



## LEGISLATORS MEET TO DISCUSS ELECTRIC GRID ISSUES

Building relationships, providing input, and educating about issues concerning the electric utility industry are the core reasons why Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) hosts an annual Legislative Update. Several topics were discussed when Minnesota legislators met with FMEC directors and staff on August 29 at the cooperative.

Brent Ridge, President and CEO at Dairyland Power Cooperative, explained priorities for the electric generation and transmission cooperative that serves in a four-state area of the upper Midwest, including FMEC. During his remarks, Ridge emphasized the integrity of the electric grid and stated that in December 2022, there were nine states across the nation that experienced rolling blackouts. The reliability of conventional generation is significantly challenged by more frequent weather extremes, high demand for electricity, and a changing mix of generation resources.

Dairyland Power operates within the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) region. MISO is an independent,

not-for-profit organization that manages the flow of electricity across 15 states and Manitoba, Canada. #2175004 It seeks to balance the complexities of the utility grid, matching electric load with generation resources, without sacrificing safety and reliability.

Legislators were particularly concerned about the trajectory and speed at which Minnesota is pursuing the Carbon-Free by 2040 Act. While innovation will drive the transition, traditional energy resources will be necessary to ensure a reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible flow of electricity.

*Grid reliability is at the forefront of strategic planning for utilities. To ensure the adequate availability of generation resources year-round, MISO recently changed its requirements for power providers, including Dairyland Power. This has resulted in modifications to FMEC's load management program.*

*Photo Caption: (l-r) Chuck Ackman (Senior Regional Outreach Director for US Senator Amy Klobuchar); Representative Peggy Bennett (District 23A); Jenny Glumak (Director of Government Affairs – Minnesota Rural Electric Association); Jim Krueger (FMEC President & CEO); Representative Patricia Mueller (District 23B); Aaron Eberhart (Caseworker, Office of U.S. Congressman Brad Finstad); Aaron Farris (Chairman of Minnesota 1st Congressional District Republican Party); Senator Gene Dornink (Senate District 23); Brent Ridge (President & CEO -Dairyland Power Cooperative).*

## ceo message

Jim Krueger,  
President & CEO



## GROWTH FOR: PEOPLE. POWER. POSSIBILITIES.

Across the nation, electric cooperatives play a vital role in growing communities by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement, and supporting the unique needs of their members. At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), our mission is to power your life! Your satisfaction is our goal. We were formed in 1936 to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. #1927306 We've come a long way since then, and your needs have also continued to evolve. The cooperative business model has served us well throughout these many decades of growth and changing times.

This is why FMEC will never stop growing for you. Together, let's celebrate October as Cooperative Month!

## \$644,703 IN CAPITAL CREDITS RETIRED

The FMEC board of directors recently approved the 2023 general retirement (return) of Capital Credits. Capital Credits are the tangible representation of how FMEC members share in the cooperative's financial success and FMEC's operation as a member-owned, not-for-profit entity.

In our cooperative, excess revenue (called margins) is allocated as Capital Credits. Each member has been assigned a Capital Credit account. FMEC tracks each member's purchase of electricity and the patronage revenue that they have generated for the cooperative.

Prior to their retirement, Capital Credits are used to financially strengthen the cooperative and reduce the need to borrow funds. Each year, the board of directors evaluates whether the cooperative's financial position will allow for the return (retirement) of Capital Credits. At that time, the board will also determine the total amount to be retired.

The 2023 retirement of Capital Credits has been applied as a credit on the October electric statements of current qualifying members. Former members will receive their Capital Credit retirement by check. A member who has terminated electric services with FMEC will no longer receive Capital Credit allocations but will receive retirements until their credits have been paid in full. Capital Credits become part of a deceased member's estate. Please notify FMEC of any address change until your Capital Credit account has been fully retired. Contact Joanne at [joanne.miller@fmec.coop](mailto:joanne.miller@fmec.coop) or (507) 379-8860.



### 1. VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP.

Membership in Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender, language, political perspective, or socioeconomic status.



### 2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL.

FMEC is governed locally by a board of directors that is elected from the cooperative membership. Each member has an equal voice and a vote in determining the directors. Not only do your directors reside locally, but so do the cooperative's leadership team and employees. This is valuable to our making informed decisions.



### 3. MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION.

FMEC is committed to serving its members by providing power to their lives. As a cooperative, we are a value-based organization that is motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute to, and democratically control, the capital of FMEC. Members share in our financial success through Capital Credits.



### 4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations, controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.



### 5. EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION.

Ensuring our continuing effectiveness can only be accomplished by providing information and training to the members and public, our employees, staff, and directors.



### 6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES.

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-op movement by participating in local, state, regional, national, and international cooperative organizations. Examples include Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO), Dairyland Power Cooperative, Minnesota Rural Electric Association, Touchstone Energy®, and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



### 7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY.

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their local communities through policies accepted and supported by their members. Our very successful Operation Round Up® and scholarship programs are examples of FMEC living out this principle.

