



Freeborn  
Mower  
Electric  
Cooperative

People. Power. Possibilities.

# county lines

## NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022 • VOLUME 83 • NO. 09



## YOU ARE INVITED! ChargedUP

*Are you considering going electric? Mark your calendar and join us for our Charged UP Event!*

**WHEN:** Tuesday, October 4, 2022 | 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Hosted by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative in our parking lot at 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea.

Learn about the features of electric vehicles, electric bikes, electric lawn and garden tools, and more! Several items will be on display.

*National Drive Electric Week, September 23 - October 2, 2022, is a nationwide celebration to raise awareness of the many benefits of all-electric and plug-in hybrid cars, trucks, motorcycles, and more.*



**Check out and learn about a variety of electric vehicles and battery powered home appliances.**



**Refreshments such as hot dogs, brats, chips, dessert, and a drink will be available.**



**Drawings for an Electric Leaf Blower and an Electric Lawn Mower!**



*The popularity and adoption of electric vehicles are on the rise. In fact, it's anticipated that automakers will be investing \$330 billion in the technology by 2025. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is a trusted source for all your energy needs and electric vehicles are part of the mix in energy efficiency.*

## ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



## WE'RE PART OF A DYNAMIC INDUSTRY

Along with our industry partners, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is dedicated to providing its members with all of the electricity they need to power their lives. This, of course, is dependent on many factors beyond supply and demand. The industry is navigating a constantly changing landscape of regulations, environmental pressures, new technologies, and evolving consumer expectations.

For example, electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more prevalent. We've structured home charging rates to take advantage of off-peak hours when the overall demand for electricity is typically the lowest. We have also collaborated with a network of electric cooperatives to place rapid charge public use stations across the Midwest.

As an electric distribution cooperative, FMEC must purchase wholesale electricity from generation and transmission sources that are part of a large power market. #2215200 Our role is to distribute electricity to the consumers.

The expenses that FMEC has direct control of are under our constant scrutiny. We are taking steps to control these costs, such as ordering materials in advance to stay ahead of supply chain shortages and delays, looking for efficiencies in how we operate, and by promoting paperless billing and communications. Year-to-date, I am proud to report that FMEC is under budget in our operating expenses. We'll work to keep that the case.

The Co-op has been impacted by rising costs in our daily business operations. FMEC is currently engaged in a rate study with an independent, third-party consultant. Results of that study will be available soon and we will communicate needed changes as soon as practical. Currently, we are expecting to see a rate change in the first quarter of 2023.



## WHAT IS THE PCA?

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) reflects changes in wholesale power costs without having to frequently change retail rate schedules to recover expenses. It can appear on your bill as a credit or a charge.

A **PCA credit** generally occurs when fuel and other production costs are low.

A **PCA charge** can be due to higher-than-budgeted fuel costs (mainly natural gas and coal) and/or purchase prices on the energy market. Other reasons can be transmission congestion within the regional grid that limits the available energy and unexpected heat waves occurring when power plants are unavailable due to seasonal maintenance.

Due to an increase in wholesale power cost, FMEC has increased the PCA charge to recover these added costs. As of now, we expect the increased PCA charge to continue until the wholesale cost pressures subside. FMEC has little control over costs passed through to us and ultimately recovers these through increased PCA charges.

## member news

### ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. To learn more about EAP or to apply for assistance, contact the agency that services your area. You will also find more information at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>

#### SEMCAC

(507) 864-7515 | (800) 944-3281  
[www.semcac.org](http://www.semcac.org)

#### Freeborn County Human Services

(507) 377-5400

#### Mower County Human Services

(507) 437-9701

#### Minnesota Valley Action Council

(507) 345-6822 | (800) 767-7139

#### Minnesota Prairie County Alliance

(888) 850-9419

#### Faribault County Human Services

(507) 526-3265

#### Fillmore County Social Services

(507) 765-2175

#### North Iowa Community Action

(641) 423-9028 | (800) 873-1899

## Notice of Cold Weather Rule



Minnesota Statute 216B.097 regulates the disconnection of residential accounts during the heating season. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, is prohibited from disconnecting the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1st and April 30th if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

