



Freeborn
Mower
Electric
Cooperative

People. Power. Possibilities.

county lines

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025 • VOLUME 86 • NO. 08



A CAPITOL EXPERIENCE: LOCAL STUDENTS JOIN NATIONAL YOUTH TOUR

Twenty-nine Minnesota high school students recently returned from a Washington D.C. trip-of-a-lifetime. Electric Cooperatives across Minnesota select students and award them an all-expense-paid trip to see the sites and learn about the political process in our nation's capital city.

The statewide trip is sponsored by each electric cooperative that sends students, coordinated by the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Nearly 2,000 students from across the United States attend the activity-filled week and learn firsthand about politics, community development, and the governmental process with peers from nearly every state in the nation.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative was excited to sponsor two students from our service area, Brynn Sathre and Benett Grove. They both confirmed that this was truly a trip of a lifetime, one they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Grove remembered attending a presentation by a past youth tour participant at school, which sparked his interest in the opportunity. Meanwhile, Sathre's grandfather saw the advertisement and recognized that it would be perfect for her, as she has a strong interest in politics. Both students went through an application and interview process at the cooperative where they were selected by a panel of judges.

Grove had not been away from his family for an extended period of time, so he was excited to have the opportunity to adventure in a new place. #13001 Sathre, who was familiar with Washington, D.C., was very excited about the trip. Unfortunately, two days before their departure, she faced an unexpected health challenge that required a visit to the emergency room. Despite this setback, she was determined to recover in time so she could attend the trip.

Continued on page 3.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



A DECADE OF PROGRESS, POWERED BY PEOPLE

August 1 marks the 10th anniversary of our historic acquisition of accounts and assets by Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC). At that time, we were one of twelve electric distribution cooperatives that came together to jointly purchase service territory from Alliant Energy, welcoming nearly 16,000 new members. This acquisition is a significant milestone in our Cooperative's history, representing a positive change for the members we acquired.

Being part of a cooperative offers values and principles that differ from those of an investor-owned utility. There is a distinct difference in the cooperative model, allowing our members to be part of something unique and special. Our members are involved in the decision-making processes at the cooperative and have the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Additionally, they share in the cooperative's success through the retirement of Capital Credits, which is excess revenue that is distributed back to the member. The cooperative remains focused on people and exemplary service, aiming to enhance the overall experience for our members. This is the Cooperative Difference.

Large acquisitions typically don't happen without a few growing pains along the way, but we are proud to say that the final piece of the puzzle is now complete with the expiration of our wholesale power contract with Alliant. Going forward, our wholesale power will now be solely purchased from Dairyland Power Cooperative, our industry partner, who also shares our same values as a member-first driven organization.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude for the Alliant Energy employees we gained through the acquisition. They have seamlessly integrated into our team and continue to deliver exceptional service to our members. #1354901 Their support has been invaluable to our cooperative, contributing significantly to our operations and the benefits of the acquisition.

Thank you for trusting FMEC to power your lives.

With gratitude,
Jim Krueger

INVEST IN EFFICIENCY. REAP THE REWARDS.



Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) offers a water heater rebate program aimed at promoting energy efficiency and helping our members save on utility costs. This program is available to members who install FMEC Marathon electric water heaters with a capacity of either 85 or 100 gallons that have an energy factor of .88 or greater. Additionally, the water heater must be part of the cooperative's load control program, which allows FMEC to manage energy usage during peak times and improve overall system efficiency.

Rebates are also available for the purchase of heat pump water heaters that meet Energy Star criteria with an energy factor of 2.2 or greater. Unlike the Marathon electric water heaters, heat pump water heaters do not need to be controlled by the cooperative.

The rebate program provides financial incentives to encourage the adoption of high-efficiency water heating solutions. By participating, members can receive monetary rebates, making the initial investment more affordable and also ensures long-term savings through lower energy consumption. By taking advantage of FMEC's water heater rebate program, members can benefit from both cost savings and enhanced energy efficiency.

member news

OFFICE CLOSED

We will be closed on Monday, September 1 in observance of Labor Day.

SERVICE UPGRADES, RELOCATION, HOUSE MOVES

Specifications and electrical codes constantly change, and we're here to ensure you stay compliant. If you plan to upgrade or relocate your electrical service for your home or business, our team is ready to assist you.

