

# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 51  
NUMBER 3  
MARCH 2020

## 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

*All members are invited to attend the 2020 Annual Meeting!*

### WHEN:

**Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

### WHERE:

**40 Club Convention Center**  
960 2nd St NW  
Aitkin, MN 56431

### SCHEDULE:

**Registration** - 4:30-5:30 p.m.

**Meal Served** - 5:00 p.m.

**Business Meeting** - 5:45 p.m.

*Bring a non-perishable food item or cash donation for the food shelf & get a free LED light bulb.*

### **Election of Directors - Districts 3 & 4**

Per MLEC Bylaws, Article II, Section 8, Harold Harms of District 3; and Aileen DeMenge of District 4 shall be reelected by acclamation. No voting is needed for these uncontested positions.



**Harold Harms**  
District 3



**Aileen DeMenge**  
District 4

# WAR OF THE CURRENTS

*The Bakken Museum presents to Rippleside's 3-5 graders.*

On February 13th, students from Rippleside Elementary were treated to a fast-paced, energy-filled program about the invention of our modern-day electric systems. "War of the Currents" is an assembly program put on by The Bakken Museum of Minneapolis and sponsored by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative and Great River Energy.

During the program, students learned about Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla and how the two were at odds with one another in creating the better system for delivery of electric energy. Students participated in the show by acting out parts and being part of demonstrations that illustrated electrical principles. The show was a crowd-pleaser with the demonstration of a 5 ft Tesla Coil that sent lightning-like sparks snaking through the air.



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 **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

## COGENERATION NOTICE

In compliance with Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative's (MLEC) adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, MLEC is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. MLEC is obligated to provide information, free of charge, to all interested members upon request, regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the MLEC Board of Directors. Interested members should contact MLEC at P.O. Box 230, Aitkin, MN, 56431 or call 218-927-2191 or 1-800-450-2191.



# EXCITING THINGS UNDERWAY

Dear Member:

Recently we had a member ask what percentage of the monthly access charge is paying for our high-speed fiber Internet business. The concern was that it is unfair to those that could not receive Internet, but still must pay for it through the monthly access charge. The good news is you need not worry about this, because the answer is 0%. The current monthly access charge of \$33 pays for only a portion of the real cost of providing each MLEC residential electric member with electricity, whether they use it or not. That may include system maintenance and repairs, power poles, power lines, transformers, insulators, administration, etcetera. MLEC serves less than 7 members per mile of power line compared to urban utilities that serve over 32 customers per mile of power line. With roughly the same costs associated with servicing a mile of power line, the current monthly access charge does not cover the real cost of providing this service.

MLEC follows generally accepted accounting practices, and our fiber revenue and expenses are kept separate from electric revenue and expenses. Additionally, we are audited annually by an independent auditing firm to ensure we uphold these practices. Furthermore, the Rural Utility Service (RUS) requires us to adhere to strict loan covenants in order to continue to receive loans from the federal government to efficiently operate your electric cooperative. Your MLEC management team is consistently tracking and reporting the financial stability of your cooperative to ensure its strength moving forward.

We believe that true gigabit fiber Internet access is critical infrastructure necessary to help rural America's economy survive and thrive in the years to come. With the help of grants from Aitkin County, the State of Minnesota, and the United States Department of Agriculture, we can build that critical infrastructure. As more grants become available, we plan to continue to grow our fiber Internet network throughout MLEC's service territory.

Your MLEC senior leadership team has a combined 136 years of experience in the electric cooperative industry. Together, we are looking at other ways we can add value to you, our member, and enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. In March, we are sending staff members to train to become certified Briggs and Stratton emergency back-up generator installers. While we have been focusing on reliability through our aggressive right-of-way maintenance program the past several years, it is important to note that nearly 50% of our residential consumers are seasonal members. An emergency back-up generator system is something that could give great peace of mind to members that are not permanently at their homes.

***"Together, we are looking at other ways we can add value to you, our member, and enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve."***

This year, two of your MLEC board members are up for re-election. President, Harold Harms, and Vice President, Aileen DeMenge. Both candidates are unopposed. While three candidates considered running for a director position, none of the three ultimately ended up committing to running in the



*Sarah Cron*  
CEO

election. This is great news for two reasons. First and foremost, it means we have an engaged group of concerned members that truly care about the success of MLEC. Second, it means they all have faith in the governance of their electric cooperative and the current slate of officers. New this fall, MLEC will be hosting a series of district meetings which will provide more opportunities for member engagement. We hope to see a lot of you at these meetings.

As always, we encourage you to keep reading your Outlet, check out Facebook, and visit our website. We will do our best to keep you informed on the state of your cooperative, provide education to help you make wise energy decisions, and keep you up to date on important industry news.

