



*Pictured from L to R: Brent Ridge, Jim Krueger, Joe Miller, and Pete Wyckoff.*

## FREEBORN MOWER ENERGY FORUM BRINGS COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY LEADERS TOGETHER

***On November 13, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) hosted an Energy Forum bringing together key stakeholders, community members, and industry experts for an engaging discussion on energy solutions and sustainability.***

Attendees had the opportunity to connect with one another and hear from experts on a range of important topics, including energy policy, net metering, the nuclear moratorium, transmission costs, and grid reliability.

The event began with opening remarks from Jim Krueger, who highlighted the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide FMEC's mission and operations, which distinguish electric cooperatives from other utilities. #2253501 He emphasized the cooperative difference and the unique positioning cooperatives have, which enables them to support and positively impact the communities they serve.

Joe Miller, the Director of Communications at the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), provided an update on energy policy and the current legislative priorities for electric

cooperatives throughout the state. Brent Ridge, President and CEO of Dairyland Power Cooperative, gave a detailed overview of transmission, the generation portfolio, and the 2040 Carbon-Free Standard. He discussed both the current energy landscape and the future of cooperatives as they adapt to the evolving demands and opportunities in the energy sector.

Pete Wyckoff, Deputy Commissioner from the MN Department of Commerce, concluded the day by giving an overview of some of the current and future funding opportunities that are available from the MN Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources, as well as sharing some of the challenges at the state level from increasing loads while balancing reliability and affordability.

Presenters fielded several questions throughout the event, which fostered meaningful discussion and encouraged collaboration among attendees. The open dialogue reflected FMEC's ongoing commitment to transparency, education, and working together toward a sustainable energy future.



ceo message  
Jim Krueger, President & CEO



KEEPING YOU INFORMED  
ABOUT GRID RELIABILITY

*It is always a pleasure to spend time with the members of our cooperative through engagement opportunities such as the bus tour we hosted in early October and the Energy Forum in November. During these events, several key themes consistently emerge in our discussions about the changing energy industry—one of the most pressing being grid reliability.*

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, grid reliability remains a top priority. Our team works diligently to ensure that equipment and power lines are regularly inspected for wear and tear and replaced according to a scheduled maintenance cycle. #1917700 However, this represents just one piece of a much larger puzzle.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), the regional grid operator serving 15 states across the central United States and the Canadian province of Manitoba plays an even greater role in maintaining and improving grid reliability. MISO has identified a portfolio of critical transmission projects as part of its Long Range Transmission Plan, designed to strengthen the energy network and enable the grid of the future.

MISO has selected Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and its partners to build, operate, and maintain and operate the Maribell Transmission Project—one of several key transmission initiatives identified in its Long Range Transmission Plan. The proposed MariBell Transmission Project is an approximately 140-mile, 765 kilovolt (kV)/161 kV double circuit transmission line that will stretch from Marion, Minn., to Bell Center, Wis.

To keep members informed and engaged, DPC hosted informational events throughout our region in November, offering opportunities for discussion and helping members better understand the purpose and potential impact of the project.

We will continue to share updates with our members as they become available, upholding our commitment to transparency and ensuring our members stay informed throughout the process.

I am grateful for your continued support and trust, and wish you all a joy-filled holiday season.

Jim Krueger

## DIRECTOR ELECTION REMINDER

**Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for board director positions in Districts 3, 6, and 9. These districts cover areas including northwest Austin, Hayward, Glenville, and the northern part of the city of Albert Lea among others. Directors are elected by fellow FMEC members to serve three-year terms, with elections rotating annually across districts.**

To qualify, applicants must be a current FMEC member with their primary residence in the district they seek to represent. Additionally, they must meet eligibility standards outlined in the Cooperative's Bylaws. These include not

having a recent felony conviction, employment with FMEC within the past three years, or immediate family ties to current FMEC employees or board members from other districts not up for re-election. #1297800 Directors must avoid conflicts of interest or relationships with entities in competition with the cooperative.

If you're an FMEC member residing in Districts 3, 6, or 9 and wish to serve, contact our office for an information packet. Unsure of your district? It's listed on your electric statement. Completed applications are due by 3:30 p.m. on Monday, January 5, 2026.

member news

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE  
JOIN US FOR HOLIDAY TREATS & CHEER!

Thursday, December 11, 2025 | 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative Lobby Area  
3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea

Stop by for holiday treats, apple cider, and coffee as we celebrate the season together.

HOLIDAY SWEATER CONTEST

Don't forget to wear your most festive sweater for a chance to win a prize basket!



HOLIDAY HOURS  
In observance of the holidays, our offices will be closed:

- Wednesday, December 24
- Thursday, December 25
- Thursday, January 1

Please call (507) 373-6421 or (800) 734-6421 for 24/7 emergency and outage reporting.

