



Albert Lea High School students pictured left to right: Benjamin Schultz, Bryant Johnston, and Samuel Stay.

ALBERT LEA STUDENTS WIN NATIONAL HONOR WITH ENERGY DOCUMENTARY

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is incredibly proud to support the students in our community, empowering them to achieve their educational goals. This commitment made it an easy “yes” when Albert Lea High School students Benjamin Schultz, Bryant Johnston, and Samuel Stay requested an interview with FMEC President and CEO Jim Krueger for a special school project under the direction of educator, Jim Haney.

The initial documentary-style project began as a classroom assignment, but when Jim Haney recognized the impressive story these three students had to tell, he encouraged them to continue working on the project and consider submitting it to C-SPAN’s National Documentary Competition. The theme for the competition was “Your Message to the President: What issue is most important to you or your community?” The students carefully considered ideas relevant to our community, such as agriculture or farming, but soon realized that

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is a vital part of what makes our community thrive. Ben Schultz’s prior knowledge of the energy issues impacting the industry helped steer the direction of their project, which they titled “Energy in America.”

In their “Letter to the President,” the three students focused on risks to reliability with the retirement of coal and gas fired generation plants which are known for their dependable ability to produce power, unlike intermittent sources of power like solar and wind. #2038701 The documentary then shifts to demonstrate the growing need for nuclear, which is an environmentally clean, safe, and dependable generation source for energy.

As busy high school seniors, the most challenging part of the project was finding time to work on it together.

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manager message

Al Stadheim PE,
Director of Engineering & Operations



SHINING A LIGHT ON
ELECTRICAL SAFETY

As we approach National Electrical Safety Month this May, it's a timely reminder of the importance of electrical safety in our daily lives. At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), we take our responsibility to educate and inform our members very seriously. Our commitment aligns with the fifth Cooperative Principle: providing education, training, and information.

Electricity is a product that everyone seems to need, yet it is invisible and can be extremely dangerous if not handled properly. This is why FMEC is dedicated to providing comprehensive electrical safety education to our members.

Our efforts include in-person electrical safety displays and written materials for all ages, which we share at numerous events throughout the year. One of our most popular educational tools is the tabletop electrical safety display. This interactive exhibit is a hit with people of all ages and allows our lineworkers to educate members on real-world hazards they may encounter. Annually, we present this display at six to eight local events, always drawing an interested crowd.

While Minnesota law permits homeowners to perform their own electrical work, we strongly recommend that only licensed electrical professionals undertake such tasks. Electrical codes are in place to prevent accidents and fires, and most of these codes were established in response to previous incidents. #509208 Licensed professionals are required to have their work inspected by state officials and must take continuing education courses to stay current with industry trends.

Members can help each other stay safe by reminding friends and neighbors to stay away from downed wires, avoid using electrical tools near water, and contact FMEC if something doesn't look right with FMEC-owned equipment around their home or farm.

At FMEC, we believe that education is key to preventing electrical accidents and ensuring the safety of our community. Let's work together to make National Electrical Safety Month a time of learning and vigilance.

-Al Stadheim PE, Director of Engineering & Operations



At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, safety is always a top priority—both for our crews and our members. This May, we're proud to recognize National Electric Safety Month by reminding everyone to stay aware and informed when it comes to using electricity safely at home, on the farm, and in the community.

member news

OFFICE CLOSED

Our office will be closed on Monday, May 26th in observance of Memorial Day.

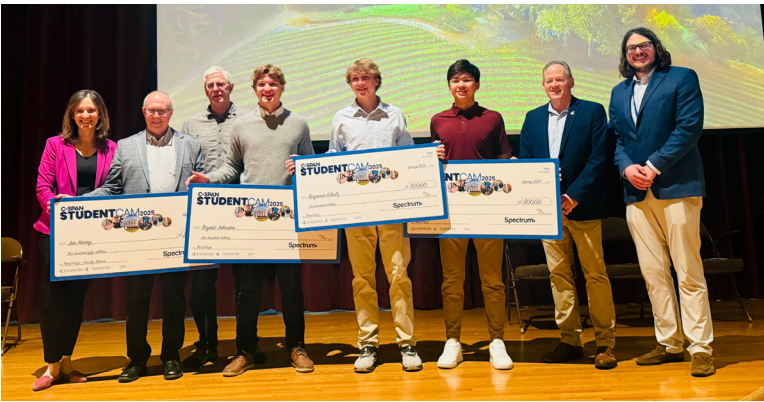
COGENERATION AND SMALL POWER PRODUCTION — POLICY 5.904

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers which satisfy the conditions and become a qualifying facility. The member is required to execute the "Cooperative Agreement for Cogeneration and Small Power Production Facilities" with the Cooperative. A Qualifying Facility (QF) is a cogeneration and small power production facility that satisfies the conditions in the 18 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 292.101(b). FMEC is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. The current interconnection documents and applications are posted on the cooperative's website — www.fmec.coop.