**(1)** The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. Household income must be verified on form provided either by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative or from a local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

**(2)** The customer enters into and makes reasonable timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

**(3)** The customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

**If you are unable to pay your electric bill by the due date, you must contact our office, to arrange a payment plan. Your service may be disconnected, even during the winter months if you fail to respond to the disconnect notice.**

## MISO APPROVES \$2 BILLION FOR GRID EXPANSION

Transmission lines are the backbone of the electric grid. The Minnesota Department of Commerce announced that on July 25, 2022, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) unanimously approved three projects which are entirely or partially in Minnesota, representing an investment of more than \$2 billion to expand and improve reliability for our electric grid. #21201 This investment is part of \$10 billion in new transmission lines planned for the Midwest under a coordinated effort by MISO, which manages the regional electric grid for 15 Midwest and Southern states, and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

The economic benefits of the transmission line expansion significantly exceed costs, with a cost-benefit ratio of \$2.80 to \$4 for each \$1 invested in the electric grid, according to MISO analysis. The MISO plan would encompass a total of 18 projects across the Midwest Subregion, with costs shared by all electric users across that region.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### YOUR SPARE CHANGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The Food for Backpacks initiative recently received a \$1,000 grant from Operation Round Up®. It was one of thirty-six organizations granted funds from the second quarter applications. The total quarterly awards amount was \$23,650.

“Since its inception in 2017, Food for Backpacks has provided nutritious weekend meal packets to students in need. Food for Backpacks has inspired a band of faithful volunteers from local churches, businesses, schools, and the community at large to serve this important endeavor. We, as FFB volunteers, do not know who receives the food, however we do know that with the steadfast support from businesses like Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we will continue to feed our children in need,” shared Linda Pederson.

#### >> Filling Hungry Tummies

*From a main location in Albert Lea, Food for Backpacks volunteers pick up boxes of food and bring to various storage locations. The food is then delivered to designated schools each week throughout the school year. (Photos shown are from a box distribution last school year.)*



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: OPERATION ROUND UP®

**Concern for Community is one of the seven cooperative principles that form the bedrock of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC). One way we follow this principle is through our Operation Round Up® program.**

Operation Round Up® is a non-profit program that administers grants to organizations in Freeborn and Mower counties. It is funded from members' electric bills being automatically rounded up to the nearest whole dollar amount. An individual member's monthly contribution could be as little as a penny but will never be more than ninety-nine cents. #211008 The average annual contribution is about \$6.00. For this small monthly contribution, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members support a wide range of non-profit and charitable organizations for beneficial initiatives throughout our local communities.

Contributions to Operation Round Up are pooled together in a fund held separately from the cooperative's operational accounts and which is administered by the program's own Board of Trustees. Operation Round Up® is an opt-out program.

Applications are reviewed, and grants are made, quarterly. Application materials and program guidelines are available on our website ([www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop)). Applications must be received or postmarked by the deadline date and must be for a project or event in the future.

**The next application deadline is September 15!**

## LEARNING HOW TO STAY SAFE

**Starting at a young age, it's important that children gain respect for the power, and dangers, of our electrified lives.**

Nick Roling, Journeyman Lineworker, and Lucas Van Engelenburg, Temporary Lineworker, recently visited with about 40 children, ages six through ten, at the Children's Center in Albert Lea. The children learned about the specialized equipment lineworkers use to stay safe while working on power lines.

A main message was that the public, and children in particular, must stay clear from power lines and utility equipment because they lack both professional training and proper safety equipment. #211008 An energized tabletop demonstration reinforced this important safety message by visually showing danger points around the yard and farmstead.



## SAFETY OUTREACH

**Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) participated in the Albert Lea Safety Night held August 9<sup>th</sup> at Morin Park. This community building event was free to the public and showcased local support of organizations.**

“The event was well attended. We were glad to have the opportunity to educate youth on electrical safety,” said Dawn Schroeder, FMEC Communications Specialist. “At our table there was a wheel for the children to spin, then questions for them to answer. They were given children's hard hats, and bags that included safety sheets and a whistle/flashlight.” Lori Masters, FMEC Operations Assistant and Jake Hamberg, FMEC Underground Construction Equipment Operator also participated in the event, offering safety tips and information to children and their parents.

