



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Lighting Up Lives,
One Connection at a Time

YOU'RE INVITED!

88TH ANNUAL MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 1
ALBERT LEA
HIGH SCHOOL



LEGAL NOTICE 88TH ANNUAL MEETING FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Notice is hereby given that the annual business meeting of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative will be held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 6:30 p.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

REGISTRATION | MEAL

5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

BINGO

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING

6:30 p.m.

A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is a member-owned electric utility provider serving both Freeborn and Mower counties. We take great pride in supplying power to our member-owners and bringing light to your everyday lives—one connection at a time.

We enable the simplest joys, such as reading a bedtime story to your child by lamplight, cozying up to watch a movie, or gathering with family and friends. These special moments matter to us. We power your families, hobbies, holidays, and so much more.

Our impact goes beyond personal moments; we contribute to sustaining our community by powering farming operations, manufacturing facilities, food producers, and other local businesses. Without power, these enterprises wouldn't be able to perform the work that supports our communities and the world. The year 2024 was significant for FMEC, as we participated in numerous community events. Some of these events supported great causes within our service area, while



others allowed us to connect with our members face-to-face. These interactions are what powers us and represent the “why” behind the work we do each and every day.

While we are technically in the energy business, at FMEC's core, we are truly focused on the members we serve. Our members are what make our cooperative thrive. In the following pages, you will find glimpses of some incredible work that happened in 2024, as well as moments that made us proud.

With gratitude,
Jim Krueger, President & CEO



A NOTE FROM YOUR CHAIR OF THE BOARD

It is my honor and pleasure to support the work of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative as your elected board representative of District 7 and Chair. Working alongside eight other board members as we seek to support the leadership team at FMEC as they work diligently to bring power to your everyday lives is truly a distinct honor.

The energy industry is complex and ever-changing; however, my confidence in our board and the leadership team at FMEC, to guide the cooperative's direction on behalf of our members is unwavering and deeply rooted in their commitment to excellence.

I extend my gratitude to the entire team at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative for the important role that each employee plays in ensuring the reliable delivery of power and exceptional service to our members.

We have a bright future ahead and I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in 2025 as we lean into our strong foundation as a cooperative, but also look to set the strategy for future success in the years to come.

With gratitude,
Jack Korman, Board Chair

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS: MEMBERS ELECTED BY MEMBERS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is governed by a nine-member board of directors, each representing individual districts in our service territory. The board of directors have each been elected by the members of their district and serve a three-year term.

The board of directors is vital to the functioning of the cooperative and is responsible for setting policies and retail rates, fiduciary responsibilities, strategic direction, and offering guidance to the CEO and management team.

We are proud that our nine board of directors have received their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate, meaning they have received in-depth training giving them the essential foundational knowledge needed to provide leadership in the electric utility field. The CCD program is offered through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and consists of courses focused on understanding the electric business, director duties and liabilities, board operations and process, strategic planning, and financial decision making.



Dennis Anderson
District 1, Vice Chair



Jay Neitzell
District 2



Steve Garbisch
District 3, Treasurer



Richard Schauffer
District 4



Frank Fryer
District 5, Secretary



Matt Maras
District 6



Jack Korman
District 7, Chair



Bill Trygstad
District 8



Larry Irvine
District 9

KEY CO-OP STATISTICS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative that has been proudly serving portions of Freeborn and Mower counties in southern Minnesota since 1936. We provide safe and reliable electric service to nearly 18,000 members, spanning an area of nearly 2,125 square miles. Our mission is to serve our members by providing power to their lives, and we are committed to delivering safe and reliable electric service that our members can depend on. Our core values are reflected in our daily operations, as our employees exemplify integrity, safety, quality, engagement, teamwork, community, and service in everything they do.

We are owned by the members we serve and are organized under the seven cooperative principles. These principles guide us in our commitment to the community and include: Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member

Control, Members' Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, Education, Training and Information, Cooperation Among Cooperatives, and Concern for Community.

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we believe in the power of community and the strength that comes from working together. Our members are more than just customers; they are essential to the success of our cooperative, and their voices are vital in shaping the future of our services. We actively encourage member participation in meetings and decision-making processes, ensuring everyone has a voice in the cooperative's direction.

Together, we continue to light up lives one connection at a time, creating brighter, more connected communities.