NOVA POWER PORTAL™

Members who are interested in installing their own distributed energy resource such as solar for interconnection, must use the NOVA Power Portal. Applications and resource documents are available through our website. Search under Services, Renewables, and then the Interconnection Information tab. Also found on the FMEC website is an abstract of the Interconnection Process for Distributed Energy Resources less than 10 megawatts (MW) interconnected to the Distribution System of a Cooperative in the State of Minnesota. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any disputes over interconnection, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the cooperative.

We invite you to contact the FMEC office to discuss interconnection plans.



STUDENTS CONTINUED...

Bryant Johnston recalled working on the project during long bus rides to away hockey games and mentioned how Jim Haney's support was crucial in helping them produce a finished product they were proud of.

Seeking the help of Jim Krueger, President and CEO of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, was straightforward as all three students had internal connections to the cooperative. The students expressed gratefulness for the opportunity to sit down with Krueger and discuss energy issues impacting our community.

Jim Krueger stated, "As a cooperative, we are committed to supporting local students who are eager to learn about the energy industry. We aim to be their go-to resource for information and are dedicated to supporting them in their educational endeavors."

C-SPAN received over 1,700 submissions for the competition, with nearly 3,500 students participating. When the students heard through some friends that they had received 3rd place, they were excited. The reward for their efforts on the project was \$750 to split.

C-SPAN recognized the students in a special ceremony at school with their teacher, peers, and other community leaders. Though Jim Haney has encouraged students to submit project entries in the past, this is the first time a group of students has placed and won a monetary prize and they were the only students to win in the state of Minnesota.

As the students embark on their next chapter in higher education this fall, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is thrilled to have played a part in their inspiring journey. Their dedication to understanding and addressing critical energy issues reflects a bright future not only for themselves but for our community. We are proud to have partnered with these young leaders and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will undoubtedly make. We wish Bryant, Sam and Ben all the best in their future endeavors.

LIGHTING UP LIVES, ONE CONNECTION AT A TIME

FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

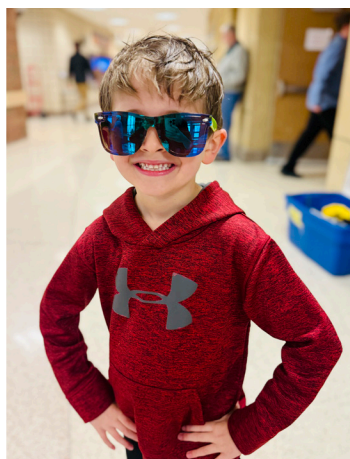
On April 1, 2025, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative hosted their 88th Annual Meeting at Albert Lea High School. The cooperative welcomed members to the event to enjoy a meal, connect with the FMEC staff, and hear about the cooperative's performance in 2024. They also welcomed guest speaker, Brent Ridge, President and CEO of Dairyland Power Cooperative who shared about the importance of the work they do to prioritize reliability and affordability and how that directly impacts cooperative members at FMEC.

During the annual meeting, FMEC presented the results of their member election process by seating John Penkava to the board in district 2, and re-seating Frank Fryer and Bill Trygstad in districts 5 and 8, respectively.

President & CEO Jim Krueger shared about FMEC's solid financial performance in 2024 while navigating inflationary pressures, compliance with changing government regulations, and an unseasonably warm winter to start 2024. Krueger also shared how average temperatures varied quite a bit from 20-year averages which resulted in selling less energy overall.

Despite these headwinds, the cooperative's revenue totaled \$58.5 million, with expenses totaling \$55.2 million #2038701 which generated net margins of \$3.3 million. Krueger explained how positive net margins are what allow the cooperative to reinvest back into the co-op and also distribute profit back to members in the form of Capital Credits.

Krueger also outlined several key legislative priorities for electric cooperatives in 2025 and the importance of advocacy. Krueger and Ridge answered several questions at the conclusion of the meeting and members were reminded that by being part of a cooperative, they have the opportunity to actively engage FMEC and have a voice in the direction of the cooperative.



"LUCK OF THE DRAW" SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is proud to support students in their educational journey. At FMEC's recent annual meeting, fifteen students were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship through the Luck of the Draw scholarship program. Investing in students is investing in our future and we wish each of them the best of luck in their post-secondary education.

Congratulations to the following 15 high school seniors!