- For house or building moves that involve FMEC crews, we require at least two weeks' notice.
- Additionally, please provide the moving route, the loaded height, and a down payment.

To arrange a move, service update, or relocation, please contact our office.

JOIN US AT ALBERT LEA'S SAFETY NIGHT

September 16 | 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Morin Park in Albert Lea

FMEC will be there with safety information, games, and prizes. It's a fun and informative event for all.

YOUTH TOUR CONTINUED...

Sathre shared that her favorite part of the Youth Tour was the connections she was able to make with some of the girls on the trip. #585600 They are already planning their next adventure together which might include a meet-up at the MN State Fair or a concert.

Grove was equally excited about the friends he made and, most notably, the Segway tour. He also expressed his appreciation for his cooperative chaperone, Raul Garcia, from Itasca-Mantrap Electric Cooperative, who was affectionately nicknamed "R-Dog." Both students noted the positive impact this leader had, which contributed significantly to their enjoyable experience.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local electric co-ops, MREA, and NRECA, since 1964. In that time, more than 60,000 high school students from the nation's cooperative electric utilities have participated in the Youth Tour since its inception. Students wishing to participate in 2026, should stay tuned for more information this fall.



THE IMPORTANCE OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Vegetation management is a crucial aspect of maintaining the reliability and safety of our electric grid. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is committed to ensuring that power delivery remains uninterrupted and safe, and effective vegetation management is a key component of achieving this goal.

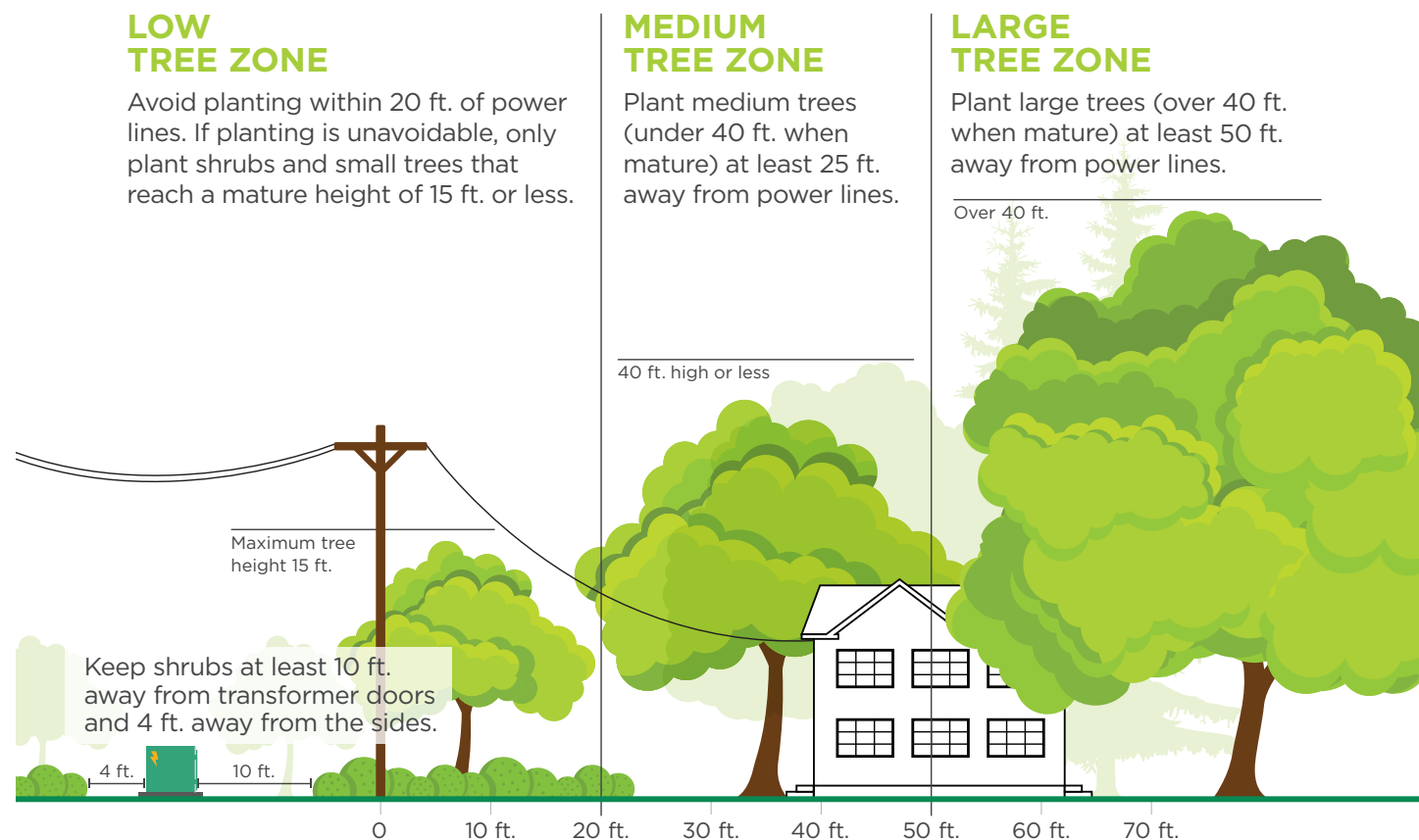
Trees and other vegetation growing too close to power lines pose significant risks, including power outages, electrical fires, and damage to the infrastructure. #13001 During storms or high winds, branches can break and fall on power lines, causing disruptions to power. Regularly trimming and removing problematic vegetation helps to prevent these incidences, minimizing the risk of outages and enhancing the overall reliability of our power supply.