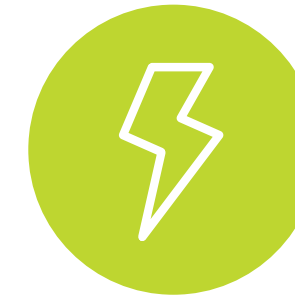
MEMBER OWNERS
17,896



ELECTRIC ACCOUNTS
21,190



SQUARE MILE SERVICE AREA
2,125



CONSUMERS PER MILE
7



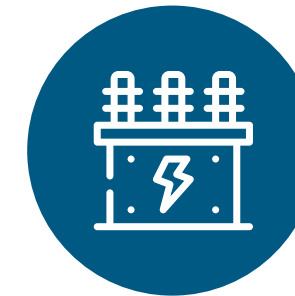
TOTAL MILES OF LINE
2,781



MILES OF UNDERGROUND
1,334



MILES OF OVERHEAD
1,447



NUMBER OF SUBSTATIONS
23



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
64



TOTAL HOURS WORKED
118,418



BOARD MEMBERS
9

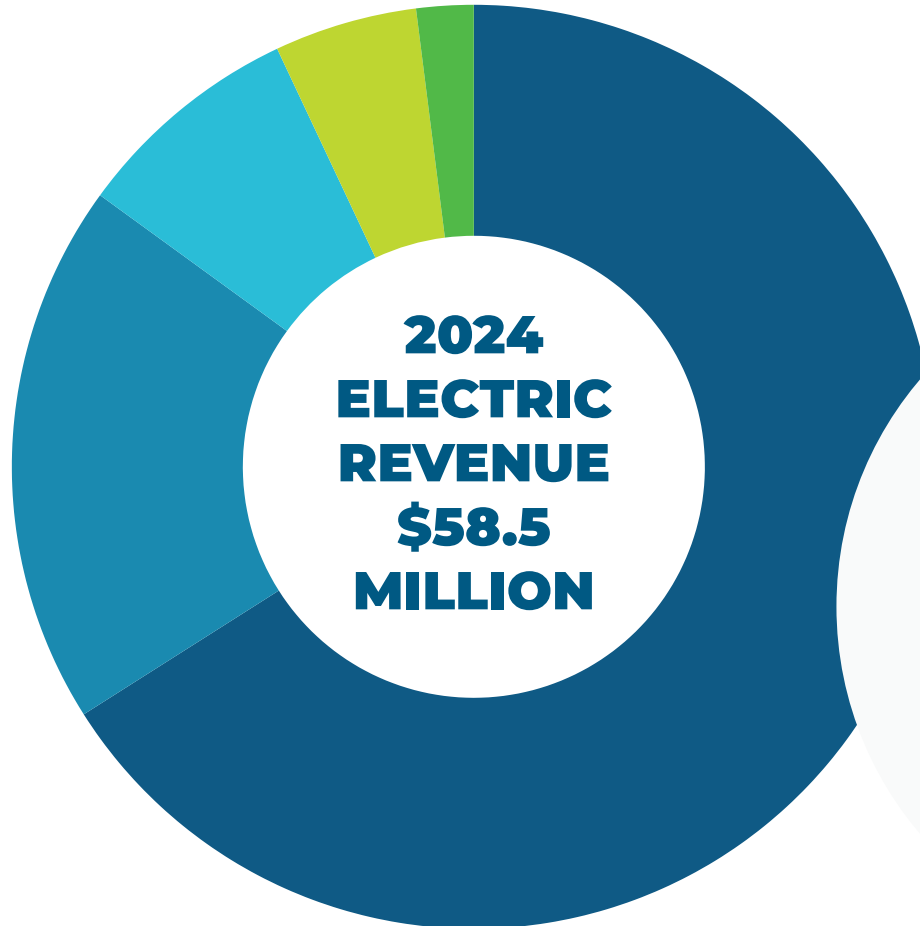


FLEET VEHICLES
35

FINANCIAL REPORT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is a not-for-profit organization focused on serving our members. We assume the responsibility to carefully use our resources, while maintaining a high-level of integrity that our members can trust.

We take financial accountability seriously, and offer our members visibility into our audited financials at their request. Transparency is something that we value, and as a result we make every effort to regularly communicate with our members what the drivers are behind the fluctuating costs required to provide power to your lives.

