



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023 CONSTRUCTION WORK

“Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative has several projects slated to begin when we transition to spring weather,” explained Allan Stadheim, Director of Engineering and Operations. “Each project will enhance the reliability and quality of electric service for our members.”

The first project is in the Emmons, Albert Lea, and Mansfield areas. It will replace two miles of three-phase power line, one mile of single-phase line, and 0.6 miles of single-phase underground with new three-phase underground line. “We will basically be moving service to Emmons from a substation in Albert Lea to the Mansfield substation. The project also includes the construction of another 3 miles of new three-phase underground line into the City of Emmons and results in a new three-phase loop between the two substations to enhance service reliability.”

The second project will allow the Shell Rock substation to be retired. #1648400 “We will replace 4.25 miles of three-phase overhead line with new three-phase underground line. The power line to be retired has deteriorated since it was constructed in the 1950’s. Coupled with a project at the Glenville substation, we will change our system configuration to enable the City of Myrtle to be transferred to the Glenville substation,” said Stadheim.

“A third project of note is the construction of a new feeder line to the City of Lyle from the London substation. This involves the replacement of 5.7 miles of three-phase line. An additional 1.7 miles of single-phase line which was built in the 1930’s will be replaced with three-phase underground line and a 0.6 mile three-phase underground tie line into the City of Lyle.” A system voltage upgrade to the area is included in the project and distribution transformers will also be upgraded.

WHY THESE PROJECTS ARE IMPORTANT

RELIABILITY OF ELECTRIC SERVICE
REDUNDANCY OF MAIN FEEDER LINES
REPLACEMENT UPGRADES OF EQUIPMENT
RETIREMENT OF AGED INFRASTRUCTURE
REDUCED SUSCEPTIBILITY OF EXPOSED POWER LINES
TO IMPACTS BY WEATHER, BIRDS, ANIMALS, AND
HUMAN INTERFERENCE OR ACCIDENTS

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



YEAR-END RECAP

For the past several months, I've been explaining the various inflationary and regulatory pressures that have been putting a squeeze on our cooperative. The only way we have to deal with the situation is to raise rates effective April 1, 2023. Setting new rates is something that is never taken lightly by our management team and board of directors. It is more difficult because we understand that your households are facing inflationary pressures, too.

While Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) did increase electric sales by 1.94% during 2022 compared to the previous year, this was not enough to cover increasing expenses.

When we make our annual budget, of which rate revenue is key, we do so with the best and most current information available. #422602 Year 2022, however, was unlike any other in many respects. Expenses are very difficult to project when so many factors are rapidly changing. Our Operating Margins were budgeted at \$1,162,000 but came in \$436,000 over at \$1,598,412. We had budgeted Net Margins at \$2,609,000. Net Margins came in at \$2,578,812 which is \$30,000 under budget.

That being said, we did have many accomplishments that benefitted the cooperative and you, its member-owners. We added 96 new services and set 302 new poles. More than 57 miles of underground power line was laid. FMEC will not cut corners when it comes to public and employee safety and steps to enhance service reliability. We will not let increasing expenses change these two imperatives.

Next month, you will receive your copy of the 2022 Annual Report which highlights our activities for the year. I encourage you to review its contents and to plan to attend our 86th Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 22. Our success depends on our cooperative members. FMEC differs from other forms of electric utilities because it only exists to serve its member-owners. Member participation in the Annual Meeting is a foundational principle. Please join us.

YOU ARE INVITED!

86TH ANNUAL MEETING Saturday, April 22, 2023 “The Cooperative Difference”

WHO:

You, the member-owners of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative

WHAT:

86th Annual Meeting

WHEN:

8:00 a.m. Registration & Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Business Meeting

WHERE:

Albert Lea High School
2000 Tiger Lane, Albert Lea, MN

WHY:

Because Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is owned and controlled by its member-owners. Be knowledgeable! Participate in the cooperative, learn important information about the past year, current information, and what we see in the year ahead.

Join us for bingo, information tables, games, prizes, children's prizes, and more.



A live drawing will be held to award the Luck of the Draw Scholarship recipients around 11:00 a.m.

**WATCH FOR
MORE INFO
IN OUR
UPCOMING
ANNUAL REPORT**

member news

COLD WEATHER RULE ENDS APRIL 30

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule can protect residential utility customers from having electric service shut off between October 1 and April 30.

If your account is past due, you are no longer protected under the Cold Weather Rule after April 30th. If you need to make payment arrangements on your account, please contact our office during normal business hours.

APPLY FOR LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS BY MARCH 10

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers ten \$1,000 Luck of the Draw Scholarships to high school seniors whose parents/legal guardians are an active member of the cooperative. The deadline to apply is March 10, 2023, by 3:30 p.m. A complete list of qualifications and scholarship applications are available online or from our office.

