



## Showcasing The Cooperative Difference

Although the morning of April 22nd was blustery, 227 members and their families gathered at the Albert Lea High School to participate in the 86th Annual Meeting of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC). Members started the morning with a full breakfast served by HyVee and assisted by Cub Scouts Pack #105.

Employees interacted with members at several displays, games, and information booths. Prior to the business meeting, many member families also enjoyed playing bingo in the auditorium.

Tying into our theme of The Cooperative Difference, the Albert Lea Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director, Holly Babcock, welcomed the attendees saying, "I applaud FMEC for being a partner in the community."

During his report, President & CEO Jim Krueger delved into the changing legislative landscape and how it is impacting the electric utility industry and FMEC. He explained that FMEC has two suppliers of wholesale power, Alliant Energy and Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC). Each provides about half of FMEC's wholesale energy purchases. FMEC is a member-owner of DPC and has representation on its board of directors. "In 2025, all of our wholesale power supply will come from DPC."

Krueger noted that high natural gas prices and reduced availability of generation capacity are troubling. While FMEC ended the year within its financial targets, it had also absorbed about \$400,000 in wholesale power costs to reduce the impact on retail electric rates. "Fuel prices have dropped," he said, "but they are still higher than two years ago. Additionally, increasing interest rates can become an issue for funding capital needs."

Minnesota legislative targets are to be 60% carbon-free by 2030, 90% by 2035, and 100% by 2040. "Utilities build infrastructure to last 30 plus years," stated Krueger. "Baseload power plants will have to remain part of the mix. #531602 I believe we'll also need to have a discussion in Minnesota on nuclear energy. We all want to do the right thing and move forward."

"Going forward, we will have smaller, incremental rate increases," Krueger explained, adding that mid-2025 will be when all residential rates become aligned. FMEC has managed two rate schedules for several years since the acquisition of Alliant service territory.

*Continued on page 3.*



## ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



## RELIABILITY IS A TOP PRIORITY

Reliable power — you depend on it and you deserve it. With summer storm season upon us, this is a good time to explain some of the measures we're taking to ensure you will continue receiving reliable power.

Let me be the first to say that I enjoy trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that issues with vegetation are a common cause of power outages. That's why we strive to keep our right-of-way (ROW) areas clear. A ROW area is land Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) uses to construct, maintain, replace, or repair underground and overhead power lines. Maintaining ROW enables proper clearance from trees and other obstructions that could interfere with power distribution.

FMEC's vegetation management strategy focuses on power reliability while maintaining the beauty of our area. Although vegetation management is time-

consuming and costly, it is vital. Service reliability is improved by a rotation schedule of system-wide and proactive trimming and pruning of trees along powerline routes.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages that allow FMEC crews to perform system repairs and upgrades. #1752902 Planned outages can also be used to balance energy demand, but only in rare circumstances. We will always notify you in advance of a planned outage. Be sure we have your correct contact information on file so you will receive the latest notifications.

Lastly, I encourage you to follow FMEC on social media so that you receive the latest updates.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY SEATED DIRECTORS

We welcomed three members to the board of directors during the annual meeting. Steve Garbisch, representing District 3, and Larry Irvine, representing District 9, were re-elected to serve a three-year term. Matt Maras was elected to represent District 6, also for three years.



*"I am honored to serve the members of District 6," stated Matt Maras.*



*Steve Garbisch said, "Thank you for putting your trust and confidence in me."*

We thank outgoing Director Joe Pacovsky for his time and contributions in previously representing District 6. Allen Pelvit was also a nominee for the post.



*"It has been an honor to serve as a board member representing District 9 for the last seven years," remarked Larry Irvine.*

## member news

### ENJOY THE HOLIDAY!

We will be closed on Tuesday, July 4th. Call (800) 734-6421 or (507) 373-6421 to report an outage or emergency.

### IT'S COOLING SEASON

Are you ready? Here are a few tips.

- Clear away leaves and debris from around your outdoor central air conditioning unit.
- Change your AC filter. Poor air conditioning performance and excessive energy use could be due to neglected maintenance. Consider getting a professional AC check and tune-up.
- Switch your ceiling fans so the rotation is in a counterclockwise direction. When standing directly beneath the fan, you should feel a cool breeze.
- Use blinds and curtains, especially on western and southern-facing windows, to avoid strong sunshine and its radiative heating.

