

FEASIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

Our discussion of new facilities is not a new one. The board has been aware of the facilities' inefficiencies and structural limitations for the last decade. We have had various discussions, including with several general managers, but it did not reach the top of our priority list until now.

What changed?

A primary catalyst was MNDOT's decision to redo Highway 169; a decision that will remove our two access entries and take 20 feet of property along 169. With this in mind, we began the feasibility of building new facilities at the current location or building at a new location.

To consider a new location, we needed to find a piece of property that would fit our needs. When the property near Highways 169 and 18 became available, we purchased it with the idea that if our study determined that we could feasibly build new in the current location, we could resell this property. We engaged Widseth Engineering to conduct an in-depth facility needs analysis that considered three options: remodel the existing facility, build new at our existing location, or build new at a different location. After a thorough review of their proposal and analysis, we determined it to be in the best short- and long-term interest of our members to build a new facility at the new location.

Factors that made this our preferred choice include:

1. Building new at the current location would leave zero chance for future growth or expansion. This is simply irresponsible when considering the future of energy and Internet.
2. It would require temporary relocation of employees, equipment, and inventory during construction. This would leave us vulnerable to increased outage response times in the instance of a severe weather event or multi-day system power outage.
3. Interest rates are at an all-time low resulting in significant savings to the membership over the 30-year life of the loan.
4. The current location is always under threat of annexation by the City of Aitkin. If this were to happen, the electrical needs for our facilities would be served by Aitkin Public Utilities, instead of MLEC.
5. Remodeling of current facilities would require significant expenditures just to bring the building up to MN Building Code. It would leave many discrepancies such as on-site storage and inefficient team alignment; and, still leave us with a 60-year-old building and limited ability to expand or change as needs change.



Harold Harms
Board President

Our needs have evolved since this facility was built in 1964. Serving our members now requires more equipment, bigger trucks and broader offerings. And, we will continue to change and grow as the years go on. We believe the time is right to make this move for our members, for our employees, and for the future of MLEC.

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