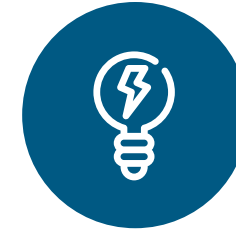


2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Total assets continued to grow due to ongoing investment in utility infrastructure.
- Equity increased by \$1.9 million, even after retiring \$1.4 million in Capital Credits this year.
- Revenue declined by \$1.2 million, while power costs and expenses dropped by \$532,000.
- Power costs were \$1.4 million lower than last year and came in \$2.5 million under budget.
- Net margins came in below budget by nearly \$100,000.
- Revenue was behind budget by \$2.3 million but was mostly offset by reduced purchased power costs as well as sales being off 1% from budget.

WHERE YOUR DOLLAR GOES

- Power Costs 66%
- Operating Expenses 19%
- Depreciation 8%
- Interest 5%
- Operating Margin 2%



KILLOWATTS SOLD
479,266,412



ELECTRIC REVENUE
\$58,546,080



COST OF POWER
\$38,416,855



OPERATING MARGINS
\$1,456,743

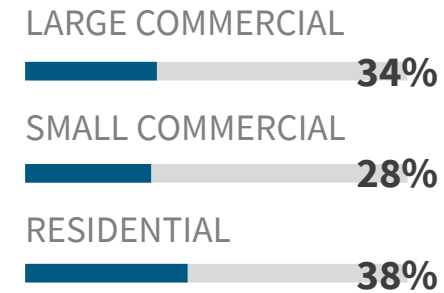


NET MARGINS
\$3,351,097



CAPITAL CREDITS
\$1,409,009

LOAD PROFILE



DESPITE RISING COSTS AND A DECLINE IN KWH SALES, FMEC'S CAREFUL COST MANAGEMENT KEPT NET MARGINS JUST UNDER BUDGET BY LESS THAN \$100,000.



OPERATIONS REPORT

An integral part of bringing light to your lives, is ensuring that our distribution system is well-maintained. Each year, our Operations Department develops a strategy centered around maintenance, inspections, and system upgrades, which requires a significant amount of planning to ensure reliable service to your homes and businesses. Not only does the Operations Department focus on current maintenance requirements, but they also anticipate future needs to ensure that the cooperative is well-positioned for future success.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 118,418 hours worked with 1 lost time injury and 2 recordable incidents.
- New feed installed to the City of Freeborn and surrounding rural areas to improve reliability.
- Tie line was provided to the City of Lyle for enhanced system reliability.
- Nearly 500,000 feet of new underground cable was installed to replace aging overhead lines.
- System reliability increased due to favorable weather and properly maintained systems.

CONSTRUCTION

- In 2024, 78 new services were installed, expanding our system to meet growing demand.
- A total of 94 members made system upgrades, enhancing reliability and efficiency.
- We replaced 4 miles of aging three-phase underground distribution (URD) to improve system resilience.
- Our team successfully designed, staked, and inspected 399 projects, ensuring safe and efficient service.

MAINTENANCE

- We patrolled 1,000 miles of power lines to identify and mitigate potential hazards.
- As part of our proactive maintenance, we tested 4,100 poles and inspected 950 pedestals to ensure structural integrity.
- Of those tested, 140 poles were identified for replacement and upgraded accordingly.
- Our vegetation management efforts included clearing 450 miles of right-of-way (ROW) to prevent outages.
- We completed 215 tree-clearing service orders and addressed 60 to 70 problem trees that posed a risk to power lines.
- To maintain accessibility and safety, we sprayed 25 parcels for vegetation control.



OUTAGE REPORT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's linecrew are on call 24/7/365 days a year to respond to outages in our service territory. Though outages are never ideal, they are sometimes necessary to make upgrades to our distribution system. The continuous improvements to our infrastructure serve as evidence of our commitment to reliability, ensuring that every connection brightens the lives of our members.



6 LINE WORKERS. 2 CATASTROPHIC STORMS. A CALL FOR MUTUAL AID.

Hurricane Helene, followed closely by Hurricane Milton, were significant storms that left a lasting impact. Helene made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane, leaving the landscape unrecognizable as it swept through the southeastern United States. Many affected areas experienced power outages affecting 80-100% of their electrical systems, with hundreds of power poles damaged and thousands of residents left without electricity.

