

JULY 2025 • VOLUME 86 • NO. 07



LIVING OUR VALUES: COMMUNITY, CONNECTION, COOPERATION

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) places a strong emphasis on member engagement, especially during the summer months where there are ample opportunities to connect with members. FMEC's summer activities are designed to educate, inform, and foster a sense of community among our members, reinforcing the cooperative spirit.

The cooperative spirit represents a unique blend of principles and values that differentiate cooperatives from other types of organizations. It serves as the foundation of the cooperative movement, guiding our operations and our interactions with both members and the broader community.

This summer, you'll find us at Wind Down Wednesday in August, providing safety education at various events, as well as participating in several local golf tournaments that support the communities we serve. We encourage our members to stop by our booth to introduce themselves. We look forward to getting to know our members better and welcome the opportunity to visit and answer any questions that you may have as we strive to be your primary resource for energy-related information.

Our aim as a cooperative is to always operate our organization with a member first approach and we are continually looking for ways to serve our members better. #1271400 This is one of the many reasons we position ourselves out in the community where our members have the opportunity to meet and engage with the team that keeps our community powered.

This summer, you'll also see us participating in many area parades. Be sure to look for us at these upcoming locations:

Thursday, July 3

Albert Lea Parade | Albert Lea, MN

Saturday, July 12

Rose Creek Days | Rose Creek, MN

Saturday, August 9

Glenville Days | Glenville, MN

ceo message
Jim Krueger, President & CEO



KEEPING YOU INFORMED:
SIMPLIFYING BILLING,
DELAYING RATE INCREASE

As part of our ongoing strategic planning efforts, we are conducting an audit of our rate structure to ensure that all member accounts are properly aligned with the appropriate rate schedule. #546004 During this process, we discovered that some of our rate schedules—although they have different names—calculate usage and charges identically. While this does not affect your billing rate, it adds unnecessary complexity to our internal bookkeeping.

HERE'S WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- If your account is affected, you will receive a letter in the mail notifying you of the change.
- This change is administrative only and will not impact your rate or how your usage is calculated.
- You do not need to take any action.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to enhance the efficiency of our systems. Furthermore, during our 2025 Annual Meeting, we mentioned that we anticipated a nominal rate increase in the fall of

this year, which would affect all members by a few dollars. However, through our strategic planning process, we have decided to postpone this increase to Spring 2026 as we continue to address complexities in our system.

This will also include a change taking place in August when 100% of our purchased power will come from Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), due to the expiration of our contract with Alliant Energy. This transition is expected to positively impact our members in the long term.

We will continue to work to ensure that our members have a close pulse on any changes that may impact them. Thank you for trusting us to power your lives.

- Jim Krueger

member news

OFFICE CLOSED

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

CAPITAL CREDIT NOTICE
WILL BE INCLUDED ON
JULY BILLING STATEMENT

The 2024 margins allocation has been completed. If you had service with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) in 2024, and are a current member, look for your Capital Credit Allocation notice in your July billing statement. Inactive members will receive a separate allocation notice.

Capital Credits represent your share of ownership and are held by the cooperative until a general retirement is approved by the Board of Directors. Capital Credits belong to the member until they are fully distributed. Therefore, it's important to keep your current address on file with FMEC, even if you move out of the service area, to ensure retirement checks can be sent to you. #1271400 Current members receive Capital Credit retirements as a bill credit. For more information, contact FMEC's Accounts Payable, Capital Credits Specialist Joanne Miller at (507) 379-8860 or joanne.miller@fmec.coop.

POWER COST
ADJUSTMENT

Power Cost Adjustments help the cooperative to recover costs associated with fluctuations in the energy market. Members will have a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) increase on their bill due an uptick in wholesale power costs.

INTRODUCING A NEW WAY
TO PAY YOUR BILL!



We are excited to announce the installation of a new kiosk located in the front vestibule of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. This kiosk will allow members to pay their bills using cash, check, or card (please note that no change will be given). It will be available seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

This addition to our cooperative offers members a convenient, efficient, and secure way to manage payments, even outside of regular business hours. It's especially beneficial for those with busy schedules who may find it challenging to visit the cooperative's office during normal operating hours.

