

AUGUST 2024 • VOLUME 85 • NO. 08



AUGUST IS NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH

Priding ourselves on our cooperative core values of integrity, safety, quality, engagement, teamwork, community, and service, the wellness committee at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) strives to engage our team members in wellness activities that promote not only physical health, but also financial and emotional wellness. Why? Because we know that to serve our members best, it is important to invest in our employees at FMEC and make wellness in these critical areas a priority.

Post-covid statistics will show the declining mental well-being of the general population, with anxiety, depression, and other mental illnesses remaining pressing concerns for both adults and children.

Our aim as a wellness committee is to educate our FMEC employees on wellness-related topics and provide our employees with information and resources to encourage self-care, physical activity, nutrition, and financial health.

In addition to providing information and resources, FMEC has dedicated spaces in the new facility that help foster a culture of wellness. Since launching the wellness committee in 2009, FMEC has hosted numerous events for employees that highlight area businesses that promote physical, emotional, and financial well-being. The response from the employees has been overwhelmingly positive.

One employee shared, “Wellness is all encompassing. The wellness committee promotes not only physical health, but mental health as well. #1950101 The inclusion of a fitness room in our new building has been a wonderful commodity. Committee-sponsored events to encourage wellness are highly attended, which demonstrates how important these opportunities are to our employees.”

Investing in the wellness of our employees enables them to provide exceptional service to our member-owners on a daily basis.

ceo message
Jim Krueger, President & CEO



POWERING THROUGH: STRATEGIES
TO COMBAT MISO’S PROJECTED
POWER SHORTFALL

Midcontinent Independent System Operators (MISO) distributes a survey each year that gives an in-depth analysis of the grid’s capacity, outlining committed power resources, new capacity opportunities, and potential unavailable capacity. This information is stacked against the current and projected power demands as well as historical data to help determine the projected energy forecast based on trends.

Right now, we are trending in the wrong direction. With the influx of Cryptocurrency operations, electric vehicles, increased cooling demands, manufacturing, and Data Centers, grid planners nearly doubled their 5-year peak load growth forecasts since last year.

This means that next summer, the MISO’s northern and central regions could face a 1 GW to 3.7 GW shortfall. #2117200 To put it simply, there will not be enough power generated to meet the demand, which could result in power “blackouts” if swift action isn’t taken.

We have seen an ease of supply chain bottle necks, permitting constraints, and labor shortages but there still remains an urgent need for collaboration at State and Federal levels of government to bring new capacity online, coordinate resources for new load additions and slow the pace of resource retirements so that we can prevent this situation from happening.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, along with our utility partners, are engaging in proactive strategies such as increasing our investments in renewable energy sources, enhancing our grid’s infrastructure to handle peak loads more efficiently, and exploring efficient energy solutions. We’re committed to not only addressing the immediate concerns but also ensuring a sustainable and robust power system for the future. Our position is to transform these obstacles into opportunities for innovation and resilience, reinforcing our dedication to our members’ needs and environmental stewardship.



CO-OPS WORKING TOGETHER

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is proud to partner with Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO), a wholesale distributor of high-voltage electrical products, to furnish our electric equipment needs for construction so we can continue to provide reliable electric service to our members. Sharing the cooperative model as a not-for-profit, RESCO shared their success with FMEC by distributing a capital credit check for \$140,000! Supporting RESCO is one of the many ways we are living out our cooperative principles of “Cooperation among Cooperatives.”

Pictured left to right Joe Cochran, RESCO Regional Sales Director; Jim Krueger, FMEC President & CEO; and Ben Haarstad, RESCO Account Manager stand with a capital credit certificate.

member news

CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

Our office will be closed on Monday, September 2 for Labor Day. In case of emergency or power outage, calls to our regular phone number will be routed to our after-hours call center.

JOIN US AT ALBERT LEA’S
SAFETY NIGHT

September 17 | 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Morin Park in Albert Lea

FMEC will be there with safety information, games, and prizes. It’s a fun and informative event for all.

POLLINATOR GARDEN

April, May, and June showers bring July flowers! Our pollinator garden at FMEC is in full bloom, and the bees are buzzing about it!



WELCOME
NEW EMPLOYEES



DYLAN
GERBER

Dylan joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on June 24, as a Seasonal Lineworker.

He resides in Albert Lea and is familiar with the area, having grown up in rural Myrtle. The crew is looking forward to having Dylan work alongside them during a very busy season at FMEC.

While Alaska remains a dream work location for him, we’re happy that for now, we have his talents and he’ll be contributing to our employee group.

Welcome to our cooperative, Dylan!



BRODY
SKJERVEM

Brody joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on June 17, as an Underground Construction Equipment Operator.

He is excited to be part of our cooperative and is looking forward to working in a positive, safe, and fun environment. His enthusiasm and fresh perspective will bring new energy to our cooperative.

Brody hails from Brownsdale, MN, and enjoys hobbies such as hunting, fishing, and camping.