In times like these, the seven cooperative principles are put into action, particularly the seventh principle: "Concern for Community." Within 24 hours, six line workers from Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative responded to the call for help by providing mutual aid. While events like these are rare, it is important for FMEC to support other cooperatives in their time of need because we know that if a situation arises, this sacrificial service will be reciprocated at our cooperative when we are in need.

"PEOPLE WOULD BE TEARING UP AND CHEERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON," SAID ERIC RUDDLE, FMEC LINEWORKER.

WHAT'S CAUSING OUTAGES?



**PLANNED
69%**



**TREES
9%**



**ANIMALS
8%**



**WEATHER
5%**



**EQUIPMENT
4%**



**PUBLIC
3%**



**OTHER
2%**

ENERGY SOLUTIONS REPORT

WE ARE PROUD TO PROVIDE RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE, AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, our Energy Solutions Team is laser focused on providing members with best-in-class service as they navigate the ever-changing landscape of renewable energy sources and seek to help members to conserve energy and use electricity efficiently. Offering a wide range of rebates to help members save money, our Energy Solutions Team takes pride in being your go-to resource for information as you explore sustainable energy solutions for your farm, residence or business.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- We have a team of three employees focused on energy solutions.
- Members received \$286,058 in residential rebates for energy-efficient upgrades.
- Businesses earned \$59,754 in commercial and industrial rebates.
- Farms received \$12,475 in rebates for energy efficiency improvements.
- Our rebate programs helped save an estimated 4,320,858 kWh of energy.
- We managed 2,145 load control systems to optimize energy use.
- FMEC installed 26 new load management systems.
- The Dual Fuel program now has 475 participants.
- In 2024, we paid \$358,288 to members for energy efficiency upgrades.
- Members own 4 wind turbines, contributing to renewable energy.
- There are 190 member-owned solar arrays generating clean power.
- Our members have a total renewable energy capacity of 2,531 kW.

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE: FMEC'S 1946 CHEVY GOES ELECTRIC

What do a 1946 Chevy truck and an electric vehicle have in common? Nothing. Or so we thought. In partnership with Riverland Community College (RCC), Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative set out to imagine the impossible and embrace innovation by transforming the oldest truck in the FMEC fleet into an electric-powered vehicle.

Collecting dust in a back corner of the warehouse sat a vintage 1946 Chevy truck that was undrivable. The retired truck was a part of the Rural Electric Association's fleet dating back to the early 1940s. The "what to do with it" question lingered as it felt like the truck represented a small piece of FMEC history that was too special to scrap or offer to a collector. Now, with the help of an automotive professor (who is passionate about electric vehicles) and six students at RCC, the truck is fully operational and was debuted last summer during the parade season.

One might think that swapping out an old 80-horse gas engine with an electric-powered one was an easy feat, but not so much. The modifications necessary to adapt the truck to new modern engine components posed opportunities for the students to problem solve, think critically, and work as a team to solve.

The students worked together on the vehicle for over nine months as Professor Olle gave the students guidance and direction. "Essentially, we had to start from scratch by removing the old engine," he said. Professor Olle described it as the "most rewarding, challenging, and at times infuriating" process he has experienced in his teaching career.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative was proud to partner with RCC on such an exciting project and we hope you enjoyed seeing it at area parades last summer.



HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's Human Resources (HR) Department is dedicated to supporting our most valuable asset: people. With a commitment to excellence, the HR department at FMEC ensures that new team members are recruited and onboarded in alignment with the cooperative's values and culture.

Employee well-being is a top priority, with HR implementing policies and a comprehensive benefits program that promotes a healthy and supportive environment. In 2024, Judy Jensen joined our Executive Team as the Director of Human Resources, bringing a wealth of experience and leadership to the role.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- As of December 31, 2024, FMEC had 64 employees.
- The annual employee turnover rate for 2024 was 9.4%.
- One employee retired in 2024.
- Eight employees advanced or transferred internally.
- Seven new employees joined FMEC in 2024.
- The average years of service among employees is 9.37.



COOPERATIVE RELATIONS REPORT



The Cooperative Relations Team is pivotal to the success and connectivity of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC). This team serves as the vital link between the cooperative and its members, ensuring effective communication, streamlined services, and unwavering support.