As we strive to find innovative ways to enhance our service, the kiosk provides a user-friendly method to expedite the bill-paying process. It features secure payment processing and an easy-to-navigate interface, which is also available in Spanish. You will need to have your account number handy.

As we roll out this new technology at FMEC, we will be here to answer any questions or assist you with the process. We encourage all members to stop by and give it a try!

FMEC IS GOING
GREENER!



At FMEC, we're always looking for ways to make communication more efficient and convenient for our members. Since many of you have already made the switch to paperless billing, we're taking the next step.

Starting in July, members enrolled in paperless billing will begin to receive our newsletter by email instead of by mail.

THIS CHANGE HELPS US:

- Reduce printing and postage costs
- Deliver updates faster
- Make information easier to access anytime, anywhere

PREFER A PRINTED COPY? NO PROBLEM!

Call Us: (800) 734-6421
Email Us: info@fmec.coop



DID YOU KNOW?

FMEC offers its members the following rebates for these ENERGY STAR certified appliances.

- Electric Clothes Dryer: \$25 each
- Heat Pump Clothes Dryer: \$50 each
- Clothes Washer: \$25 each
- Dehumidifier: \$25 each
- Dishwasher: \$25 each
- Refrigerator (Min. 10 Cu. Ft.): \$25 each

Recycling rebates are also available for refrigerators, freezers, and window air conditioners that are in working order when recycled. Check our website for details or contact our office with questions.



ENERGY SOLUTIONS

ENERGY in the SAVINGS LAUNDRY ROOM

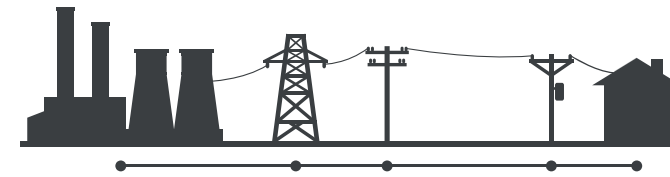
Today's home appliances are the most energy efficient they have ever been. If you are in the market for an appliance always look for the ENERGY STAR label!

WHEN WASHING:

- Switch from warm or hot water to cold. Improvements in laundry detergents allow impressive results from cool or cold water.
- Wash full loads. It will take the same amount of electricity to operate your washer for a small load as it will for a full load.
- Use the high-speed or extended spin feature. #1604101 The more moisture removed before drying, the better. It saves on drying time and reduces wear of the fabric.

WHEN DRYING:

- Do not mix light-weight clothing with heavier items. Dry them in separate loads since the light-weight items do not need as much dryer time.
- Use the lowest drying temperature you can. Make use of remaining heat in the dryer to finish the load by using the "cool down" cycle.
- Wool or rubber dryer balls will keep clothes separated for faster drying and reduce static.
- Take advantage of heat remaining from the previous cycle. Switch loads while the dryer is still warm.
- Keep your lint filter clean. A clean filter is needed for ideal air flow and dryer operation.



BREAKING IT DOWN Energy Management Events

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we're always working to keep your electricity reliable, affordable, and available when you need it most. One important way we do that is through smart energy management.

Whether it's making everyday energy-efficient choices at home or participating in special programs that reduce usage during peak times, your efforts help us manage electricity wisely. Conserving energy not only helps lower your own bill, it strengthens the reliability of the grid, reduces demand on generation resources, and helps control wholesale power costs for our entire membership.

Throughout the year, there may be times when we ask members to reduce electricity use. These requests happen for different reasons, and the timing and devices involved may vary. For members enrolled in our energy management programs, this may include temporary control of specific appliances or systems to help lower demand during peak periods or grid emergencies.

Understanding why and when these events occur can help you make informed choices and see how your actions benefit the greater community.

We may ask members to reduce energy use for three key reasons:

1. ENERGY SAVINGS

Energy Efficiency

GOAL: Use energy wisely and save

WHEN: Everyday

WHO: Everyone

WHY: Using energy wisely and making energy efficient purchases helps members use less electricity and save money. Some purchases may qualify for a rebate. We work year-round to share energy efficiency tips via our newsletter and social media channels.