LEGAL NOTICE

86th Annual Meeting Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative will be held in-person Saturday, April 22, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at Albert Lea High School, 2000 Tiger Lane, Albert Lea, MN.

The purpose of the meeting will be to conduct regular annual meeting business. Registration is required. This meeting will be in-person only.

Frank Fryer | Secretary,
Freeborn Mower
Electric Cooperative
Board of Directors

HAPPY RETIREMENT, NATALIE NELSON!



We bid farewell to Natalie Nelson who retired on February 28. She joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on July 31, 2015, coming from previous employment with Alliant Energy as part of our service territory acquisition.

Natalie served in our Dispatch and Operations department as Mapping and Information Specialist. Her duties included dispatching the lineworkers and documenting the location of their work and equipment used. She was tasked with keeping the cooperative's outage history current and notifying members about planned service outages to allow upgrades or equipment repairs. Additionally, she handled the service orders for security and street lights, and miscellaneous other repair orders.

Natalie is a lifelong resident of the Albert Lea and Geneva area. #1529803 She and her husband of more than 42 years, Dana, are parents of a son and daughter, and grandparents to three. When asked about retirement activities, she responded, "I plan to do some traveling with my husband and spend more time with my grandchildren."

Thank you, Natalie, for your service. We wish you happiness and good health in the years ahead.

OUR REASONS FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative employs a professionally trained tree-trimming crew year-round and hires additional contractors as needed. These crews follow a scheduled four-year rotational cycle that covers our entire service territory. Their approach is determined by substation and circuit.

- **Service quality and reliability depend on proper vegetation management.** Power outages are frequently caused by trees or branches contacting overhead power lines. #1648400 These outages can range from momentary blinks to lengthy outages that impact numerous accounts.
- **Public safety is also a concern.** Trees in close proximity to a power line pose a lethal threat to anything that could climb it and contact an energized power line. This could be an adult, a child, or an animal. The result may be a tragic fatality. Additionally, power lines contacting tree branches can spark fires that quickly spread out of control.
- **There are situations where the removal of a tree is preferable to trimming it.** Certain tall or fast-growing species should never be planted under a power line. Also, trimming these species will never result in a natural-looking tree. Trees that are leaning, split, or hollow also pose safety and service reliability threats.



Clearing Right-of-Way is critical to keeping our members' lights on.

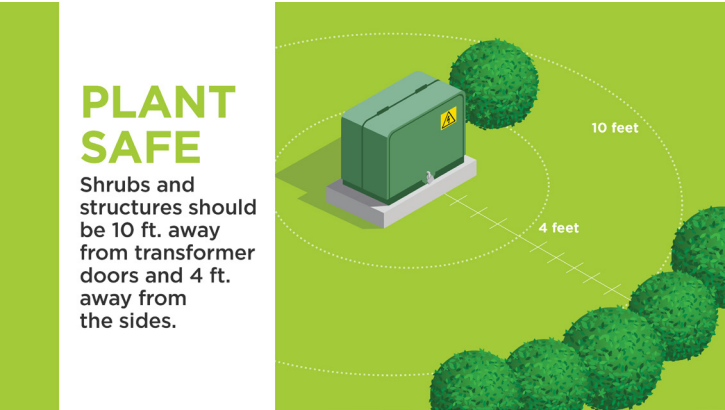
Cooperative members should never hire a private tree contractor to work within 10 feet of power lines or attempt to do the work themselves. Please contact the cooperative so we can trim or take down the hazardous tree in a safe manner. If you see a tree touching power lines and/or sparking, or any other hazardous tree condition, please contact Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative immediately.



PLAN AHEAD BEFORE PLANTING TREES OR SHRUBS

- Trees that grow no taller than 40 feet may be planted 40 feet from electrical wires, but no closer.
- Trees that grow taller than 40 feet must be planted no closer than 50 feet from electrical wires and no closer than 35 feet from buildings to allow proper root development while minimizing root damage to building foundations.
- Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative maintains a ten-foot right-of-way clearance on either side of an overhead power line.

To provide adequate clearance around power lines, trimming or removal of some trees may be required. In such cases, the property owner is notified. As a courtesy to our cooperative members, our vegetation management professionals seek the property owner's consent before removing the tree. #422602 This work will be done at no charge to you. Please direct questions to our Vegetation Management Department at (507) 379-8866.



Cooperative crews need full access to utility equipment. Please do not landscape, plant flower gardens, or install fences near pad mount transformers or junction boxes. A clearance of ten feet must be maintained from the front doors and a minimum of four feet on the other three sides. Planting or landscaping around the base of power poles must also be avoided.

RECYCLING COUPONS

It's free to recycle your standard, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. You will also receive \$.50 off the recycling fee when you recycle fluorescent tubes and high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps. Present coupon(s), with your bulbs, to a participating store near you. Limit 10 lamps or bulbs per member, per year.