### STANDBY GENERATOR SAFETY

Proper use of a standby generator is the homeowner's responsibility. Make certain that it is installed correctly so the wiring arrangement will not allow a back-feed of electricity onto the utility's power lines, creating an electrocution hazard. A transfer switch is required if the generator is to be connected directly to your electrical system. Hire a qualified electrician to install the transfer switch and necessary wiring.

Avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning by only operating it outside in a dry area, on a level surface, and away from windows and doors.

Familiarize yourself with the generator operating manuals. Maintenance should be performed by a trained electrician.

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR GENEROUS REBATE PROGRAM!

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, in conjunction with Dairyland Power Cooperative, offers a wide variety of energy efficiency rebates. Details are available at [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop). Rebate applications must be submitted within three months of the equipment or appliance purchase/installation.

## ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED...



Krueger also honored four recent retirees: Brad Wood, Natalie Nelson, Deb Kolling, and Larry Underdahl. Their total combined service exceeded 130 years.

Area students were awarded each a \$1,000 Luck of the Draw Scholarship toward their post-high school education. These scholarships are funded from forfeited capital credits in accordance with MN statutes.

It was announced that Jaylee Waters will represent FMEC in Washington, D.C. this month as our Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegate. She attends Albert Lea High School.

The event ended with a variety of prize drawings.





# CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



## Operation Round Up® Distributes \$34,397.31

Our first quarter awards for Operation Round Up® included grants made to 48 entities located in 14 local communities. The grants totaled \$34,397.31.

Operation Round Up® is a non-profit, opt-out program. Strengthening the community is part of our foundational principles as an electric cooperative. The program has its own board of trustees and all funds are held completely separate from Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC).

Application requests must be for charitable, educational, or non-profit organizations only that serve communities located within Freeborn and Mower Counties. Application information is available on the FMEC website.

**The next quarterly application deadline is June 15th.**



The Albert Lea Legion Riders Chapter 56 was awarded a \$500 grant to be used toward the Freedom Rock Project it is spearheading. The project has the dual goals of creating a point of pride and honoring Freeborn County veterans for their service.

The rock will feature artwork by Ray “Bubba” Sorenson and will be permanently located on the north side of the Freeborn County Courthouse adjacent to the existing veteran’s memorial. #1752902 Sorenson has painted Freedom Rocks in all counties of Iowa, along with a few in Minnesota and Wisconsin. His work can be viewed at [www.thefreedomrock.com](http://www.thefreedomrock.com).

Bill and Lynn Koza accepted the award from Dawn Schroeder, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative Communications Manager.



## JUNE 19-23 IS NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK

Pollinators like bees, butterflies, and birds are crucial for our food supply. Without them, many plants that nourish us would be critically threatened. They also play a vital role in supporting wildlife, water filtration, and soil stability.

Dairyland Power Cooperative, a wholesale electricity supplier to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), is a partner in the Power-In Pollinators initiative. #2299001 The initiative launched in 2018 and has quickly grown to be the largest power

company collaboration in the United States that is researching how the electric industry may support pollinators.

Planting a pollinator garden? Your goal should be to make it easy for pollinators to track down the plants and flowers in your garden. Try planting bright flowers in clusters, use scents like old fruit, and consider setting up a hummingbird feeder nearby.

*“This is the fifth year for our 1.5 Acre Organic Pollinator Flower Field. It attracts a tremendous number of birds, butterflies, and bees! Our field has 35 different wildflowers and also native grasses.”*  
— Photos and quote from FMEC member Bryce Gaudian, Hayward.



# ELECTRIFY YOUR RIDE



## CHARGING YOUR ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Many automakers have decided to transition their vehicle models to electric-only by 2030. Coupled with state policies and growing electric vehicle (EV) adoption across the nation, these market forces will directly impact how the electric grid functions in the future. Therefore, right-sizing local EV charging infrastructure is critically important. This is a long-term investment that requires ample time, technology, and resources.