The Cooperative Relations Team enhances member satisfaction by addressing inquiries, resolving issues, and offering personalized assistance, and ensuring that members feel valued and heard. Our goal is to provide member service that exceeds your expectations with every point of contact whether it is a face-to-face interaction, phone call, or digital engagement.

Additionally, the Cooperative Relations Team promotes various programs and initiatives that benefit the community. Whether it's energy-saving tips, safety guidelines, or community events, the team ensures members are aware of the resources available to them. This not only enhances member experience but also strengthens our connection to our members and communities we serve.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Our 1946 truck conversion was featured in RE Magazine, a national publication for electric cooperatives.
- An October 2nd Facebook post featuring our crew leaving for mutual aid received 39,000 views and over 2,000 Likes across 222 shares.
- We hosted several events for our members throughout 2024 including our Sip & Save event and Holiday Open House.
- We redesigned our safety display to continue sharing about the importance of electrical safety in our communities and area schools.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

- Our team handled 70,428 member calls this year.
- We have 10,894 members using SmartHub for account management.
- A total of 7,444 members are enrolled in Autopay for convenience.
- 6,364 members have gone paperless, reducing waste and streamlining billing.
- Our website had 50,249 visits, keeping members informed and connected.
- We engaged with 4,000 Facebook followers, sharing updates and news.

ACSI SCORE

We are thrilled to share that our member satisfaction score is quite high! In the latest member survey, we achieved an American Customer Satisfaction Index score of 87. The FMEC employees and directors are dedicated to delivering the exceptional service our members deserve and expect. We take pride in this level of service and continually seek opportunities to enhance our communications.

75 MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

87 FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

74 INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES





SAFETY

In 2024, the safety of our employees and members continued to be our top priority at FMEC. We provided regular hands-on training for all staff to ensure they had the knowledge and resources required to respond swiftly to emergencies. Practicing real fire scenarios under the guidance of trained professionals helped employees build confidence in their abilities in the event of a real emergency.

The line crew completed their annual pole-top rescue training, where each team member practiced a simulated rescue scenario using a 160-pound practice mannequin. This exercise ensured that climbers were safe, fully competent, and equipped with the necessary skills to perform rescues. Our line crew also trained on hotline safety, practiced simulated energized three-phase line work, and completed crew observations.

Additionally, some of our line crew spent time educating our youngest members about the dangers of electricity when not handled properly, using our newly remodeled safety display.



YOUTH TOUR

Kaci Wallin and Nolan Brooks, students from Glenville-Emmons High School and Albert Lea High School, had the honor of representing Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative as part of the Minnesota student delegation to Washington, D.C., for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's 2024 Youth Tour.

This prestigious event brought together students from electric cooperatives across the country, offering them the opportunity to engage in interactive learning experiences, explore vital issues surrounding rural electrification, and advocate for the future of their communities. As they immersed themselves in the rich history and culture of the nation's capital, they developed a deeper understanding of the cooperative movement and the importance of leadership in local communities.



YOUR COOPERATIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You may have seen us out and about this year at local parades, golf fundraisers, schools, and community events! Check out these photo highlights showcasing the moments we've shared while connecting with our valued members.



Chamber Annual Meeting



Chamber Golf Outing



Albert Lea Safety Night



Local Community Parades



Glenville Ag Safety Day



Homecoming Pride



Santa Cruise



Holiday Member Open House



COOPERATIVES SHAPE THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Electric Cooperatives help shape the next generation of leaders through providing educational opportunities and scholarships that encourage continued education. Congratulations to our 2024 recipients:

LUCK OF THE DRAW

At the 2024 FMEC Annual Meeting, these ten students were randomly selected from a pool of applicants to receive a \$1,000 scholarship for higher education.

- Brendon Arndorfer, LeRoy
- Blaine Bakken, Albert Lea
- Alyssa Colby, Albert Lea
- Jordan Habana, Albert Lea
- Jessie Hanson, Adams
- Sydney Kokot, Glenville
- Ruby Page, Glenville
- Kaylee Slater, Glenville
- Carly Jo Stevens, Albert Lea
- Hannah Veldman, Hollandale

RIVERLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Scholarships are awarded to the children of FMEC members and adult members furthering their education at Riverland Community College.