FREE CFL RECYCLING

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Account #: _____

Number of Lamps Redeemed:
(Up to a maximum of 10 per year.)

Coupon is valid only at Raleigh's ACE Hardware in Albert Lea, MN, and D&G ACE Hardware in Austin, MN. Offer expires 12/31/2023.

\$.50 OFF FLUORESCENT TUBE/HID LAMP RECYCLING

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Account #: _____

Number of Lamps Redeemed:
(Up to a maximum of 10 per year.)

Coupon is valid only at Raleigh's ACE Hardware in Albert Lea, MN, and D&G ACE Hardware in Austin, MN. Offer expires 12/31/2023.

A NEW LOOK TO YOUR FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BILL STATEMENT

Refer to this sample bill for an explanation of how to read your new billing statement. Please contact our office if you have any questions regarding your billing statement. Call during our standard business hours Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. at (800) 734-6421 or (507)373-6421.

- 1 **Member Information.** Your name, service address, account number, and board director.
- 2 **Account Summary.** A summary of your account balance, including billing dates and service period.
- 3 **Important Billing Messages.** Priority billing messages regarding your electric bill will show here. Ex. Disconnect Notice, Expired Credit Card, Budget Billing, etc.
- 4 **Amount Due.** The total amount due and the payment due date are located here, within the circle.
- 5 **Energy Snapshot.** A bar graph showing the average temperature and last 12 months of energy use.
- 6 **Your Energy Breakdown.** The total cost per day of your current billing, compared to previous month, and previous year.
- 7 **Payment Stub.** If paying by check, please return this stub in the enclosed envelope with your payment, to ensure your account is properly credited.
- 8 **Contact Us.** Contact Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) with any billing questions.
- 9 **Meter Information.** This section provides your meter, rate, and energy/demand usage information.
- 10 **Current Charges.** This section details your current charges for electric use within the defined billing period.
- 11 **Message Center.** Stay current with important messages from your cooperative.
- 12 **Ways to Pay Your Bill.** FMEC offers several convenient payment options.
- 13 **FMEC Account Information.** Please make sure your contact information is up to date. Including mailing address, phone numbers and email address.

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MEMBER NAME: JOHN DOE
JANE DOE
SERVICE ADDRESS: 123 ANY ROAD
ALBERT LEA, MN 56007
Account Number: 9999999
Board Director: William Trygstad

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Account Summary
Bill Date: 02/06/2023
Service Period: 1/1 - 2/1 (31 Days)
Previous Balance \$124.00
Total Payments Received -\$124.00
Current Charges Due 02/25/23 \$131.00
Total Balance Due \$131.00

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Total Balance

\$131.00

Due 02/25/2023

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Energy Snapshot
Learn more at [fmec.smarthub.coop](#) or download the SmartHub app.

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Your Energy Breakdown
\$4.26/day
\$4.00/day
\$4.23/day

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Account Number 9999999
Member Number 99999
Total Balance Due 02/25/2023 \$131.00

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Info@fmec.coop (800) 734-6421

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative
PO Box 611
Albert Lea MN 56007-0611

JOHN DOE
JANE DOE
123 ANY ROAD
ALBERT LEA MN 56007

623020999999000013100

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Meter Number	Rate	Service Period	Start Reading	End Reading	Meter Multiplier	kWh Usage	Demand Road	Demand Usage
99999999	160 Resid-Single Phase	1/1/23 - 2/1/23	60802	61587	1.0	785	6.716	6.716

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Current Charges

Basic Service Charge	160			\$17.00
Energy Charge	785 kWh	@ \$0.10100000		\$79.29
Power Cost Adjustment	785 kWh	@ \$0.0245000		\$19.23
Cons Improvement Adj	785 kWh	@ \$0.0004528		\$0.36
State Sales Tax				\$7.97
Freeborn Co Transit Tax				\$0.58
City Of Albert Lea Tax				\$0.58
Franchise Fee				\$5.21
Operation Round Up				\$0.78
Current Charges				\$131.00
Total Balance Due				\$131.00

YTD Operation Round Up Contribution \$0.78
Pay by the due date to avoid a 1.5% late fee (\$1.00 minimum)

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Message Center

Join us at our 86th Annual Meeting, on Saturday, April 22, 2023, at Albert Lea High School! Registration and breakfast begin at 8:00 a.m. and the business meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. Hope to see you there!

FMEC offers several scholarship opportunities. For more information, and to apply go to [www.fmec.coop/scholarships](#).

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Ways to Pay Your Bill

Visit [fmec.coop](#) to see all the ways you can pay your bill.

Online

Log into your account at [fmec.coop](#).

Phone

Call (877) 487-9910 to pay by phone.