“It's very important to teach children (and the community) how to be safe around electricity. Safety is our priority at FMEC and we're hopeful that each person who stopped by to visit with us, learned something valuable,” stated Masters. “The children were also excited to learn about the cooperative's bucket truck,” explained Hamberg.





Brad Wood retired July 18, 2022, from his position as a Service Representative following a 37-year career in the industry, the last seven with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

“I’ve really enjoyed being a Service Representative, working with my hands and being outdoors. I worked with a lot of great coworkers during my career and have also enjoyed the interaction with the customers/members. I met a lot of interesting people,” he stated. He also worked with the FMEC crews when extra help was needed. “It was always a good feeling to restore power during outages.”

Brad worked for five different utilities during the span of his career — three electric cooperatives, one municipal utility, and one investor-owned utility. “There have been quite a few changes in the power industry since I started in 1985. #2215200 Things are a lot more modern now and equipment improvements reduces physical labor. Working safely has always been a concern of mine and there have also been improvements in that area.”

In his well-deserved retirement, Brad is looking forward to moving on to other things that are important in his life. “I plan on spending time with my four children and seven grandchildren, doing some traveling, and spending more time fishing and hunting.”

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative thanks you, Brad Wood, for your dedicated service and we wish you a long, healthy, and fulfilling retirement!

*“I’ve always enjoyed my time as a lineworker/service representative, and I’d encourage anyone who is interested in working outdoors and doing things with their hands to pursue a career as a lineworker.” - Brad*



Carrie Shell joined our professional team as an Information Technology Specialist on July 6, 2022. Originally from Gate City, VA, Carrie now resides in Albert Lea. She is the mother of two grown children and three others whom she raised. Carrie has four grandchildren.

“The people I have met here at work are amazing and have helped make my transition to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative easy. What I enjoy most about my position is having the opportunity to learn new things in technology,” said Carrie.

“One of my favorite quotes is from Socrates — ‘The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.’ I can’t wait to see what my future here has to offer!”



**Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative will perform a Member Survey this Fall.** The survey will take place by email during the month of October. Please be aware that you may be one of several members who are randomly selected to participate in the survey. If you get an email about a survey from us, it’s legitimate.

If you are contacted, we would greatly appreciate your time to share your opinions about the cooperative. Your information and your responses will remain confidential. By participating in the survey, you will help us identify where we are serving you well and where we might need to improve.

We know your time is valuable, so rest assured, we will use the results to make decisions on matters important to the future of your cooperative and that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors. Thank you for your honest feedback. If you have any questions regarding this upcoming survey, please contact us.



## IT’S TIME TO TALK “PREPAREDNESS”

Every year, the United States observes National Preparedness Month in September to remind Americans to be ready for any disaster that could affect them, their homes, communities, or businesses. In the event a disaster hits, every second will count. Take time to discuss emergency procedures with your family and/or employees. #21201 The safety plans you create will help your household or place of business be better prepared to deal with disaster.

## CLASSIFIED marketplace

### FOR SALE

#### FARM:

**ROCK BOX** for tractor. Rear mount, quick hitch, category 1, 14 x 36 x 24. \$75. Call (507) 383-4459.

**HOG NURSERY EQUIPMENT.** Stainless steel feeders – single & double, PVC 2 x 8 planking – various lengths, Tenderfoot flooring. Call (507) 383-0295.

**3 - 250 BU GRAVITY BOXES.** Good condition. Call (507) 440-2620.

**OLIVER ROW CROP 88.** Loader, wide front. Rear tires like new. Good tin, runs good. Call (507) 219-8213.

**60’ – 8” PTO AUGER.** Good condition. Call (507) 438-4043.

**GRAIN TRUCKS** ( tandems). 1979 Ford 900 - \$6,500. 1974 Ford 800 - \$3,250. Call (507) 279-0949.

**16’ ELECTRIC HAY ELEVATOR** on wheels. In good condition. \$350. Call (507) 373-0324.

**FARMALL M.** Repainted, power steering, rear tires 95%, front tires very good, runs good. Call (507) 383-0410 or (507) 383-0411.