# member news



## RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC HEAT TAX EXEMPTION

Residential consumers using electricity as their primary heat source (50% or more) are exempt from sales tax for the billing months of November, December, January, February, March, and April.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) requires a signed certificate stating that your primary source of heat is electricity. The purpose is: 1) It notifies FMEC to remove the sales tax from your bill for the qualifying months. 2) Should FMEC be audited by the Department of Revenue, FMEC would utilize the exemption certificate signed by you as our authority to remove the sales tax. This is for the protection of the cooperative. If FMEC were audited and it was found that the consumer's bill was illegally exempted, it would be the responsibility of the individual consumer to pay any amount due, plus penalties.

If this tax exemption applies to you, please submit a completed certification form to FMEC. The certificate is available from our office or can be downloaded from our website: [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop). The downloadable form can be found under the **SERVICES** tab, Forms, Downloadable Information, Exemption Forms.

If you have previously submitted a form, there's no need to submit a new form. However, if you are no longer exempt from sales tax, please contact our office.

Separately metered electric heat does not require the completion of this form. Your electric heat usage is already exempt under that agreement.

## UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

It is important that Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative has your current contact information on file so we may better serve you with:

- Storm situations and large power outages.
- Scheduled outage information.
- Your monthly electric billing statement and more.
- Distribution of your earned Capital Credits.

Contact our office at [info@fmec.coop](mailto:info@fmec.coop) or (800) 734-6421 to update your information if:

- Your email address has changed.
- You have moved or now receive your mail at a different location.
- Your name has changed.
- You have a new phone number or a disconnected phone.

# FMEC GROWS WHERE IT'S FIRMLY PLANTED

As a cooperative, FMEC has direct accountability to those we serve, our member-owners. We've never wavered from this principle during our many decades of service in Freeborn and Mower counties. Directors elected from and by our cooperative membership provide the policy direction for FMEC.

## 2024 DIRECTOR ELECTION INFORMATION

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is governed by nine directors who are member-owners of the cooperative. Elections are held in three different districts each year. Board members are elected by the membership and serve a three-year term. Directors meet monthly at the cooperative headquarters, typically on the last Tuesday of each month. Nominations are now open for interested members in District 1, District 4, and District 7.

- **District 1:** Represents the northwest part of Albert Lea, Freeborn, Hartland, Manchester, and Clarks Grove areas.
- **District 4:** Represents areas near and including, Elkton, Grand Meadow, Adams, Taopi, and LeRoy.
- **District 7:** Represents the areas in and around Alden, Conger, Twin Lakes, and Emmons.

If you are a member of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative who lives in one of the districts up for election and would like to run for the position of FMEC director, please contact our office for an information packet. Applications are due in our office by 3:30 p.m. on December 11, 2023.

- Board members must attend monthly board meetings and other special meetings as they are called.
- They are responsible for the adoption of policies, to assure the democratic functioning of the cooperative in accordance with the Bylaws, and respect the confidentiality of information provided, among many other duties.

***Any member meeting the Bylaw Qualifications who has a desire to become a director of the cooperative, may apply for an open board position. This includes minorities, women, and individuals with a disability.***

*Recordatorio: Cualquier miembro que cumpla con los requisitos de los reglamentos internos y que tenga interes en ser director/a de la cooperative puede aplicar para puestos vacantes en la mesa directiva. Esto incluye miembros de grupos que son minorias, mujeres, y personas con discapacidades.*



# LOOKING OUT FOR OUR MEMBERS



## AVOID THE LURKING ENERGY VAMPIRES

Are “energy vampires” hiding in plain sight? If your home is like most, it holds numerous appliances and electronic devices. Despite your believing that these are “off”, for many devices that will truly not be the case. Anything that features “instant on” capability will draw electricity although the device is not currently in use. #2175004 Among energy vampires are microwave ovens and coffee pots with clocks, cell phone chargers, video game consoles, cable and satellite TV boxes, and many remote-controlled devices.

Spot those vampires by their glowing eyes! Standby lights are telltale signs that electricity is slowly being consumed although the device is not in use. Turn off your home lights and check to see how many “glowing eyes” — the small standby lights — remain lit.

### SLAY THE VAMPIRES!

The only way to ensure that electricity is not being consumed is to unplug the device until needed. This works best, of course, with devices used infrequently. Some devices such as computers have an energy-saving sleep mode. Power strips make it easy to cut off electricity without having to unplug each device. When replacing old or broken devices, choose products that are more energy efficient and have a lower-than-average standby consumption rate.

Individually, “energy vampires” may not consume a lot of electricity. However, day after day and month after month, their energy consumption will add up. The more devices you have plugged in, the quicker the energy consumption multiplies.



## BEWARE OF SCAMS

Should you receive a suspicious or threatening phone call from someone claiming to be affiliated with FMEC, please do not give out your account or credit card information. #1350000 It may be a scam. Please contact our office to confirm details.

## YOUR DATA IS SECURE

Whether you pay your electric bill through SmartHub or by phone with a credit card, be assured that we have the security of your data covered. FMEC complies with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard Compliance standards. These are worldwide requirements that are designed to prevent fraud through increased data controls.





## HEARTLAND SECURITY: SECURITY SYSTEMS IN 2023

Having a security system for your home or business will drastically reduce the chances that you will fall victim to a burglary or home invasion.

### THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A SECURITY SYSTEM ARE:

- 1. PROTECT YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS.** The peace of mind your family or employees feel is profound.
- 2. PROTECT YOUR HOME/BUSINESS AND VALUABLES.** Remember, most criminals won't even bother if they see you have a security system in place. Even if they attempt to break in, the alarm will scare them off as they know the police have been dispatched.
- 3. DETECT POTENTIALLY FATAL DANGERS.** Security systems go beyond burglary protection, also detecting home hazards such as smoke, fire, carbon monoxide, etc., alerting the monitoring station when detected.
- 4. THE ABILITY TO CONTROL YOUR HOME REMOTELY.** Controlling your home remotely can be as simple as arming/disarming the security system or integrating lights, thermostats, garage doors, door locks, etc. from your phone. #1927306 You could be in Florida on vacation and let someone in.
- 5. BENEFITS OF REDUCTION IN YOUR HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE.** This is often the overlooked benefit to homeowners. Most insurance companies give discounts for monitored home security systems and often greater discounts if smoke sensors are included.

### HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A SECURITY SYSTEM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Research shows that if you say "Yes" to any of these questions, you may want to consider some type of security.

- You live in a high-crime area with reported home break-ins.
- Your home has been broken into in the past.
- You travel frequently or are often out of town.
- You are a senior who lives alone, or have parents who live alone.
- You have small children at home and want to feel protected.
- You have valuable possessions or keepsakes in your home.
- You've noticed strangers in your neighborhood who seem out of place.

With Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) - Part Owner of Heartland Security, you will receive discounts on the purchase of a security system. If you would like a no-pressure quote for an alarm system, video surveillance, a video doorbell, or a fire alarm system, contact Heartland Security at (888) 264-6380, or you may call the FMEC office.

## 2023 REBATE REMINDER

Don't forget about our generous energy efficiency rebates.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers rebates on a variety of products including, HVAC equipment, appliance purchases, lighting, and more.

Visit our website for more information. Rebate applications must be submitted within three months of the equipment or appliance purchase.



## WINTER CHANGES TO LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

*Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative has a long and successful history of using load management programs to reduce electricity consumption during times of high demand and high prices in the energy market. Our commitment to grid reliability is forcing changes to the winter program.*

Residential electric water heaters and auto-start generators enrolled in load management will no longer be part of the Peak Alert/Full Load Control schedule. Instead, they will be controlled in the following situations:

- During a Maximum Generation Event, a minimum of four times per year (once each season) to a maximum of 16 times per year. A Max Gen Event can be declared at any time of the year.
- When electricity prices are high in the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) market or when there are local events threatening the FMEC system's reliability.

Additionally, winter load control events will be split into morning and evening events during December through February. During times of highest demand for electricity, enrolled interruptible heat (dual fuel) loads will be managed in the mornings, beginning at 6:55 a.m., with restoral starting at 10:05 a.m. Enrolled dairy water heaters, grain dryers, and manual standby generators will remain in the traditional winter schedule of control beginning at 4:55 p.m., with restoral starting at 8:05 p.m.

Residential water heaters and other accounts that are enrolled in Daily Energy Storage programs will not be affected by the program changes.

## SIGN UP FOR A HOME ENERGY AUDIT TODAY!

*Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is partnering with Minnesota Energy Resources to provide Albert Lea residents with comprehensive in-home energy audits.*

- Appointments are being scheduled for October 10 – 12.
- The homeowner pays only \$50 for this service valued at more than \$300.

To be eligible, the home must receive natural gas service from Minnesota Energy Resources and electric service from FMEC. #1350000 The audit includes:

- A comprehensive analysis of your home's energy use, both natural gas and electric.
- A blower door test to locate heating / AC leaks.
- Safety tests: combustion safety, depressurization, and carbon monoxide.
- A comprehensive review of all relevant rebate opportunities.


**Visit [cashrebatesnow.com](https://cashrebatesnow.com) or call (800) 376-0517 to schedule!**



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j. Total (see item 10a)	16,539	16,539	16,539
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3. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 1b + Paid Circulation Copies (Line 1b))	18,368	18,450
4. Forwarded Third-Class Periodicals Classification (Not Applicable) (Line 3 + 000)	99	99

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*Joe Hargreaves*

Date

**09/15/2023**

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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.*

## COLD WEATHER RULE REMINDER

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members who may have trouble paying their winter energy bills are reminded the Cold Weather Rule is in effect from October 1 through April 30.

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 discontinued, even during the winter months if you fail to respond to the disconnect notice.

## LET'S COOK



### FARMHOUSE CHICKEN ALFREDO Submitted By: Sharon Hanson

- 1 stick butter
- 1-8 oz. brick cream cheese
- ½ to ¾ C. any milk
- ½ C. parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. dried or fresh basil
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 1-2 C. grilled or left-over chicken, cut-up
- Pasta of choice

#### Directions:

Melt butter and cream cheese together in a saucepan. Once bubbly, whisk both together, then add parmesan cheese, milk, and basil. Add chicken to sauce. Stir occasionally until chicken is hot. Serve over pasta.

*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.*