Welcome to our cooperative, Brody!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ELECTRIC SAFETY REMINDERS

Before students return to school this fall, don't forget to remind them of important electric safety precautions to take whether they're in Pre-K or headed off to college.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- **Stay Away from Pad-Mount Transformers:** Green, pad-mount transformers contain high-voltage electrical equipment and should never be climbed on. Always keep a safe distance to avoid any risk of electric shock.
- **Avoid Utility Poles and Power Lines:** Utility poles and power lines are dangerous. #2117200 Teach students to stay away from them, as contact can result in serious injury or worse.
- **Don't Overload Electrical Outlets:** Overloading outlets can cause electrical fires. Ensure that students

plug in only the necessary devices and keep all cords away from bedding, curtains, or other flammable materials to prevent fire hazards.

- **Know What to Do in an Accident Involving Power Lines:** If involved in an accident with power lines, it's crucial to stay inside the vehicle unless there is an imminent danger of fire. Call 9-1-1 immediately and wait for help.
- **Use Extension Cords Sparingly:** Extension cords should only be used for temporary purposes. Overusing or overloading them can lead to overheating and potential fire risks. Make sure they are unplugged and stored away when not in use.

By following these essential electric safety tips, students can stay safe and focused on their studies. Have a safe and successful school year!



SAFETY EDUCATION SCHEDULE A SAFETY DEMO

We have revamped our electric safety display and are ready to showcase it at daycares, schools or safety events in our service area. We believe that imparting electric safety knowledge to the community and youth could potentially save lives. This free, interactive presentation, led by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative trained lineworkers, will guide you through several different scenarios that could be hazardous, if not handled properly.

Schedule your safety demonstration today by contacting Jessica Phelps at communications@fmec.coop or (507) 379-8853.

Back TO School SUPPLY DRIVE



FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS COLLECTING SCHOOL SUPPLY DONATIONS.

Your contributions can make a significant difference for children heading back to school this year. A wide variety of items are needed, from notebooks and pencils to backpacks and art supplies. #1465605 FMEC is proud to be a drop-off location for these donations, ensuring they reach students who need them the most.

Donations will be accepted through August 26 at our office, located at 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, during our normal business hours. Simply bring your supplies to the designated drop-off area, and we will take care of the rest.

This year, we aim to support even more students in Freeborn and Mower Counties by distributing the collected supplies to local schools. Your generosity will help equip students with the tools they need to succeed in the upcoming school year. Join us in making a positive impact in our community.

DONATE NOW THROUGH AUGUST 26

School supply donations
may be left at the
Freeborn Mower Electric
Cooperative office,
3366 Bridge Avenue,
Albert Lea



IT'S parade SEASON

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative enjoys participating in community parades because it's an opportunity to connect with the members we serve and showcase our commitment to the community. We love seeing your smiling faces as the bucket truck comes down the road!





OPERATION ROUND UP
DISTRIBUTES \$22,400

There are seven cooperative principles that are the backbone to FMEC’s daily operations. One of these core principles is Concern for Community, which is why FMEC’s Board of Trustees voted to adopt the Operation Round Up® charitable-giving program in 2003.

Operation Round Up® (ORU) is a national program, that’s been serving rural communities for over three decades. By simply rounding monthly bills to the nearest dollar, members can make a significant group impact. #1465605 The extra change collected is used to support unmet needs for local community projects and charitable causes within the service area. A few cents from each member may seem small, but collectively, it creates a ripple effect of positive change.

This quarter, FMEC was able to donate \$22,400! These small, but meaningful contributions support a wide range of community needs, such as:

- Food banks and pantries
- Education and youth programs
- Community development projects
- After prom events and school sponsored graduation events
- Public library programs
- And much more!

The program is governed by a board of trustees who carefully review each application on a quarterly basis. The support of local causes through Operation Round Up is part of FMEC’s unwavering commitment to the local community. The next application deadline is September 15, 2024.



Thank you to the Operation Round Up Board Members (l-r) Dan Bordensteiner, Joni Osmundson, Darrell Ingvaldson, Rhonda Allison, and Brenda Wichmann for helping the cooperative administer this valuable community program.



LOOK FOR THE LABEL:
ENERGYSTAR



SHOPPING FOR NEW HOME
APPLIANCES? Look for the ENERGY
STAR label because it could mean
more savings for YOU!

Products that earn the ENERGY STAR label must meet strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), helping you to save energy and money by making choices that support a clean energy future.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers members \$25 rebates for the purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances (with the ENERGY STAR logo) in their homes. #1950101 The rebates apply to electric clothes washers, dryers, dehumidifiers, freezers, refrigerators, and inductive ranges or cook-tops.

More details on home appliance rebates are available on our website at www.fmec.coop.