**STORAGE CONTROL HOURS**  
Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) purchases its power from Dairyland Power Cooperative – a generation and transmission cooperative of which we are a member-owner. This year, Dairyland's Board of Directors approved a change to the on-peak billing hours for its 24 member cooperatives, including FMEC, effective Jan. 1, 2026. Through 2025, on-peak hours were Monday – Friday in the summer (June – August | 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.) and winter (December – February | 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.). In 2026, on-peak hours for the wholesale power FMEC purchases from Dairyland will be year-round:

- Summer (June – August): 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.
- Fall/Winter/Spring: 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Nighttime off-peak hours remain 9 p.m. – 5 a.m.

The new on-peak windows better align with times when peak energy prices may occur on the regional grid during weekends or in the fall and spring. Additionally, the change is designed to help reduce the number of Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) charges that are passed along to the member cooperatives.

MEMBERS EXPERIENCE  
THE ENERGY INDUSTRY  
UP CLOSE WITH FMEC



**On October 21, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative hosted a bus tour for a group of members to visit Dairyland Power Cooperative in La Crosse, WI. Part of the event included a tour of John P. Madgett Station (JPM), one of Dairyland Power Cooperative's coal-fired power plants. The group participating in the tour had a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences related to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.**

Over the course of the day, members engaged in discussions about the energy industry, #1297800 DPC's strategies for addressing demand growth, and ongoing efforts to expand capacity to meet the energy needs of the future.

One of the key takeaways from the day was the numerous questions regarding data centers and their impact on cooperatives across the state. The large energy demands from these data centers will impact the electric grid and DPC has a dedicated team focused on identifying locations for capacity growth.

Continued on page 6.





# FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST



## DESIGN A T-SHIRT FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING!

### ELIGIBILITY

- Open to FMEC employees, their families, and all FMEC members.
- Participants may enter individually.
- Limit one (1) submission per person.

### DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Design will appear on the front of the T-shirt.
- Must be suitable for printing on a colored T-shirt.
- No copyrighted or trademarked images, logos, or text unless written permission is provided.
- Must include the Annual Meeting date: April 21, 2026.
- Must reflect the 2026 theme: The Power of Us.

### WINNER SELECTION

- A panel of judges will select the top designs. The top three finalists will be posted on social media for voting (designer names will not be shared).
- Winner will be announced on Wednesday, February 11.
- Winning design will be printed on the official Annual Meeting shirts.

### PRIZE

- A \$100 gift card to a local business of the winner's choice within FMEC's service area.

### SUBMISSION DETAILS

Submit your design by Friday, January 30 at 3:00 p.m. to [marissa.vogt@fmec.coop](mailto:marissa.vogt@fmec.coop). Be sure to include:

- Full name
- Contact information
- File name format / Email subject line: Lastname\_Firstname\_TshirtContest

### RIGHTS

- By entering, participants grant Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative the right to reproduce, modify, and use the submitted design for promotional purposes.
- Designers will be credited when possible, including recognition at the Annual Meeting and on social media.

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT** [MARISSA.VOGT@FMEC.COOP](mailto:MARISSA.VOGT@FMEC.COOP)

## GIVE THE PERFECT GIFT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*Not sure what to buy for someone on your list? We've got you covered!*

Give them a gift certificate for electricity! Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) Gift Certificates are available in any amount you choose. The recipient must be an active member of FMEC. To purchase, please visit our office during business hours with the name and address of the recipient. Gift Certificates will be applied directly to their account.



## KEEP YOUR HOLIDAYS SAFE AND BRIGHT

*Make sure your holidays don't go from merry to scary by following these important safety precautions.*

1. The best decorations are safe ones. Ensure that cords are not run under rugs or furniture to prevent fires.
2. Always turn off decorations when #1917700 you leave your home and when you're sleeping.
3. Inspect decorations to make sure they are not damaged or worn out.
4. Only use decorations in dry areas. As tempting as it is, avoid decorating your fish aquarium with icicle lights.
5. The best gift for your family is an Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) breakers or outlets. Many electrical fires that occur every year could be prevented by AFCIs.



## HOLIDAY LIGHT STRANDS NOT WORKING? WE'RE COLLECTING!

You can recycle strings of holiday lights at FMEC by depositing them in the bin located inside the front lobby entrance. We will be collecting through January 30, 2026. They will be donated to an organization in southern MN where workers will reclaim the usable components.



# SCHOLARSHIP REMINDERS

**LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP**  
Supporting area youth in their pursuit of continuing education is important to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. If you or someone you know is a graduating high school senior who resides in the FMEC service territory (student/parent with active account), he or she is eligible to apply for a \$1,000 LUCK OF THE DRAW Scholarship. The application deadline is Friday, March 21, 2026 by 3:30 p.m. The drawing will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at the cooperative's Annual Meeting at the Albert Lea High School, 2000 Tiger Lane, Albert Lea, MN. Student must be present to win. Applications can be found on the website ([www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop)).

**LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP**  
Are you or someone you know interested in becoming a lineworker? Apply now for one of two \$1,000 scholarships that will be awarded to two applicants pursuing a post-secondary education in an electric lineworker program. The applicants must apply by March 1, 2026 to be considered for this opportunity. Applications can be found on the website ([www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop)).

