minutes or until knife comes out clean. Cool and enjoy!

Thank you to Julie Hansen of Aitkin for sharing this month's recipe.

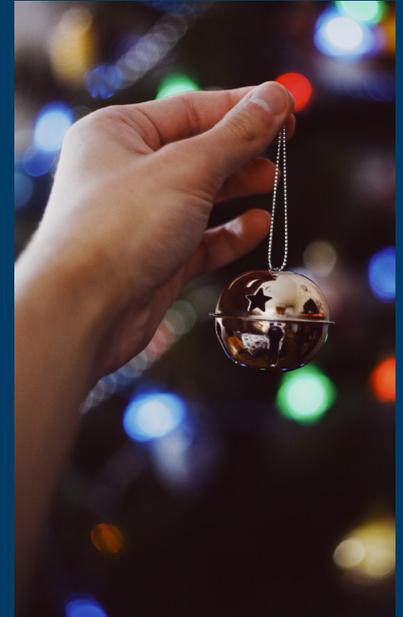
LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Light up your home this holiday season while saving energy.

- Switching to LED holiday lights can save up to 90% of energy use when compared to traditional incandescent string lights.
- LED bulbs always remain cool to the touch unlike older incandescent models making them safer for pets & kids.
- LED last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent strands and do not contain fragile filaments that break from shaking and rattling.

Recycle your old light strands!

Mille Lacs Energy is joining with the Brainerd Sunrise Sertomas to sponsor a holiday Bites for Lights recycling program. Drop off your old strands in the Aitkin office and the Sertomas will work with Kenwood Enterprises to recycle them. Last year, they recycled 7,654 pounds of lights in the Brainerd lakes area and, in turn, were able to give \$1,500 to various area food shelves. Consider going green and recycle to help the area food shelves.



MLEC GIFT CERTIFICATE



Any MLEC member would welcome one less bill to pay during the holiday season. It's easy - return the completed form with the desired gift amount to:

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

This gift is for: _____

Address _____

This gift is from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Certificate amount \$ _____

Recipient's gift will be applied to their MLEC account

BOARD ELECTIONS

Candidate filing for MLEC director positions from Districts Three and Four is now OPEN!

District Three includes members whose electric account numbers start with 52, 54, 55, 58, or 59. The present director is Harold Harms of McGrath.

District Four includes members whose electric account numbers start with 17, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 42, or 43. The present director is Aileen DeMenge of McGregor.

If you are an MLEC member receiving electricity in one of the districts listed above and are interested in filing for a director position, **call Erin Beck at 927-8245 or 800-450-2191 or, email ebeck@mlecmmn.com** for director election filing forms and a complete information packet.

All filings must be received at the Cooperative by **February 23, 2020**.

You can find additional district and annual meeting information on the MLEC website www.mlecmmn.net.



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

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.mlecmmn.net under *Quick Links*.



Visit our website -
www.mlecmmn.net
E-mail us - mlec@mlecmmn.net

OUTAGE?

Use SmartHub.

It's the most efficient way to report power outages.
It's quick, easy, and goes straight into MLEC's dispatch
center. No more searching for your account number and
phone number to call in. Using the app, you can report
an outage in a snap!

**Visit www.mlecmmn.net to sign up for SmartHub or
download the app to your mobile device today!**



Third Quarter Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Comparative Operating Statement for the Quarter Ending Sept. 30, 2018 & Sept. 30, 2019

	2018	2019
OPERATING REVENUE	20,211,721	21,230,488
COST OF PURCHASED POWER	12,101,668	11,941,611
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-OPERATION	768,911	693,001
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-MAINTENANCE	1,465,104	2,203,532
CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS EXPENSE	583,649	643,508
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATIONAL EXPENSE	461,303	397,491
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSE	1,158,095	1,250,087
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	4,437,062	5,187,619
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	16,538,730	17,129,230
DEPRECIATION	1,465,115	1,538,364
TAX EXPENSE	1,320	1,330
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	937,858	1,032,829
INTEREST EXPENSE-OTHER	2,883	4,872
OTHER DEDUCTION	1,161	2,097
TOTAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICE	18,947,067	19,708,722
OPERATING MARGINS	1,264,654	1,521,766
NON OPERATING MARGINS-INTEREST	162,425	172,135
NON OPERATING MARGINS-OTHER	(100,541)	(84,590)
GENERATION & TRANSMISSION CAPITAL CREDITS	-	-
OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	123,238	97,082
NET MARGINS	1,449,776	1,706,393

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
DEC. 24TH, DEC. 25TH, AND JAN. 1ST



ACCOUNT FEE

Beginning January 1, 2020, MLEC will begin charging a one-time, non-refundable \$25 new account fee. This will apply to transfers of existing electric services and any new reconnections of disconnected services. With approximately 1,400 applications each year, this fee will recover nearly \$35,000.00 in direct costs.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations/policies, USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal/retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA; not all bases apply to all programs; remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

MAIL: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

FAX: (202) 690-7442

EMAIL: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Viasat™

Unlimited data plans

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

SPEEDS
NOW UP TO
30
Mbps

**FREE FIRST MONTH AND
FREE INSTALLATION**

Limited time offer - **CALL TODAY FOR DETAILS**
218-429-0433 or 800-497-5310



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • www.mlecmmn.net

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