2. COST MANAGEMENT

Peak Alert/Full Load Control

GOAL: Reduce electricity use during high demand/prices

WHEN:

Summer (Jun., Jul., Aug.) or Winter (Dec., Jan., Feb.)

WHAT: Summer - enrolled air conditioners, irrigation, dairy water heaters, manual standby generators | Winter - enrolled interruptible heat (a.m.); enrolled peak alert accounts, manual standby generators, dairy water heaters, grain dryers (p.m.)

WHY: A Peak Alert (Full Load Control Event) is called by Dairyland Power Cooperative. These occur only in the summer or winter seasons when the regional grid is expected to reach its peak demand for the season, resulting in higher wholesale prices. Electricity supply at these times is sufficient to cover demand, but the cooperative wants to reduce the amount of electricity purchased at high prices.

3. GRID RELIABILITY

Maximum Generation Event

GOAL: Reliability/Stabilize Electricity Supply

WHEN: Any Time (*enrolled devices will be tested once each season (4x/yr) unless an Event has occurred that season*)

WHAT: Enrolled residential electric water heaters, auto standby generators; then, if needed: enrolled air conditioners or interruptible heat systems, dairy water heaters; enrolled peak alert/standby generators, grain dryers, irrigation

WHY: Maximum Generation Events are called by the regional grid operator, Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), when there is a reliability concern. There may be a risk of insufficient generation resources to power our members' needs. Reducing electricity use during a Maximum Generation Event is crucial for all members, but only enrolled devices will be affected.

**These devices will be called upon as needed, not all at once.*



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF LINEWORK: 2025 LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Congratulations to Issac Lazaro-Rojas for being awarded our 2025 Lineworker Scholarship!

This scholarship is reserved for students who are pursuing post-secondary education in an Electric Lineworker Program. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is proud to partner with students as they continue their educational journey. We wish Issac all the best in his future!

CO-OP CAREERS: POWERING PURPOSE

HOW CO-OPS EMPOWER EMPLOYEES WHILE ENERGIZING COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives, such as Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), offer a wide variety of career opportunities that are both fulfilling and essential to the community. Fueled by the seven cooperative principles, co-ops don't just power homes and businesses—they empower people and energize entire communities.

DIVERSE CAREER PATHS:

Electric cooperatives require a broad spectrum of professionals to operate efficiently. Career opportunities include roles in engineering, finance, member service, IT, human resources, and more. From engineers who keep the grid running smoothly to member service representatives who deliver personalized support with a smile, every role at the co-op helps power an exceptional member experience.

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Working at an electric cooperative means contributing directly to the well-being of the local community. #1604101 Employees often take pride in knowing their work supports essential services, fosters local economic growth, and enhances the quality of life for their neighbors.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Co-ops are known for their commitment to employee development. They often provide continuous learning opportunities, professional training, and career advancement paths. This commitment to growth enables employees to gain new skills, assume greater responsibilities, and advance in their careers.

A career at an electric cooperative like Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers more than just a paycheck. It's a chance to make a real impact. With diverse job opportunities, a strong sense of community, and a culture rooted in collaboration and growth, co-op careers provide purpose, stability, and the satisfaction of powering people's lives.

COLLABORATIVE CULTURE:

Cooperative workplaces are typically characterized by a strong sense of camaraderie and mutual support. Employees work together towards common goals, fostering a cohesive and supportive work environment. This collaborative culture is reinforced by the democratic nature of cooperatives, where every member and employee has a voice.

COMPETITIVE BENEFITS:

Electric cooperatives often offer competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits packages, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off. These benefits contribute to job satisfaction and help attract and retain top talent.

Pursuing a career in an electric cooperative like FMEC not only offers professional growth and stability but also provides the unique reward of serving the community and contributing to the cooperative's mission of providing energy that powers people's lives.

Security Systems Made Easy



A security system from Heartland Security is an affordable, reliable way to help keep your home and family safe.