# YOUTH TOUR: APPLY NOW!

The Youth Tour is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. with over 1,900 other students from across the country for leadership training, interactions with elected officials, and to tour the city. Students will come away from the trip with a better understanding of government, advocacy, and the cooperative business model. FMEC is proud to sponsor two individuals, junior or senior high school students, for the upcoming tour in 2026. The application deadline is Friday, February 13, 2026, by 3:30 p.m. with the interview process beginning Monday, March 16, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.



# ENERGY TOUR CONTINUED...



Members had the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session with two members of DPC's Executive Team: Jeremy Browning, Vice President of Generation, and Amanda Hoefling, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer.

Members were also able to view the System Operating Center and gain a deeper understanding of FMEC's close partnership with DPC, as well as learn about how closely our cooperatives work together to provide members with reliable service.

The group ended the day by touring JPM and learning about the process of how electricity is generated from coal. #2253501 One tour attendee shared, "I was fascinated watching an entire rail car of coal being picked up and dumped."

Another member shared, "It was very informative, the presenters were excellent and prepared to answer the questions that were asked. We would recommend this tour to anyone who has the chance to join FMEC on a similar trip."

FMEC is excited to continue offering members meaningful ways to stay involved in the ever-changing energy industry, reflecting our cooperative's ongoing commitment to innovation, education, and community connection.



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# CLASSIFIED marketplace

## FOR SALE

**VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:**  
**2002 GMC 2500 6.0 PICKUP.** 120,000 miles. \$7,500. Call (507) 383-7269.

**ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR,** Porto Mobility Ranger Discovery. Foldable, all-terrain, used less than 2 miles. \$800. Call (507) 369-5892.

**FARM:**  
**GRAIN & HAY FEEDERS FOR SHEEP/GOATS, LAMBING PENS, TRANSPORTER BOX, RUBBER CREEP FEEDER.** Call (507) 438-1556.

**HOUSEHOLD:**  
**RICCAR VACUUM CLEANER.** \$30. Call (507) 261-8174.

**ICU BED W/AIR CONTROL SHIFTING MATTRESS.** \$2,500 OBO. Call (507) 491-2022.

**BUNN COFFEE MAKER.** Used 9 months. Perfect Condition. \$25. Call (507) 460-8168.

**MENS KEY BIB OVERALLS.** Used Lg. reg., tan, insulated. \$5. **CARTER JACKET.** Size 38. \$5. Call (507) 448-3491.

**SILK-FILLED, QUEEN-SIZE COMFORTER.** New Condition, hypoallergenic, wash & dry. \$85. Call (507) 373-0093.

**BERNINA BERNETTE 46 SEWING MACHINE.** Bought at Calico Hutch. Like new \$125. Call (507) 383-9932.

**JANOME 1600P SEWING MACHINE & Q-ZONE QUILTING FRAME.** New \$3,000. Call (507) 383-0988.

## MISCELLANEOUS:

**2 UNOPENED PEPSI BOTTLES.** Celebrating Elvis Presley's 2000 artist of the year. Call (507) 383-4909.

**4 FIRESTONE TIRES TRANSFORCE AT' 2, LT 265/75 R16, 123/120 R TUBELESS.** Less than 500 miles. \$850. Call (507) 448-2840.

**STEELE CITY DELUXE AIR FILTER.** 3-speed, model #65120. \$180. Call (507) 256-4535.

**CUB CADET 1862 SNOWBLOWER.** Power steering, 45" deck, runs well. Call (507) 273-6063.

**3 PROPANE PATIO HEATERS.** \$60 each. Call (507) 383-3425.

**PETS/ANIMALS:**  
**ENGLISH CREAM GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPIES.** Call (507) 440-4184.

## WANTED

**ADVERTISING TIN CONTAINERS & SIGNS.** Call (507) 402-0880.

## FREE

**GLASS TOP COFFEE TABLE.** Rectangular, rattan style. 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](http://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](http://www.fmec.coop)**. Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab.

You may also email ads to **[info@fmec.coop](mailto: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 15<sup>th</sup> of the current month to claim your \$25 bill credit. Congratulations to Michael Anderson for spotting his account number in the November newsletter.



### 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)



#### 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.*



### LET'S COOK



### FETTUCCHINE ALFREDO

**Submitted By: Karen Osmundson**

- 12 Oz. fettuccine
- ½ C. butter
- ½ Pt. half-and-half
- ½ Tsp. salt
- 1 Tsp. white pepper
- ½ C. fresh Parmesan cheese, grated

#### Directions:

Prepare the pasta according to the package directions; set it aside. Melt the butter in a saucepan, then blend in the remaining ingredients and heat through. Spoon over noodles. Add cooked chicken, shrimp, or vegetables if you prefer.

*Members may submit one short recipe per month by email to [info@fmec.coop](mailto: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.*