Additionally, proper vegetation management is essential for the safety of our crews and the community. Overgrown vegetation can obstruct access to critical infrastructure, making it difficult for our lineworkers to perform maintenance and repairs efficiently. By keeping the areas around the power lines clear, we not only ensure quicker response times for repairs but also create safer working conditions for our crews.

Ultimately, vegetation management helps maintain the integrity and reliability of our electric system, ensuring that power is delivered safely and consistently to our members. FMEC remains dedicated to these proactive measures to protect our infrastructure and provide the highest quality service to members in our service area.

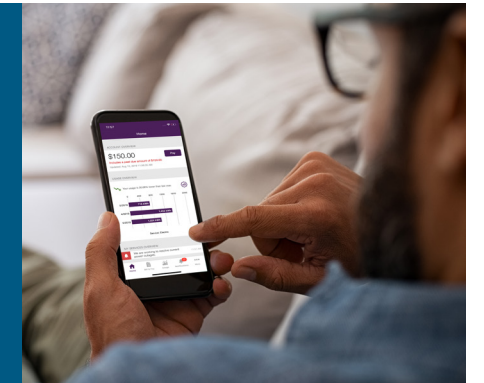
PLANT TREES SAFELY

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.



GET TO KNOW SMARTHUB: YOUR UTILITY DASHBOARD

SmartHub is a comprehensive, user-friendly platform designed to simplify and enhance the way members engage with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. Created for electric cooperatives, SmartHub offers a range of features that empower members with control, insight, and convenience in managing their utility accounts. Here are a few features that make SmartHub a great resource for our members:



1. ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT:

SmartHub provides seamless access to account information, allowing members to view their current balance, track payment history, and make secure online payments. This feature ensures that members can stay up-to-date with their account status at all times.



2. DETAILED USAGE INSIGHTS:

One of SmartHub's most valuable features is detailed usage tracking. Members can monitor electricity use daily, weekly, or monthly through easy-to-read graphs and charts. This real-time data helps identify patterns, understand peak usage times, and find ways to save energy and lower costs.



3. OUTAGE REPORTING AND NOTIFICATIONS:

SmartHub makes it easy to report outages and get real-time updates. #585600 Members can report outages through the app. This feature improves communication and helps ensure timely responses.



4. CUSTOMIZED ALERTS:

Members can set up personalized alerts and notifications in SmartHub for various account activities, such as billing reminders, payment confirmations, and high usage alerts. These customized notifications help members stay on top of their account management and energy consumption.



5. MOBILE ACCESSIBILITY:

With the SmartHub mobile app, members can access their account information and features from their smartphones or tablets. #1354901 This mobility ensures that members can manage their utility services on-the-go, providing greater flexibility and convenience.



6. PAPERLESS BILLING:

SmartHub supports paperless billing options, allowing members to receive and pay their bills electronically. This environmentally friendly feature not only reduces paper waste but also streamlines the billing process, making it faster and more efficient.



7. SECURE COMMUNICATION:

The platform includes secure messaging features, enabling members to communicate with member service representatives directly through SmartHub. This is another avenue for members to easily connect with our team to help answer any questions they may have.