- Ethan Campos, Emmons
- Burke Cichosz, Albert Lea
- Christa Eastvold, Grand Meadow
- Nicholas Edland, Rose Creek
- Carter Keck, Hollandale
- Travis Kirtz, Adams
- Michelle Wilder, LeRoy

LINEMAN

These scholarships are designed to support the development of professional lineworkers for electric cooperatives and the broader industry. To qualify for this profession, they must complete a training program through a certified technical college. FMEC has awarded \$1,000 to each student pursuing a career in this vital trade.

- Kadin Johnson, Albert Lea
- Jakob Nelson, Walters

Funding for scholarships comes from forfeited Capital Credits in accordance with state statutes. In this way, these funds are being returned to the communities from which they were generated.



**WE SINCERELY
THANK THE ORU
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THEIR SERVICE
AND STEADFAST
COMMITMENT TO OUR
COOPERATIVE AND THE
OPERATION ROUND UP®
PROGRAM.**

OPERATION ROUND UP®

In 2024, the Operation Round Up® (ORU) Board of Trustees awarded \$101,893 in grants to 148 charitable and nonprofit organizations within our service area.

Operation Round Up® is a distinctive community grant initiative offered as an opt-out program through Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. Members round up their electric bills for just a few cents each month, collectively generating thousands of dollars to support our communities.

Contributing to our communities is one of the core principles of our cooperative. By engaging in programs like Operation Round Up®, members can create a meaningful impact. This initiative provides a successful avenue for giving back to the areas where we live and work. A heartfelt thank you to our members for helping to strengthen our local communities.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

The IT department at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative plays a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless operation and advancement of the organization's technological infrastructure. It serves as the backbone for all digital and technological needs, enabling efficient and secure communication, data management, and operational workflows.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 400+ malicious emails were reported and addressed.
- Employees completed 260 hours of cybersecurity training.
- 100% of employees participated in cyber awareness training.
- All of the board of directors engaged in cybersecurity training.

NETWORK AND SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

The IT team manages the cooperative's network and computer systems, ensuring hardware and software function smoothly. This includes setting up, configuring, and troubleshooting networks, servers, and end-user devices.

CYBERSECURITY

Protecting the cooperative's data is a top priority. The IT department implements security measures such as firewalls, anti-virus software, and encryption to safeguard sensitive information.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The IT team provides prompt assistance, troubleshooting hardware and software issues, and guiding employees on various applications and systems.

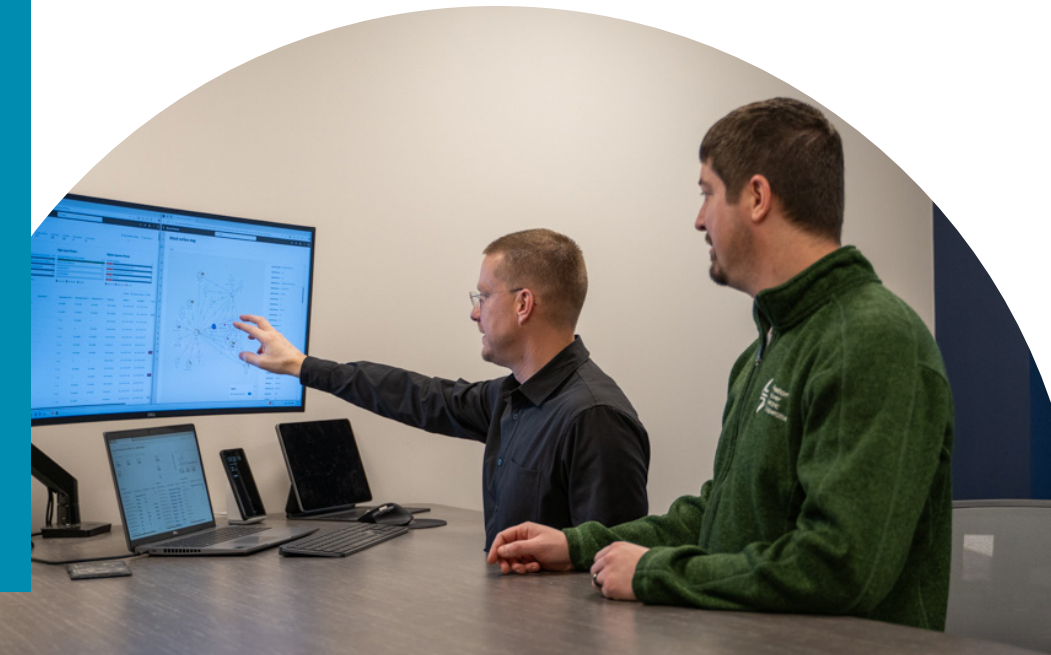
DATA MANAGEMENT

Proper data storage, backup, and retrieval support informed decision-making. The IT team also employs analytics tools to identify trends and improve operations.