UPDATE YOUR
CONTACT INFORMATION

It is important to keep your current information on file, so we can keep you informed. If you would like to update your contact information, please send a message through your SmartHub account, or contact our office by phone, in person, or by email.

WE NOTIFY YOU	CONTACT US
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Of scheduled power outages.• With electric billing situations.• With all other customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your email address changes.• If you change phone numbers or disconnect a phone line.• If you receive your mail at a different postal address.• If your last name changes.



CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:
1985 CHEVY SCOTTSDALE. Single cab, 305 V8, 27,240 miles. Red w/black interior, Cragar wheels. Like new. \$24,500. Call (507) 438-3753.

2007 JEEP COMPASS SPORT. 2.4 L engine, good condition, 217,000 miles. \$3,000. Call (507) 383-9029.

FARM:
LARGE HAY BALES. New crop, 70% alfalfa/30% pasture grass. \$100 ea.
OLD SMALL BALES. 50/60. \$2 ea. Call/text (507) 433-8145.

UMBRELLA. Fits most old tractors. Like new. \$25. Call (507) 383-3613.

HOUSEHOLD:
PRINT. Framed/matted, vibrant colored print of a “City View of Venice”. 37” x 37”. \$60. Call (507) 402-8071.

APPLIANCES - MAYTAG CLOTHES DRYER. White. \$150. **MAGIC CHEF OVEN.** white, coil-top stove. \$100. Call (507) 402-1985.

KING HEADBOARD. Rattan/bamboo. \$50. Photos - call (507) 351-4355.

MISCELLANEOUS:
2 WHEEL DOLLY. To lift a snowmobile. \$150. Call (507) 325-2427.

1968 MONITOR CAMPER. 16’, needs interior work. \$500. Call (507) 402-7800.

SNOW BLOWER. 8.5 hp, 26”, electric start, chain tires, 6 forward – 2 reverse speeds. \$300. Call (651) 470-7539.

ALUMINUM SCOOP SHOVEL. Like new. \$25. Call (507) 383-9949.

GOLDEN BEAR GOLF CLUBS. 9 piece women/teen. Excellent condition. Includes pull cart. \$75. Call (952) 484-9929.

2022 FOREST RIVER WILDWOOD CAMPER. 169RSK, bought new 02/2023, 22’5” exterior length, fiberglass, warranty left. \$21,500. Call (507) 279-0426.

MENS’ TREK BIKE. Black, 800 series, 18-speed, fenders, rack, and newer tires. Call (507) 373-0539.

2021 SPORTTREK CAMPER. 343vik, king-size bed, outside kitchen. 2 fireplaces, dual awnings, porcelain toilet. Call (507) 438-6415.

PETS/ANIMALS:
GIVE AWAY – 2 MALE CATS. Adult barn cats, neutered, vaxed, friendly, siblings. Great cats! Call (507) 433-2712.

WANTED

USED T POSTS. Will buy. Call (507) 383-3522.

FREE

1959 HAMMOND ORGAN w/bench. Good condition. Call (507) 383-9055.

CLASSIFIED
MARKETPLACE
RULES

Classified Marketplace ads are printed in our monthly **County Lines** newsletter **FREE OF CHARGE** to our current members.

You can review the Classified Marketplace Rules and/or submit an ad at www.fmec.coop. Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab.

You will find a downloadable form on our website: www.fmec.coop. Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab.

You may also email ads to michelle.rayman@fmec.coop or go to the website, use the instructions above, and click on the **NEWSLETTER** tab to electronically submit an ad.

SPOT YOUR NUMBER

WIN A \$25 BILL CREDIT

To reward our faithful newsletter readers, we've randomly selected and hidden three (3) member account numbers and placed them in the newsletter, each two times. Hidden account numbers are spelled out numerically. (Ex: #123456)

If you spot your full account number, contact the cooperative by the 15th of the current month to claim your \$25 bill credit.



FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

PO Box 611
3366 Bridge Avenue
Albert Lea MN 56007

(507) 373-6421 or (800) 734-6421
www.fmec.coop
info@fmec.coop



Office Hours:

Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Board Meetings:

Typically the last Tuesday of each month.

*Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.*



***It's not too late to make your home
more comfortable this summer.***

- Is it time to schedule a tune-up of your central air conditioning unit?
- Are you considering installing a new central air conditioner, heat pump, or WI-FI thermostat?

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative encourages energy-efficient choices through its rebate program.

Details and downloadable rebate forms are available at:

WWW.FMEC.COOP

LET'S COOK



EASY SUMMER SALAD

Submitted By:

Nikki Merfeld Ruble

- ¼ C. chopped red pepper
- ¼ C. crumbled feta cheese

Directions:

Mix together and enjoy! It's a sweet & salty combo. Keeps well in the refrigerator for several days. This makes 1 serving.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email to michelle.rayman@fmec.coop or by mail at FMEC Newsletter, PO Box 611, Albert Lea, MN 56007. The member whose recipe is published will receive a \$10 electric bill credit.