Until next month,

# LET'S DISH

Thank you to Jeanne Manthei of Wabasha for sharing this month's recipe.

## 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:

kkokesh@mlecmn.com



## EARTHQUAKE CAKE

1 cup shredded coconut  
1 cup chopped nuts  
1 chocolate cake mix  
1 package (8 oz) cream cheese

1/2 cup butter  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
3/4 cup chocolate chips  
2 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 inch pan. Sprinkle coconut and nuts over bottom of pan. Mix cake mix as directed on the box. Pour over coconut and nuts. Mix cream cheese, butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Drop by spoonfuls over cake mix. Sprinkle chocolate chips over top. Bake for 50 minutes. Enjoy!

# BENEFITS OF BROADBAND

Why do we need broadband in the MLEC service area?

These are the top 6 reasons why MLEC is committed to bring a fiber network to our members.

### 1. Education

Broadband not only provides Internet access for youth who bring home iPads and computers from school, but offers more than ever before, online learning opportunities, including college, for everyone.

### 2. Healthcare

Telemedicine can reduce some healthcare costs up to 72% by using remote monitoring. (Tufts Medical Study, 2010)

### 3. Economic development

Broadband opens the doors for economic diversity. Entrepreneurs need broadband to promote their businesses.

### 4. Saving you money

Broadband can help households save money on food, prescription drugs, gasoline, entertainment, and more.

### 5. Increased home values

A study conducted in 2015 by the Fiber -to-the-Home Council found that property values can increase by 3 percent or more if there is a fiber connection.

### 6. Business prosperity

Broadband allows businesses to reach a larger market and help boost sales, whether storefront or home-based.

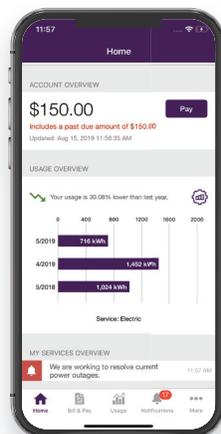
Call MLEC today for more information or visit us online at [www.mlecmn.net/fiber](http://www.mlecmn.net/fiber).

# SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB TODAY!

*It's Easy, Convenient, and Free!*

### SmartHub Features:

- Provides 24-hour access to your account(s)
- Allows you to pay electronically through a safe and secure connection
- Provides billing information and payment history
- Outlines energy usage in graphs
- Includes free app for your smartphone or tablet
- Provides an easy way to report power outages



# NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will be held at 40 Club Convention Center, 960 Second Street NW, Aitkin, Minnesota, on Thursday, April 23, 2020. Registration will begin at 4:30 P.M. and the annual business meeting will begin at 5:45 P.M. The purpose of the meeting is:

1. Election by Acclamation
  - a. Harold Harms was re-elected in District 3 and Aileen DeMenge was re-elected in District 4 by Acclamation in accordance with Article II, Section 8 of the Cooperative's Bylaws.

2. Transaction of any other business that may properly come before this meeting.

By Order of the Board of Directors,  
Barbara G. Welty, Secretary.



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)

# WATER HEATER SAVINGS

One of the biggest energy users in your home is your water heater. There are ways we can help lower that usage, thereby lowering your overall energy bill. First, consider joining our off peak water heating program. Off peak water heating means you would have a separate meter and controls installed on your home for your water heater. This would allow the water heater to only draw electricity during times of low demand, such as overnight. A storage tank would then let you use the hot water all day. In turn you would get a lower kilowatt rate of 5.35¢.

An added bonus is that right now there is a rebate of \$400 on a Marathon water heater, purchased from us, when you opt into the off peak water heating program. Marathon water heaters are already extremely efficient with 2.5 inches of Envirofoam® insulation in the tank, allowing only 5°F of heat loss in 24 hours. They are ultra-durable and backed by a lifetime warranty of no leaking, leaving you with fewer worries in the future.

**Contact your Energy Service Team today at 218-429-0432 or 1-888-433-4279 to discuss our off peak water heating program & Marathon water heaters.**



# 2021 PHOTO CALENDAR

See your photo in MLEC's 2021 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 27, 2020. 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**

by 11:59 p.m. on October 27, 2020.

*Winning photographers automatically give MLEC permission to use the photos in the calendar, in other publications, member presentations, or electronically online. The 2020 calendar is available at our office.*

## Photo Contest Guidelines

- Only MLEC members are eligible for the contest.
- Photos must be electronic.
- Photos should capture the beauty of the area we serve, if possible, but any Minnesota photos are acceptable.
- Pets, animals, food, etc. are acceptable.
- **PHOTOS MUST NOT INCLUDE PEOPLE.**
- The photos must 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.



## 2020 CALENDARS ARE AVAILABLE AT OUR OFFICE!

They are free for MLEC members. Stop by and get yours while supplies lasts.

# 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

# 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 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)**



## 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.*