We encourage any of our members who are not currently set up on SmartHub, to give it a try. It is a free service offered through FMEC for the convenience of our members.



IT'S parade SEASON

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative proudly participates in various area parades during the summer months. It provides a wonderful opportunity for our employees to engage with the community and connect with the members we are proud to serve. We hope that many of you enjoyed seeing the bucket truck drive past and appreciated a sweet treat or two!



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CLASSIFIED marketplace

FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS COLLECTING SCHOOL SUPPLY DONATIONS.

Your contributions can make a significant difference for children heading back to school this year. We need a wide variety of items, including notebooks, pencils, backpacks, and art supplies. FMEC is proud to serve as a drop-off location for these donations, ensuring they reach the students who need them the most.

Donations will be accepted through August 29 at our office, located at 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, #585600 during our regular business hours. Simply bring your supplies to the designated drop-off area, and we will handle the rest.

Your generosity will help equip students with the tools they need to succeed in the upcoming school year.

Join us in making a positive impact in our community!

DONATE NOW THROUGH AUGUST 29

School supply donations may be left at the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative office, 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:
2013 CUSTOM HERITAGE SOFTAIL.
Low mileage 10,184. Excellent condition. \$10,000. OBO. Call (970) 682-5963.

1987 PONTIAC TRANS AM GT.
Needs work. Asking \$2,500. Call (507) 391-3353 or (507) 415-4586.

FARM:
MIRAFOUNT 3465-E CATTLE WATERER, Never been used. Stainless Steel **HOG FEEDERS.** Call (507) 383-2432

CUB CADET WITH REAR MOUNTED TILLER. \$1,300. Call (507) 273-6063.

HOUSEHOLD:
4-STURDY METAL FOLDING CHAIRS. Tan colored padded seats. Like new \$44. or highest offer. Call (507) 373-0093.

LAZY BOY CHAIR. \$10. Call (507) 788-0004.

HIFI STEREO EQUIPMENT. All items in working condition. Call (507) 369-4957.

MISC.:
2019 PF 16 WOLF PUP TRAVEL TRAILER. Comes with all the amenities. Book value. \$12,100. Make an offer. Call (507) 383-3976.

2018 R-POD 179 RV. Second owner. Weight distribution hitch for towing. Newer battery. Well maintained. \$17,500. Call (612) 578-7481.

2 NEW PATIO SCREEN DOORS. 35x80. \$25. each. Call (507) 330-4900.

4-WHEEL WALKER. Has seat & brakes. \$25. Call (507) 318-0031.

WANTED

CAST IRON FRY PANS, DUTCH OVENS, WAFFLE IRONS, GRIDDLES. Call (507) 402-0880.

VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL WOOD SPLITTER. Reasonably priced. Call (507) 272-4672.

WATKINS PETRO-CARBO SALVE. Leave message. Call (507) 265-3261.

1973-1980 CHEVY PICKUP 2 WHEEL DRIVE. Looking to restore. Call (507) 373-0760.

OLDER GRAIN WAGON. Call (507) 438-0525.

FREE

HARD ROCK MAPLE END TABLE. 28" x 22" x 20" H. Good condition. Call (507) 373-3633.

CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE RULES

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

You can review the Classified Marketplace Rules and/or submit an ad at www.fmec.coop. Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab.

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 info@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 15th of the current month to claim your \$25 bill credit.



FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Albert Lea MN 56007

(507) 373-6421 or (800) 734-6421
www.fmec.coop | info@fmec.coop



Business Hours:

Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Lobby Hours:

Monday - Thursday, 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Friday, By appointment only
Kiosk, Available 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. 7 Days a Week

Board Meetings:

Typically the last Tuesday of each month.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Got a Favorite Recipe? Share It With Your Co-op!

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members can submit one short recipe each month by emailing info@fmec.coop or mailing it to: FMEC Newsletter, PO Box 611, Albert Lea, MN 56007. If your recipe is published, you'll earn a \$10 electric bill credit!

We can't wait to share what you're cooking!



LET'S COOK



CUPPA CUPPA

Submitted By:
Christina Bergstrom

- 1 C. flour
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 can of fruit cocktail
- 1 Tsp. vanilla *optional

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-inch round cake pan or cast-iron skillet. Mix all ingredients together until creamy. Pour into dish. Bake for 35 - 40 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool and serve with ice cream.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email to info@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.