INNOVATION AND STRATEGY

Staying ahead of technology trends, the IT team recommends and implements new tools to improve member services and operational efficiency.

By ensuring robust and reliable IT infrastructure, the IT department enables the cooperative to operate efficiently, securely, and adaptively in an increasingly digital world.



2024 DAIRYLAND REPORT

I am proud to be our cooperative’s representative on the Dairyland Power Cooperative Board of Directors and Board Executive Committee. Dairyland is the primary generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative that provides the power required by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members 24/7/365.

Safety is Dairyland’s top priority. If employees do not work safely, the delivery of reliable and cost-competitive electricity cannot happen. Employees are authorized to stop work and speak up if something is unclear or they have questions about the best way to proceed.

A NEW ERA

Dairyland’s decarbonization goal includes diversifying the sources used to generate electricity. Last year was a banner year as Dairyland was awarded more than \$600 million in grants through programs created by the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The grant projects will help reduce Dairyland’s carbon footprint and add resiliency to the grid through more than 1,000 MW of renewable energy projects and battery storage, as well as upgrades and rebuilds to existing transmission infrastructure.

Dairyland works with elected officials, regardless of party affiliation, to advocate for policies benefitting electric cooperatives. With a new federal administration, Dairyland, Minnesota Rural Electric Association and

the NRECA are monitoring developments and advocating for co-op priorities that support growth and development in the rural communities we serve.

As part of its overall sustainable power supply plan, Dairyland continues to explore small modular nuclear reactors. Nuclear will drive the clean energy transition by providing reliable baseload, carbon-free power to support economic growth and the integration of wind and solar.

NO TRANSITION WITHOUT TRANSMISSION

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative and Dairyland are part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which is the air traffic controller for reliable and cost-effective electricity in a 15-state region plus the province of Manitoba, Canada.

One critical aspect of reliably powering the lives of more than 40 million people in the MISO footprint is building new power generation facilities; the other is efficiently delivering electricity to where it is needed. In September 2024, the 102-mile, 345 kilovolt (kV) Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line was energized between Dubuque, Iowa, and Middleton, Wis. By the time Cardinal-Hickory Creek was placed in service, there were 160 renewable generation projects totaling 24.5 gigawatts dependent upon the line.

Dairyland passes along the financial benefits from its investments to its member cooperatives in the form of stable rates that are among the lowest in the region.

Dairyland holds credit ratings of “A3” with a stable outlook from Moody’s Investors Service and A+ with a stable outlook from Standard and Poor’s (S&P).

COMMUNITY

Our cooperative joined Dairyland in donating \$1,000 to the Freeborn County Humane Society through Dairyland’s Cooperative Contributions program.

The future is exciting, and I am proud to serve as Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative’s representative on Dairyland’s Board of Directors. The Cooperative Business Model is unique, and it positions all of us to make decisions in the best interests of our members and communities. Thank you for your membership!

Just as directors are elected from our membership to govern Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative the same applies to Dairyland’s Board of Directors. I’ve had the privilege of being a director of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative for nine years and have been proud to serve as your representative on the Dairyland Board for almost four years.

- *Bill Trygstad,*
FMEC’s Dairyland Director

WWW.DAIRYLANDPOWER.COM

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE WAS CREATED IN 1941 TO BE THE WHOLESALE POWER PROVIDER TO ITS MEMBER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES. TODAY, DAIRYLAND CONTINUES TO DELIVER POWER TO 24-MEMBER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVES, INCLUDING FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, AND 27 MUNICIPAL UTILITIES THROUGHOUT ILLINOIS, IOWA, MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN.

REGISTRATION CARD

Please bring this card as admission for you and your family to the Annual Meeting of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at Albert Lea High School (2000 Tiger Lane, Albert Lea, MN). Registration and meal from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.; bingo from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by the business meeting at 6:30 p.m. This card will also serve as registration for prize drawings.

