



Freeborn
Mower
Electric
Cooperative

People. Power. Possibilities.

county lines

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024 • VOLUME 85 • NO. 06



NEW RULES JEOPARDIZE RELIABILITY

The new Environmental Protection Agency rulings to reduce the energy sector's carbon footprint pose a severe threat to electric reliability. The current reality is that energy demand is soaring and expected to reach record highs in 2024 and 2025, while electric grid planners are also forecasting peak demand growth of 38 gigawatts through 2028. To put this forecasted demand growth into perspective, it is equivalent to adding another state, the size of California, to the nation's grid.

Pressures from new regulations are causing the premature retirement of fossil-fueled power plants, putting the electric grid at risk. The EPA holds that we can generate more electricity with fewer available resources. #241503 In April, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) stated that more than 110 GW of always-available generation will retire through 2033. This means that all or part of 19 states are considered at high risk for experiencing rolling blackouts during normal peak conditions over the next five years.

The finalized Power Plant Rule combines multiple new rules for coal and natural gas-fired power plants which further mandates increasingly stringent carbon dioxide emissions unless these power plants shut down or curtail their operations. Additional standards set by the EPA are based on adopting technologies that have not yet been demonstrated as achievable. There are no carbon-capturing systems in the United States that are currently achieving the EPA's required 90% capture rate consistently while operating at baseload levels. In addition, specifications of the rule will allow neither existing nor new power plants enough time to reach compliance.

Electric Cooperatives across the nation are working towards the mutual goal of reducing carbon emissions to provide communities with cleaner environments. However, it takes resources and time to develop and implement carbon-capturing technology to execute this mission without compromising the grid's reliability.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



NAVIGATING ENERGY POLICY CHANGES

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we are committed to providing our member-owners with reliable power. To achieve this, we recognize the importance of staying current with how the energy industry is rapidly evolving and the impact of policy changes on our member-owners now and in the future.

Recent Environmental Protection Agency rulings have raised concerns as we strive to find a balance between sustainable energy sources while meeting the rising energy demands of the American economy. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it is crucial now more than ever to become well-informed about these policies. Understanding the positive and negative consequences of energy policy can help you make informed decisions when participating in local and national elections.

We believe that education is key to ensuring a sustainable future for both current and future generations. #2176600 Therefore, we want to encourage all of our member-owners to take the time to learn about these policies and their potential impact on the environment, economy, and our community.

There are multiple resources available that can provide you with fact-based information to guide you to a better understanding of energy policy. Here are a few websites we'd encourage you to explore:



Voices for Cooperative Power
www.voicesforcooperativepower.com



Minnesota Rural Electric Association
www.MREA.org/advocacy/

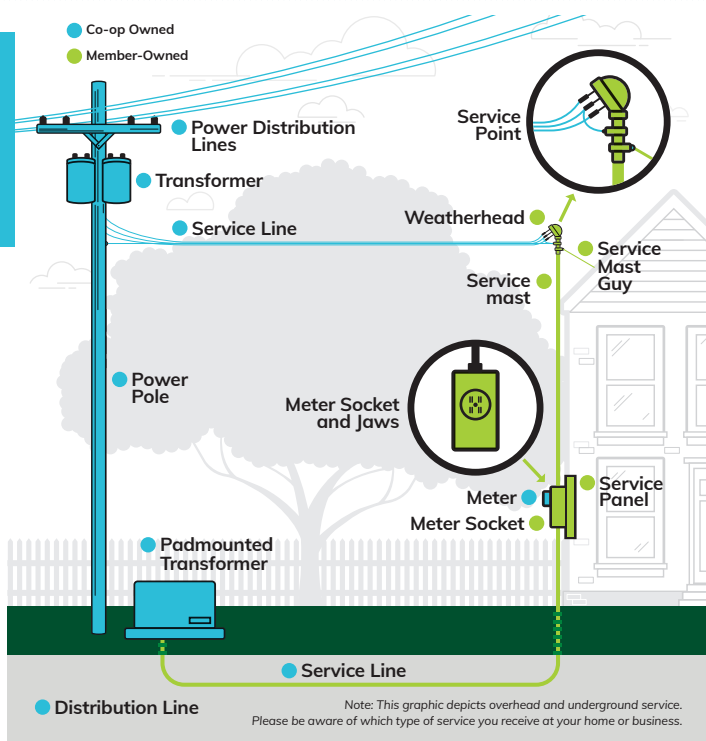
As the industry continues to change, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative will continue to be the trusted leader in providing energy, services, and information to our members.

