



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

*When thinking of all the ways we depend on electricity, it's easy to see its value continues to shine!*

Medical care, residential rent and education costs have increased over the last decade at rates at about 3% or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have gone up by more than 2% annually.

Electricity costs rise about 1% a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010 due to investments in energy efficiency. That means members are doing more with less energy.

Kilowatt-hour usage per co-op household—that is, the amount of energy it takes to run an appliance per hour—dropped by 8% in the last 10 years.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why MLEC urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances and promotes technology designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

As an example, residential home lighting shifted from less-efficient lighting—primarily incandescent bulbs—to more energy-efficient lighting, like LEDs, between 2009 and 2015 according to data from the Energy Information Administration.

In the 2009 survey, 58% of all households used at least one energy-efficient bulb indoors. In 2015, 86% of households reported using at least one LED bulb and 18% of households reported they had no incandescent bulbs in their homes.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most water heating, laundry and dishwashing outside of peak rate periods help reduce the co-op's overall power demand. They also give you opportunities to control, or even trim, your monthly utility bills.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected technologies are included in our daily lives.

Today, U.S. households own an average of 11 connected devices, including seven with screens to view content (e.g., smart phones or TVs), a study from Deloitte found. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll count on MLEC for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

# TRUE OR FALSE?



*See how much you know about saving energy.  
Are these statements true or common misconceptions?*



## ***Appliances and electronics don't use energy when turned off.***

FALSE. Computers, printers, TVs, cell phone chargers, and more may continue to consume electricity when turned off, sometimes just as much as when they're turned on. Consider purchasing a smart strip (more advanced than a traditional power strip) that cuts off power to appliances that are powered off.

## ***Bigger heating and cooling equipment is not always better.***

TRUE. When buying new heating and cooling equipment, proper sizing and quality installation are critical to your home's energy efficiency and comfort. Oversized equipment can cause reduced comfort and excessive noise. Oversizing can also shorten the life of equipment by causing it to cycle on and off more frequently than a properly-sized unit.

## ***Leaving your computer on saves energy compared to powering it up and down.***

FALSE. If you're going to be away from your desk for a long period of time, and particularly after hours, you should turn off your computer, monitor and peripherals using a smart strip (more advanced than a traditional power strip).

## ***You should check your heating and cooling system's filter once a month.***

TRUE. You should also have a pre-season checkup of your system by a licensed contractor in the spring and fall to ensure all parts are working properly, and to avoid early system failure. If your furnace is more than 15 years old, or your A/C unit is more than 12 years old, consider replacing it with a properly-sized, more efficient unit.

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

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Find minutes from  
MLEC Board meetings at:  
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your tax and interest paying  
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formed to supply you with  
low-cost, dependable  
electricity when other sources  
failed to do so.*

Managing Editor: Kassie Peterson,  
Communications Specialist

# STANDBY GENERATOR PROGRAM

Reliability is of utmost importance at MLEC. However, we sometimes experience outages due to a variety of causes, such as weather, animals, or damaged power lines from digging or car crashes. For most members, being without power is merely an inconvenience, but for others, continuity of service is very important. For this reason, we offer a standby generator program that is ideal for members with a home business, sump pump, medical needs, or simply desire to always have the comfort and conveniences that electricity provides. MLEC is now offering Briggs and Stratton standby generators. 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.

***Call MLEC for more information or a price  
quote at 218-429-0432.***



# ROLLING BLACKOUTS

Dear Member:

Rolling blackouts have recently left hundreds of thousands of California businesses and residents without power. Speculation and finger-pointing have energy experts blaming the blackouts on everything from the extreme heat and excessive energy demand, to mismanagement by energy regulators, to renewables.

The bigger question on the minds of Minnesotans, Great River Energy (GRE) staff, and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) employees and members is why is Minnesota different? While discussing this with David Saggau, CEO of Great River Energy, this is what we discovered.

It is important to note that California purchases their energy from a separate energy market than Minnesota. California purchases energy from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) and Minnesota purchases energy from the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO).

There is a fundamental difference between California and Minnesota that makes our situations quite different, and that is California's dependence on solar energy. Rolling blackouts have been occurring shortly after sundown, when solar resources stop generating, while temperatures remain high, and air conditioner use continues.

In Minnesota, solar energy makes up a very small percentage of the generating resources in the MISO market, so our region does not experience the sharp drop-offs in energy production associated with widespread reliance on solar generating resources.

***"It is important to note that California purchases their energy from a separate energy market than Minnesota. California purchases energy from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) and Minnesota purchases energy from the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)."***

GRE has been a part of the MISO energy market since 2005. As a member of MISO, GRE is required to have sufficient generating capacity to meet their members' peak load plus reserves. GRE's generating capacity is, and will always be, more than sufficient to provide reliable service and meet MISO requirements.