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CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

2009 FORD E350 SUPER DUTY CUTAWAY VAN CAB CHASSIS. 2-door. Low mileage, excellent Condition. Great for flatbed. \$6,000. Call (507) 481-5544.

2008 MERCEDES-BENZ CONVERTIBLE. Near perfect condition. 63,000 miles. \$11,500. Call or text (507) 318-0075.

FARM:

1971 750 FORD GRAIN TRUCK. 12,000 lbs. \$2,000. Call (507) 320-5264.

FARMALL CUB CULTIVATOR & PLOW. Call (507) 318-8158.

HOUSEHOLD:

CURIO CABINET. \$100. Call (507) 373-1743.

ANTIQUE OAK SECRETARY SIDE-BY-SIDE DESK. Good condition with mirror. \$175. Call (507) 383-0802.

UPRIGHT FREEZER. \$75. Call (507) 481-4639.

KIRBY VACUUM CLEANER. Generation 5 includes carpet cleaners and all attachments. It also has storage to hang up. Call (507) 373-0539.

POWER LOVE SEAT WITH CENTER CONSOLE. Enterprise by Home Stretch. Light brown. Like new. Call (507) 256-4233.

MISC.:

PINT CANNING JARS. Ball & Kerr brands. Call (507) 383-6546.

JOHN DEERE MODEL 265 LAWN MOWER. Hydro. Runs well. Has new battery. \$450. Call (507) 402-6101.

24 HP CRAFTSMAN PROFESSIONAL MOWER. 42" deck, 48" snowblower, snow cab, weights & chains. (312 hours). Runs excellent. \$1,500. Call (507) 460-8601.

2013 CF MOTO CF 600 4-WHEEL DRIVE WINCH. New plow, low miles. \$5,500. Call (507) 383-1850.

12 GOLD COLORED PRESIDENTIAL COINS. With holder booklet. \$15. Call (507) 373-0093.

WILDERNESS TARPON 105 KAYAK. Medium life vest, paddle, and cart included, like new. \$600 OBO. Call (507) 383-6318.

5 ANTIQUE WAGON WHEELS. 1 wood, 4 metal. 44" & 24" \$25.00 each. Text only. (507) 269-8992.

HON 5 DRAWER HEAVY DUTY FILE CABINETS. Qty 2, \$10.00 each. Call (507) 391-1935.

WOLLENSAK 3M 8-TRACK PLAYER, Model 8050A. 12 new & 20 pre-recorded 3M 8-track tapes. \$100.00. Call (507) 373-3633.

WANTED

ANVILS & ANVIL TOOLS. Call (507) 402-0880.

SIDE-BY-SIDE OR 4-WHEELER. Call (507) 402-7820.

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 may also email ads to info@fmec.coop or send by mail to County Lines, PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007. One ad/item per member. Ads will not be accepted over the phone. Ads will not be repeated.

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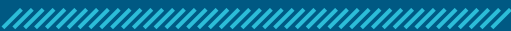
President: Jim Krueger, President & CEO
Telephone: (507) 373-6421

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

PO Box 611
3366 Bridge Avenue
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.

Protect Your Home and Your Budget

Surprise repairs can be expensive. That's why Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative has partnered with HomeServe to offer optional coverage for unexpected home system breakdowns. From electrical to water lines, HomeServe's trusted plans help cover the cost of repairs so you don't have to.



LEARN MORE

Scan this code or call
(833) 334-1874 to learn
more about available
plans in your area.



LET'S COOK



SUMMER PEACH PIE

Submitted By: Leola Anderson

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- One 3 oz. package of orange or peach Jello
- 5 cups fresh, sliced peaches
- 1 baked pie shell
- Whipped cream, for topping

Directions:

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, water, and cornstarch. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture becomes thick and clear. Remove from heat and stir in the Jello until fully dissolved. Add the fresh sliced peaches and toss gently to coat them with the mixture. #546004 Pour the peach mixture into a baked pie shell and refrigerate until set. Serve chilled, topped with whipped 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.