**CASE VAC TRACTOR.** Woods belly mower included. \$1,000 OBO. Call (507) 402-2607.

#### HOUSEHOLD:

**SOFAS.** Leather sofa, like new - \$50. Pull-out combination sofa sleeper - \$40. Call (507) 318-3865.

#### OAK PEDESTAL TABLE & 4 OAK CHAIRS.

Table 42”, extends to 68”. Excellent condition. Call (507) 582-3694.

**TELEVISION.** Works. Call (507) 373-8088.

#### MISC:

##### HEALTH RIDER EXERCISER.

Manually operated with a monitor. \$75. Call (507) 383-6251.

**KING KUTTER REAR BLADE 6’ and TILLER 3 pt. 60”.** Call (507) 440-0679.

**FRUIT JARS.** Call (507) 373-8715.

**4 MENS SHORT SLEEVE SHIRTS.** Large & X-Large. \$12. Call (507) 377-6064.

**LIVE SPARROW CAGE TRAP.** Best offer. Call (507) 324-5680

**GARDEN HOSE 75’ and HOSE REEL.** Call (507) 852-3499.

**24” MT 220 TREK BICYCLE.** In very good shape. Call (507) 433-2712.

**MIZUNO JPX919 GOLF CLUBS.** 5-GW steel regular flex. \$600. Call (507) 391-4546.

**2014 12’ JAYCO SPORT POP-UP CAMPER.** Easily sleeps 6. Fridge, furnace, water heater. \$6,500. Call (507) 373-0135.

**EASY-GO GOLF CART UTILITY MODEL.** Has hand dump bucket on back, lights, runs great. \$5,500 Call (507) 206-8264 or (507) 503-2664.

**2019 EXTREME POWER 2200W ELECTRIC DEMOLITION JACK HAMMER** w/ flat chisel & bull point tip. Never used. \$150. Call (507) 383-8395.

**100 CINDER BLOCKS.** 10 x 8 x 16. Never used. \$1.00 each. Call (507) 383-0802.

**JAZZY ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR.** New batteries. \$1,500 OBO. Call (507) 383-3612.

**TOOLS.** Wrench sets, mechanics tool set, pressure washer, garage jack, Larin creeper, and more. Call (507) 402-2393.

#### PETS/ANIMALS:

**GOLDEN DOODLE PUPPIES.** Born 6/23/22, vet checked, wormed, and 1st shots. Text/call (507) 391-4529.

**BARNYARD CHICKENS & PYGMY NANNY GOATS.** Call (507) 475-1468.

### WANTED

**1970’s POLARIS TX OR STARFIRE SNOWMOBILES, PARTS, OR MEMORABILIA.** Call or text (507) 391-1777.

### FREE

**VINTAGE SEWING CLOTHING PATTERNS.** Children, women, & men, ‘40s to ‘80s, several boxes – all must go. Call (507) 438-9289.

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](http://www.fmec.coop). Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab. You may also email ads to [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](mailto:michelle.rayman@fmec.coop) or send by mail to County Lines, PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007. Ads will not be accepted over the phone.

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President: Jim Krueger, President & CEO  
Telephone: (507) 373-6421

## SPOT YOUR NUMBER

### WIN A \$25 BILL CREDIT

To reward our faithful newsletter readers, we've randomly selected 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.*



## MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT

Take the pledge to vote this election year.

Visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) to take the pledge.

Co-ops across the nation are dedicated to making our voices heard at the polls. Collectively we can make a difference.

### REGISTER TO VOTE!

September 20, 2022 is  
#NationalVoterRegistrationDay



### LET'S COOK



### SUMMER PIE

Submitted By:  
**Lou Ann Hultgren**

#### Ingredients:

- Graham cracker crust
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 8 oz. Cool Whip
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Lemon pie filling

#### Directions:

Mix together softened cream cheese, sugar, & 4 heaping tbsp. of Cool Whip, then add vanilla and mix again. Spoon mixture into pie shell, top with lemon filling, and spread remaining Cool Whip over that. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Garnish with a lemon slice when serving.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email at [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](mailto: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.