WHO OWNS WHAT

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

With so many different pieces of equipment that make up the electrical system, it can be confusing when it comes to who owns what equipment at your residence or business.

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in light blue) and the member (in lime green). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



member news

OFFICE CLOSED

We will be closed on Independence Day, Thursday, July 4. We wish you a safe and fun holiday!

REPORTING AN OUTAGE

If you experience a power outage, please call to report it, with the information below, to (800) 734-6421:

- Billing Name
- Service Location
- Phone Number of where you can be reached
- Cause of outage (if known)

Or report through your SmartHub Account.

RATES TO CHANGE

Notice of an upcoming rate increase effective September 2024 will be included in your June billing statement. The rate increase is necessary to accommodate the rising costs of infrastructure maintenance and enhancements, ensuring we can continue to provide reliable and quality electric services to our members and the communities we serve.

WIND DOWN WEDNESDAY

Stop by the FMEC booth in downtown Albert Lea on June 12 and August 14. We hope to see you during the celebrations!



PLANT WITH PURPOSE

POLLINATOR WEEK JUNE 17-23, 2024

When landscaping or gardening, consider planting native flowers to attract pollinators like bees, butterflies, and moths. #2176600 These pollinators play a crucial role in fertilizing plants and supporting food production, wildlife habitats, and ecosystem sustainability. Pollinator Week, established to raise awareness about declining pollinator populations, is celebrated in June.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES



The Operation Round Up® program has recently distributed first quarter donations to 50 organizations, amounting to \$30,235! Operation Round Up® is a non-profit, opt-out program that reflects our commitment to community support as an electric cooperative. The program operates with its own board of trustees and keeps all funds separate from Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

Applications are considered for charitable, educational or non-profit organizations that serve the communities within Freeborn and Mower counties. For more information, visit www.fmec.coop.

The next application deadline is June 15.



SUMMER STORM SAFETY

Remember these two warnings: “See a flash, dash inside” and “When thunder roars, go indoors.”

Severe thunderstorms can produce dangerous lightning, hail, and wind gusts that damage property and threaten lives. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance and it’s time to seek shelter, preferably inside a structure. Never stand in open spaces, or under a tree, power pole, or flagpole. Get away from machinery, bleachers, fences, open-framed vehicles, and high ground. If you are in a group, spread out at least 20 feet apart. If you feel tingling across your skin or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat down low to the ground and tuck your head to make yourself into the smallest possible target.

CREATE AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

Include flashlights and fresh batteries, a battery-powered radio, non-perishable food and a can opener, water, medications, baby supplies, and blankets. Identify where you’ll seek shelter and your potential evacuation routes.

If you can access the FMEC website (www.fmec.coop), you will be able to track the geographical areas that are experiencing power outages. Use the Outage Center tab.

REPORT YOUR POWER OUTAGE

Power outages and emergencies may be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please be prepared to provide your name, account number, service address, phone number, and the cause of the outage if known.



PHONE
(800) 734-6421



ONLINE
Log into your SmartHub account.



MOBILE APP
Download the SmartHub app.

AFTER THE STORM

- Be cautious of hazards that could be hidden by tree limbs and debris, such as downed power lines. #527216 Immediately report unsafe situations to 911.
- Always assume that any downed wire or damaged electrical equipment is still energized. Stay away!
- Never step into a flooded basement where water covers electrical outlets, appliances, or electrical cords.
- Water-damaged electric appliances, equipment, and tools may be hazardous to use. Have them inspected by an electrician or professional servicing provider.
- If you have disconnected your landline and now only use a cell phone, please provide us with your updated phone numbers, so we can communicate with you during the storm, after the storm and/or for prearranged power outages, etc.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STANDBY GENERATOR USE

Standby generators must be sized properly for their anticipated use, installed and used correctly, and routinely maintained. There are three types of standby generators, stationary/whole home models, portable models, and small to midsized inverters that are limited in wattage.

Stationary generators are installed permanently outside of the home or structure. It can operate indefinitely on natural gas or propane. The generators will start automatically during a power outage and will operate nearly all key appliances simultaneously. Stationary standby generators require a transfer switch and professional installation. These generators are regulated by several federal air standards and state air permits, as noted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. A permit may also be required if one of the federal performance standards applies to the engine or if potential air emissions from the entire business exceed certain levels.