Sarah Cron  
CEO

As a leader in the generation and transmission industry, GRE has also made wise business decisions that will help support us in the future energy landscape. They are preparing to close their remaining coal-fired power plant, and supplement that needed capacity with low-cost market purchases. They also have a fleet of modern natural gas plants in Minnesota that provide all-hours reliability. Most of these plants have on-site backup fuels. In addition, they have built new transmission across the region to ensure energy can be delivered to their 28 member-owner cooperatives, like MLEC. And, in partnership with their member-owner cooperatives, they have developed one of the country's most robust demand response programs which allows them to effectively reduce electric loads during the most extreme conditions.

As your electricity provider, we understand how important reliable electric service is. We are confident GRE has the planning and resources in place that we need to ensure your energy is here today, and for the energy grid of tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'S Cron'.

## CAST YOUR VOTE

***National Voter Registration Day is September 22!***

By voting in national, state and local elections, you are serving as a role model for your family, friends and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot, and get out and vote!



# 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@mlecmm.com



## SUMMER TUNA SALAD

1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained  
1 pkg. frozen peas, cooked 2 min. in microwave  
3/4 cup chopped green onion  
1 can albacore tuna, drained  
1 cup chopped celery  
1 pkg. chow mein noodles

Thank you to Cindy Scott of Otsego for sharing this month's recipe.

Marinade ingredients:  
3/4 cup mayonnaise  
1 Tbsp lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. curry powder  
1 Tbsp soy sauce

Combine all ingredients and marinate in the mayo mixture overnight. Before serving, add 1/2 pkg. chow mein noodles. Shoestring potatoes may be substituted for chow mein noodles. Serves 6 people. Enjoy!

# 2021 PHOTO CALENDAR CONTEST

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@mlecmm.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.*

## 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.

# COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Usually this time of year, MLEC employees are busy volunteering, raising funds, and participating in local festivities. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought our summer fun to a screeching halt. Since we are unable to see our members in person at these events, MLEC has tried to help the community in other ways. In August, the MLEC Trust Board donated \$2,500 to Timber Bay Camp & Retreat Center to help have the camp professionally deep cleaned and sanitized. This way, teens will still be able to attend camp with other safety precautions in place.

Twice a year, MLEC employees help prepare and serve the free community meal at the First Lutheran Church in Aitkin. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, community meals are now prepared by one person and are distributed by take out only. To help offset costs, MLEC donated \$250 to Loaves & Fishes.

Commitment to community is one of the seven cooperative principles. During these uncertain times, MLEC is trying to help our members and the communities we serve. Stay safe and stay healthy!



Jason Todd of Loaves & Fishes with Shelly DeFoe, MLEC Member Service & Marketing Manager



# SMART PAYMENTS

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#### **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  
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Find load control schedule at  
[www.mlecmm.net](http://www.mlecmm.net) under *Quick Links*.



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### Second Quarter Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

#### Comparative Operating Statement for the Quarter Ending June 30, 2019 & June 30, 2020

	2019	2020
OPERATING REVENUE	14,070,104	13,461,590
COST OF PURCHASED POWER	7,910,866	7,467,101
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-OPERATION	448,497	681,730
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-MAINTENANCE	1,248,736	1,209,800
CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS EXPENSE	435,444	415,750
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATIONAL EXPENSE	255,114	309,091
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSE	810,315	800,687
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	3,198,106	3,417,058
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	11,108,972	10,884,159
DEPRECIATION	1,008,104	1,146,427
TAX EXPENSE	1,330	1,330
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	695,360	721,385
INTEREST EXPENSE-OTHER	3,300	1,790
OTHER DEDUCTION	1,476	-
TOTAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICE	12,818,542	12,755,091
OPERATING MARGINS	<b>1,251,562</b>	<b>706,499</b>
NON OPERATING MARGINS-INTEREST	122,385	56,060
NON OPERATING MARGINS-OTHER	(31,221)	(24,376)
GENERATION & TRANSMISSION CAPITAL CREDITS	-	-
OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	78,776	83,394
NET MARGINS	<b>1,421,502</b>	<b>821,577</b>



### Unclaimed Capital Credits Checks

You can see the list on our website at [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net) under My Co-op and choose Capital Credits on the drop menu.

A hard copy is available at MLEC's office. Maybe a check is waiting for you! If you know someone and how to contact them, please call MLEC at 218-429-0431.



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# 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 **September 30<sup>th</sup>**.

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

**OR E-MAIL:**  
[kpeterson@mlcmmn.com](mailto:kpeterson@mlcmmn.com)

### True or False

Leaving your computer on saves energy compared to powering it up and down.

Name:

Address:

  

*Congrats to Tom Spinner of Minneapolis, the July gift card trivia winner!*

## 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)**

 **MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

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