App

Pay your bill using the SmartHub app.

In Person

Payments can be made at our office M-F 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. or utilize the payment drop box 24/7.
3366 Bridge Ave, Albert Lea, MN 56007

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FMEC Account Information

Is your account information up to date? Fill out the form below or contact our office to update your phone number or email address.

Mailing Address

Phone Number: (999) 999-9999

Email Address: email@fmec.coop

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP

High school seniors, apply today for your chance to win a \$1,000 scholarship.
Drawing to be held Saturday, April 22nd, 2023. Must be present to win.



NOTIFY US NOW OF YOUR CONSTRUCTION OR EXPANSION PLANS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative always strives to meet our members' expectations. That's why we need to be aware of your 2023 construction or expansion plans as soon as possible.

Please contact our office if you are planning to build a new home or expand a structure in 2023. We will need to get your project on our construction calendar and order the necessary equipment. #1529803 There may be delays and price increases as we move closer to the traditional construction season.

CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:
1982 GS550L MOTORCYCLE. In good shape. \$7,500. Call in the evening. (507) 325-2427.

1997 DODGE DAKOTA PICKUP. Extended cab, topper, 8-cylinder, automatic, 4-wheel drive, 130,000 miles. \$4,000. Call (507) 383-4459.

FARM:
20 HP 3 PHASE CONVERTER with fused disconnect. Single phase to 3 phase. Call (507) 402-6677.

HOUSEHOLD:
FRANCISCAN DISHES made by Gladding McCean & Co. of CA. Hand decorated in apple pattern. Call (507) 297-5942.

ARMOIRE TV CABINET. Solid cherry, 19"d x 41"w x 78"h, electric outlet. Call (507) 383-8395.

MISC:
TOOLS. ¾ drive - 15 sockets, ratchet, breaker bar, 2 ext. & ½ drive impact deep 12 sockets. Call (507) 391-0763.

CONTOUR L3 TEETER INVERSION TABLE. Provides a wider base for safety. Paid \$425 asking \$350 OBO. Call (507) 514-3622.

RED HAT SOCIETY ITEMS. Jewelry, clothes/shoes/gloves, hat box, purse, knick-knacks. Call (507) 383-4909.

CHEAP ITEMS. Random cheap items. Make offer. Some collectibles. Call (507) 440-9091.

JACK KNIFE SOFA BED from a trailer. Excellent shape. \$110. Call (507) 383-2553.

PORTABLE CLOSETS. 63"h x 36"w x 20"d. Tan color. Excellent condition. \$30. Call (507) 460-8017.

ESKIMO ICE AUGER. 8", gas. Call (507) 440-3261.

GRADER BLADE. Land Pride, rb1572, 3pt. Call (507) 279-9761.

DOG SUPPLIES. Med size 2-door metal kennel, med bed, pop-up travel kennel, 2 poop scoops. \$50 firm. Call (507) 383-9029.

PETS/ANIMALS:
MALE SILVER LAB. 4 yr. old, neutered. Looking for a GOOD new home. Rehoming fee applies. Details-text (507) 391-4529.

WANTED
CLASSIC CARS & TRUCKS, VINTAGE 3 WHEELERS & MOTORCYCLES. Call (507) 438-8476.

VINTAGE HAND SCYTHE. Call (507) 402-0880.

ANTIQUE YELLOW SPIRAL HAY RAKE WHEEL for farmer's kid. Call or text (507) 438-6469.

FREE
ANTIQUE BABY CRIB w/newer mattress, good condition. Call (507) 265-3269.

GULBRANSON SPINET PIANO with bench. Good condition. Call (507) 993-0677.

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 may also email ads to [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](#) or send by mail to County Lines, PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007.

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 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.

Congratulations to Ray Sorensen!
He spotted his account number in the February newsletter.

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.*



**Freeborn
Mower
Electric
Cooperative**



A WELCOME VISIT

Jeanne Poppe, Southern Minnesota Outreach Director for U.S. Senator Tina Smith, visited FMEC on February 14. As a former Minnesota Representative, Poppe had many meetings with our cooperative leaders throughout the years. Now in her new capacity serving as Senator Smith's "eyes and ears" in 29 Minnesota counties, we are pleased to continue with this valuable relationship. She is pictured with Jim Krueger, President & CEO. Mary Nelson, Director of Cooperative Relations also participated in the meeting.

LET'S COOK



EASY PASTA BAKE

Submitted By: Karen Olson

- 1 lb. of ground beef, browned & drained
- 5 C. cooked pasta
- 1 - 30oz. jar spaghetti sauce
- ½ C. parmesan cheese

Directions:

Mix all together. Pour into 9 x 13 greased pan. Sprinkle with 8 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese. May add crushed taco (or any flavor) chips on top. Bake at 375, for 20 minutes.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email at 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.