Portable generators and large inverters, up to 7,500 watts, can be connected to the home or structure’s breaker panel. These devices are designed to power a few pieces of larger power-consuming equipment. #241503 They will not operate everything in the home simultaneously. These generators also require a transfer switch to be installed by a licensed electrician.

Smaller midsized inverters are often the choice for outdoor recreational uses. They are not to be connected to the home’s breaker panel. Sometimes they are connected to vital electronics to allow sufficient time for an orderly shutdown.

WHY A TRANSFER SWITCH IS REQUIRED

An improperly installed standby generator is an electrical hazard. The transfer switch is a mechanism that will prohibit the back-feed of electricity across the utility power lines. Without this necessary equipment, our FMEC employees making outage repairs are at risk of electrocution. The risk extends to community members who may inadvertently make contact with a downed line or something that it contacts.



GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

- A portable standby generator should be placed on a concrete pad located a minimum of five feet from windows, doors, and vents.
- Never operate a portable standby generator inside your home or garage, as it will cause a build-up of fatal fumes. Fans or open windows and doors won’t provide enough fresh air to keep you and your family safe.
- Never connect portable generators to electrical appliances or wiring components that have been affected/damaged by water.
- Familiarize yourself with equipment operating manuals.

HOW ELECTRIC LOAD IS MANAGED

Throughout the years, you likely have heard about efforts to control the electricity demand placed on the grid, whether local, regionally, or across the nation. We have often referred to this as load management. An evolution in load management has occurred due to changes in utility technology and electricity-producing resources, coupled with growth in the use of equipment and appliances.

WHAT IS THE SUMMER SHIFT?

Many years ago, when FMEC first instituted load management techniques, the highest demand for electricity in the region supplied by Dairyland Power Cooperative occurred during the winter. However, consumer electric use patterns have subsequently shifted, causing the highest demands to now occur in the summer.

During the summer months of June, July, and August, FMEC encourages members to voluntarily shift their weekday electric use away from the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. It is during these hours that the wholesale cost of electricity is the highest because of surging demand.

The key to doing the “Summer Shift” is that it calls on cooperative members to voluntarily help control FMEC’s wholesale power cost, the largest expense for the cooperative, and is a direct component of the retail rates paid by our members. #527216 Consider taking easy, voluntary steps such as:

- Delaying the use of the dishwasher and shifting the time of doing laundry.
- Taking advantage of natural lighting.
- Turning up the thermostat a few degrees.
- Using a timer on the dehumidifier.

WHAT IS A PEAK ALERT?

A peak alert notification occurs when conditions indicate that exceptionally high electricity demand is likely to occur. This is generally weather-related, primarily extended periods of sweltering heat and humidity.

During peak alerts, devices controlled by member agreements with the cooperative’s load control program will be powered down, most likely between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. These devices include residential electric water heaters, dairy water heaters, grain dryers, and some automatic standby generators.

WHAT IS A MAX GEN EVENT?

A MAX GEN event is designed to modify the electric load patterns across an exceptionally large area of the electric grid. Load control can occur at any time and is at the discretion of Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). Restoral times will vary based on MISO region needs. The same devices noted in the Peak Alert section are included in a MAX GEN event.

MISO is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization that manages the flow of high-voltage electricity across transmission lines extending across 15 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. MISO facilitates more than \$40 billion in annual transactions made in one of the world’s largest energy markets.

It is important to note that Load Management is not designed to inconvenience cooperative members. On the contrary, its purpose is to protect the integrity, reliability, and resiliency of the electric grid.

CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

FARM:

WAGON. 8-ton running gear w/hoist. Good tires. Call (507) 383-0410.

IH 183 ROW CULTIVATOR w/rolling shields. Call (507) 438-4284.

1963 3010 JOHN DEERE TRACTOR w/ LX6 brush mower. New battery, starter, tires, many options. \$12,000 OBO. Call (507) 491-3180.

FRONTIER STAINLESS STEEL MANURE SPREADER. Ground driven, pull with mower or ATV. Like new. Call (507) 676-6600.

HOUSEHOLD:

4 RETRO METAL DINING/KITCHEN CHAIRS. Copper/bronze color, sturdy, & comfortable. \$80. Call (507) 383-1394.

AVANTI FREEZER. 5.0 cu. ft., 4 years old. \$50. Call (507) 754-5672.