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION:

(Please complete this section only if any of your information has changed.)

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Property Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES MARCH 26, 2024

On the evening of March 26, the 87th annual meeting of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative was held at the Albert Lea High School. Unlike the past several years, this year’s meeting was held on a weeknight instead of a Saturday morning. The change allowed more members to attend and provided greater flexibility. In total, there were 418 attendees, out of which 243 were voting members.

Prior to the business meeting, attendees had the opportunity to interact with employees, view educational displays, and socialize with friends and neighbors.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, District 7 Board Chair Jack Korman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He welcomed those in attendance and introduced the following FMEC Board of Directors. Additionally, he acknowledged the FMEC employees and FMEC Attorney Steve Hovey.

Dennis Anderson, District 1	Frank Fryer, District 5
Richard Schaufler, District 4	Larry Irvine, District 9
Bill Trygstad, District 8	Steve Garbisch, District 3
Jay Neitzell, District 2	Matt Maras, District 6

Pastor Eileen Woyen provided an invocation, and Rich Murray, Mayor of Albert Lea, warmly welcomed attendees and spoke about the city’s great partnership with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

During the meeting, the Board Secretary, Frank Fryer, informed that the Notice of Meeting was printed in the

March edition of County Lines, and the 2023 Annual Report was sent to every cooperative member on February 29, 2024. As per Article 2, Section 5 of the bylaws, 50 registered members are necessary to conduct a meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, we had more than 50 registered members present, which constituted a quorum, allowing us to conduct the general business of the cooperative.

Dennis Anderson in District 1, Richard Schaufler in District 4 and Jack Korman in District 7 were re-elected and seated on the board of directors.

The next item of business was the consideration of the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes. A motion was proposed and seconded to approve the minutes presented in the Annual Report without reading them aloud.

President & CEO Jim Krueger was introduced and addressed those in attendance with a recap of 2023.

He highlighted 2023 under the meeting’s Illuminating Our Core Values theme. Electric sales were slightly lower than projected. However, bottom-line margins were very strong. It was the cooperative’s strongest financial performance in recent years. The most significant contributing factor to the increase in margins was the modernization of wholesale power costs. Operationally, FMEC invested nearly \$12 million in upgrades and repairs to strengthen our distribution system.

Krueger explained that although most costs have increased, the most significant annual expense for the cooperative will continue to be the wholesale power supply. Furthermore, rising interest rates have made securing financing for this capital-intensive business more expensive. It is anticipated that FMEC will need to make smaller and more frequent

adjustments to its rates in the next couple of years to better align revenues with expenses.

He also discussed the importance of state and federal legislation in determining the cost of electricity, especially as the country moves towards an environmentally sustainable energy future. The stability of the power grid and the industry’s capacity to meet future electricity demands during peak periods are closely related to energy policy decisions.

Chair Korman then called for any old or new business and asked for any questions from the audience. There being none, he proceeded to the scholarship drawings by introducing Peter Nelson, FMEC Director of Information Technology.

Ten students from the area received \$1,000 Luck of the Draw Scholarships for their post-high school education. The scholarships are funded by forfeited capital credits in accordance with Minnesota State law.

It was also announced that Kaci Wallin and Nolan Brooks will represent FMEC in Washington, D.C., as our Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegates in June 2024.

The event ended with a variety of prize drawings for FMEC members.

Chair Jack Korman then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made and seconded, and the adjournment was recorded at 7:15 p.m.

Frank Fryer, Secretary

USPS 209-540 ISSN 8755-9099

Periodicals Postage Paid at Albert Lea, MN and other locations.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to:
County Lines, P.O. Box 611, Albert Lea, MN 56007-0611

County Lines is published monthly, except for the Annual Report edition issued in March, by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, MN 56007. This monthly publication is designed to provide information about the cooperative to the member-owners of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

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

88TH ANNUAL MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 1

ALBERT LEA HIGH SCHOOL
2000 Tiger Lane, Albert Lea, MN

SCHEDULE:

Registration | Meal 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Bingo 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Business Meeting 6:30 p.m.

AFTER THE MEETING MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN:

- Luck of the Draw Scholarship Drawings
 - Prize Drawings

Bring your registration card from the reverse side of this page to register at the meeting.