As local consumer interest in EVs grows, it is important that FMEC provides information about EV charging and electrical requirements. If you are considering purchasing an EV, we invite you to contact our Energy Solutions Department regarding charging requirements, electric rates, and any necessary wiring upgrades.

We offer multiple Electric Vehicle charging rate designs so you can decide what makes sense for you.

### TIME-OF-USE RATE

A meter is installed that allows the rate to change based on the time of day you charge your electric vehicle.

- **On-Peak Rate: 21 cents per kWh, 2 p.m. — 9 p.m. on weekdays.**
- **Off-Peak Rate: 7 cents per kWh, all other times not defined above, including weekends.**

### INTERRUPTIBLE RATE

While charging at this rate, you’ll enjoy a low energy charge of 5.3 cents per kWh. The Interruptible Rate requires a meter to be installed. #2299001 This meter will control the start and stop times of the interruptible periods which are weekdays from 2 p.m. — 9:30 p.m. plus or minus 30 minutes to the start and stop times.

- **Energy Charge when not interrupted: 5.3 cents per kWh.**
- **Service interrupted (not available for charging): Weekdays from 2 p.m. — 9:30 p.m. plus or minus 30 minutes to the start and stop times.**

### REBATES AVAILABLE

Installing a LEVEL II EV charging station at your premises may qualify you for a rebate of \$400!

### EVERGREEN EVERYWHERE

Members who charge an electric vehicle during off-peak hours can receive up to four Evergreen Everywhere energy blocks each month. Evergreen is an opportunity for electric cooperative members to voluntarily contribute to the increased use of renewable energy sources. Each Evergreen block of energy is tracked by wholesale power provider Dairyland Power Cooperative and is renewable energy coming from regional solar, wind, hydro, and biogas generation resources.

**GO TO OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN UP FOR OUR EV NEWSLETTER!**



# WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

## LANGDON BACHTLE

Hired as Underground Construction Equipment Operator, Langdon Bachtle of Albert Lea will call on his 23 years in the construction trade in his new position at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. "I have operated heavy equipment and look forward to year-round work and learning a new career," he said. In addition to spending time with his wife and seven daughters, Langdon enjoys fishing, hunting, and camping.



## CARTER DAHLUM

"I'm looking forward to coming in every day and giving my best," said Carter Dahlum of Glenville. "I want to do everything I can for the co-op to be successful." He has accepted the position of Energy Solutions Specialist II. "In my previous jobs, I have worked well in a team environment and individually. There will be some challenges, but I think my past work experience can help me prepare for those obstacles." Carter enjoys working out, playing co-ed and men's league softball, hunting, and fishing with family and friends.



## RILEY GRUNWALD

"I'm looking forward to growing within the co-op and helping out as much as possible," said Riley Grunwald upon being hired as a Powerline Tree Trimmer. He comes to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative with two years of experience as an apprentice lineman with Highline Construction. Originally from Medford, WI, he also has more than eight years of experience in farmwork, equipment operations, and performing tree work. Hunting, fishing, and working out are his favorite activities. Riley currently resides in Owatonna.



## KASEY MANGES

When asked what will help him in his new career as a Powerline Tree Trimmer, Kasey Manges responded that it is his ability to be a quick thinker and a desire to learn as much as he can. He's also looking forward to gaining a greater understanding of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's operations. #531602 Kasey resides in Albert Lea.



# CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

## FOR SALE

### FARM:

**FERTILIZER AUGER** for wagon. Call (507) 754-5028.

**METAL CORN CRIB.** Round with 4 sections and door. 6' x 10'. \$120. Call (507) 383-0802.

**JOHN DEERE 920 BEAN PLATFORM.** Call (507) 383-2432.

**HARDI SPRAYER.** 1000 gal, 60' boom, hydraulic fold. Ready to spray. Call (507) 438-2861.

**KING KUTTER TILLER.** 5', category 1, only 1 hour use. \$1,800. Call (507) 279-3634.

**SMIDLEY CATTLE FEEDER** with stainless steel package. \$3,000. Call (507) 383-7390.

**HUSKEE GRAVITY BOX.** 180-200 bushel. Fair condition. \$400. Call (507) 251-1776 leave message.

**NEW HOLLAND TRANSPLANTER.** Single row, 3 pt hitch. \$550. Call (507) 434-7644.

### HOUSEHOLD:

**ANTIQUE FURNITURE.** Hall tree/mirror, table w/leaves, 100 yr. old dollhouse/furniture. Call (507) 383-7880.

**WOOD HUTCH.** Light color, 4'W x 5'H x 12½"D. Good condition. \$25 OBO. Call (507) 383-6121.

**INTEX TWIN AIR MATTRESS.** Waterproof, flocked top, built-in pump for inflation & deflation. \$50. Call (507) 373-0093

**ORIGINAL FOSTORIA AMERICANA PATTERN DISHES.** 8 place setting dishes, including serving dishes, etc. Call (507) 433-2712.

**DANBY WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER.** 12,000 BTU. Call (507) 377-9159.

**STURDY WOODEN FUTON** with beige brown zippered cover and 2 pillows. Rarely used. \$650. Call (507) 383-3976.

**4 WHITE DECK CHAIRS** with pads. \$30. Call (507) 377-2119.

### MISC:

**ENGINE STAND.** \$100. Call (641) 257-9438.

**BUTTERBALL ELECTRIC TURKEY FRYER.** \$50. Call (507) 373-1897.

**2 ANDERSON C-14 PERMA SHIELD REPLACEMENT SASHES.** Never used. \$175 ea. Call (507) 383-2258.

**TOY TRACTORS.** Large & small toy tractor/trailer semi's. Will sell as group or individually. Call (507) 402-5746.

**20' PONTOON w/TRAILER.** 25 HP, many extras. Call (507) 377-3428.

**ALUMINUM PICKUP FUEL TANK** 60-gallon w/ **TOOLBOX & PUMP.** Call (507) 383-0410 or (507) 383-0411.

**MEN'S HARLEY DAVIDSON JACKET, VEST, CHAPS.** Size large, good condition. \$200 for everything. Call (507) 261-0749.

**BELL SNOWMOBILE HELMET.** Red/black/white, full-face visor, women's medium. In box, LIKE NEW. \$50. Call (320) 496-0490.

**2021 PALOMINO SS-1200 P/U CAMPER.** Popup, queen & table beds, air, power lifts. LIKE NEW! \$16,000. Call (507) 383-1106.

**TROY-BILT REAR TINE TILLER.** \$125 OBO. Call (507) 324-5735.

**MIRRO PRESSURE CANNER.** 23 qt size, used very little, assorted canning jars & canning supplies. Call (507) 256-4307.

### PETS/ANIMALS:

**BARNYARD CHICKS.** Mixed chicks, lay blue & brown eggs. Call (507) 475-1468.

## WANTED

**STOCK CHOPPER** for parts. 220 high speed. Call (507) 438-4284.

**POLARIS TX/STARFIRE SLEDS, PARTS, & MEMORABILIA.** Possibly other vintage sleds. Call (507) 391-1777.

**OLD PHOTOS.** Call (507) 402-0880.

## FREE

**1949 GULBRANDSON SPINET PIANO & bench.** You haul. Call (507) 373-6537.

## CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE RULES

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

- Ad deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the issue in which it will be printed. Ads received after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be printed a month later. Example: An ad received on or before June 15<sup>th</sup> will appear in the July issue. If it is received on June 16<sup>th</sup> or later, it will appear in the August issue.
- A Classified Marketplace section appears in each issue except for our special Annual Report issue, typically in March.
- We take ads in these categories: For Sale; Wanted; Free/Giveaway.
- Ads can be for: Vehicles/ Motorized; Animals; Household; Farm; Miscellaneous.
- No business ads will be accepted. Ads must be submitted in writing or electronically, not by phone call.
- Ads will not be repeated.

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.

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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 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 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](http://www.fmec.coop)  
[info@fmec.coop](mailto: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.*

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## LET'S COOK



### RHUBARB CREAM CAKE

**Submitted By: Rosalind Swenson**

- One box yellow cake mix
- 4 C. rhubarb, cut into one-inch pieces
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 Pint half & half or heavy whipping cream

#### Directions:

Mix cake according to box directions, spread in pan. Spread rhubarb over cake. Sprinkle sugar over rhubarb. Slowly pour cream over top. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean.

*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.*