WALL ART. Framed & matted beautiful colored scene of Italian Countryside. 37” x 37”. \$60 OBO. Call (507) 402-8071.

QUEEN BED SET. Solid wood, 5’ h headboard, 2 ½’ footboard w/side rails, no mattress. Can text picture. \$195. Call (507) 440-4818.

MISCELLANEOUS:

2012 CRESTLINER 1700 SUPERHAWK w/Lowrance 5” screen. \$23,500. Call (507) 383-5570.

BAG BOY GOLF PUSH CART. \$75. Call (507) 402-2601.

ELECTRIC GRILL. \$55. Call (507) 325-2427.

BACK TO THE 50’S CLOTHING. Poodle skirt (12-14), 3 skirts (12-14), shirts, scarves. Call (507) 402-8055.

WOMEN’S XL LEATHER JACKET. Great condition. \$85. Call (507) 448-2952.

STORAGE. Plano Sportsman Trunk – 30 x 14 x 13. EZY Bunker HD Store Tub – 22 x 15 x 15. Both with lid locks. Call (507) 391-0763.

VARIOUS RIDING LAWMOWERS. 4 hp to 22 hp, decks from 38” to 48”. In good running condition. Call (507) 481-8153.

MEN’S 800 ANTELOPE TREK MOUNTAIN BIKE. Black. \$125. Call (507) 373-0539.

2016 CARRY-ON STEEL TRAILER. 5.5’ x 10’, wood floor. Call (507) 383-5376.

FRONT DOORS off 1999 Jimmy Blazer LT. Black, no rust, good condition. Both \$100. Call (507) 383-0802.

HONDA GX 200 GAS ENGINE. Less than 5 hours. \$200 OBO. Call (507) 383-1629.

LAND LEVELER w/skid steer quick attach. \$700. Call (507) 440-8549.

CHAR-BROIL GRILL. 5 burner, like new with cover. Used less than 5 times. Call (507) 373-2958.

CABELAS GEAR CARRIER for 2” trailer hitch. \$50. Call (507) 402-4660.

PETS/ANIMALS:

GIVE AWAY – 2 ADULT MALE CATS. Very friendly, neutered, must go together to a good home/farm. Call (507) 433-2712.

BARNYARD CHICKS. Will lay colored eggs. Call (507) 475-1468.

WANTED

SIGNS. Call (507) 402-0880.

OLDER CORNINGWARE BREAD LOAF PANS. Call or text (507) 438-6469.

FREE

HP PRINTER. HP Envy Photo 7155. Does not work. HP 64 tricolor cartridge (unused in packaging). Call (507) 373-8655.

3-RING BINDERS. 2 dozen, in good, useable condition. 1.5” to 3”. Some have clear vinyl covers & writing. Call (507) 438-9289.

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 15th of the month prior to the issue in which it will be printed. Ads received after the 15th of the month will be printed a month later. Example: An ad received on or before June 15th will appear in the July issue. If it is received on June 16th or later, it will appear in the August issue.
- No business ads will be accepted. Ads must be submitted in writing or electronically, not by phone call.
- Ads will not be repeated.
- One ad/item per member, per month.

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.

JUNE IS DAIRY MONTH

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative salutes agricultural producers! June is a great time to call attention to the 2024 agricultural energy efficiency rebates offered by FMEC. See our website for details. There are rebates for such equipment as:

- Dairy Plate Cooler/Well Water Pre-Cooler
- Dairy Refrigeration Heat Recovery with electric backup
- Low/Zero Energy Livestock Waterer
- Exhaust Fan
- Circulation Fan
- Electric Forklift Battery Charger
- Scroll Refrigerator Compressor
- Variable Frequency Drive (VFD)



LET'S COOK



SUMMER THREE BEAN SALAD

Submitted By: **Patty Lawson**

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • 1 C. cooked green beans | • ½ C. diced green pepper |
| • 1 C. cooked yellow beans | |
| • 1 C. cooked kidney beans | Dressing: |
| • ½ C. diced onion | • ½ C. salad oil |
| | • ½ C. white vinegar |
| | • 1 C. sugar |

Directions:

You can use canned beans, rinsed. Put all of the beans, onion and pepper into a bowl. Mix dressing ingredients in a separate bowl, pour over beans. Stir well. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

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.