- Jenna Balfe – Albert Lea
- Jaelyn Boss – Albert Lea
- Mika Cichosz – Albert Lea
- Miria Jean Clarey – Albert Lea
- Brooklyn Drescher – Alden
- Abby Harves – Albert Lea
- Ahnnalie Hill – Albert Lea
- Areli Lino – Albert Lea
- Ella Mensink – Elkton
- Sydney Newman – Albert Lea
- Caitlyn Stangl – Blooming Prairie
- Bree Weilage – Albert Lea
- Nevaeh Wacholz – Albert Lea
- Bailey Wood – Albert Lea
- Camden Hungerholt – LeRoy



RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR 2025

Students to Experience Washington D.C. Co-op Style!

Congratulations to Benett Grove from Glenville-Emmons High School and Brynn Sathre from Southland High School on being selected to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. for an unforgettable leadership experience. Benett and Brynn earned this award through Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's application and interview process.

This once-in-a-lifetime trip brings together high school students from across the country to explore our nation's #1948201 capital, meet with elected officials, and learn about the cooperative business model and the role of electric cooperatives in their communities. During the weeklong tour, students will visit iconic landmarks, attend educational sessions, and build lasting friendships with peers who share their interest in leadership.

We look forward to sharing a recap of Benett and Brynn's experience later this summer!

STAY SAFE AROUND ELECTRICITY THIS PLANTING SEASON

Many farmers eagerly await the arrival of mild spring temperatures to head into the fields and start planting spring crops. If you live in rural southern Minnesota, you will soon notice an increase in farming activity as farmers prepare the soil, plant seeds, and operate machinery such as tractors and planters. #1948201 This is a busy season filled with movement and hard work to ensure a successful growing season. While this time is crucial for farmers, it is also essential to review key electrical safety measures to ensure a safe planting season.

First and foremost, be aware of your surroundings and know where there are electrical lines both above and below ground whether you are digging a fence post for a new garden or planting in a wide-open field. Today's machinery is becoming larger, which means extra caution is needed around power lines. Before moving equipment, make sure there's enough clearance to safely travel underneath or between overhead lines. Taking the time to plan your route and double-check heights can prevent dangerous—and potentially deadly—accidents.

In addition to awareness of power lines and other electrical equipment, it is also important to ensure that all farm vehicles have functioning lights and reflective markings when traveling on public roadways. It is always helpful to utilize escort vehicles with flashing lights when possible.

Even if you're not out in the field, it's also important to be aware of electrical dangers that could be present in farm buildings. Always check for frayed wires and be cautious of overloaded circuits in workshops, barns, and garages.

Understanding potential hazards and implementing safety measures can significantly reduce the likelihood of electrical accidents on your farm. We wish farmers a safe 2025 planting season.

REMEMBER THESE SPRING PLANTING SAFETY TIPS



TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.



USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter #2038701 on the ground, who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.



DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.



CALL 911

Call 911 to have your electric utility dispatched to de-energize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.

NEW KIOSK: COMING SOON!

We are eagerly awaiting the installation of a new kiosk, which will be located in the entry vestibule of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. The kiosk will be a convenient way for members to pay their bill by cash (no change given), check or card. #509208 Adding this kiosk will be helpful for members who wish to pay their bills with ease and convenience. Look for additional information in the coming weeks.

CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

FARM:

HAY BALES. Small, square, grass hay. On racks, stored inside. \$4 cash. Call (507) 567-2150.

HOUSEHOLD:

WOODEN TABLE. 48", round, maple-finish with 4 chairs & two 12" leaves. \$25. Call (507) 261-8174.

2 CORDUROY RATTAN COUCHES. In very good condition. \$50 each. Call (507) 373-3633.

MISC.:

CUB CADET GARDEN TRACTOR. Hydraulic lift with 40" tiller. \$1400. Call (507) 273-6063.

16-FOOT LUND FISHING BOAT. Steering wheel, 2-stroke mercury motor with 25 hours. \$1500 OBO. Call (507) 460-2175.

CRAFTSMAN 10" TABLESAW. MN#113.298032. Nice condition. \$100 OBO. Call (507) 373-8459.

VINTAGE GALVANIZED WASHTUBS. Good condition. Call (507) 433-2712.

BEGINNER VIOLIN & CASE. Good condition. \$100. Call (507) 273-2141.

DEMCO 2 WHEEL KAR KADDY SS.

New tires, new fenders. \$1,000. Call (507) 383-7858.

C&C 25 SAILING YACHT. New steel storage cradle. One owner. Winter stored inside. \$10,500. Call (507) 282-7113.

TILT BED TRAILER. 7x10, single axle, 3,000 lbs. \$600. Call (507) 265-3213.

2 UNOPENED PEPSI BOTTLES celebrating Elvis Presley's 2000 Artist of the Year. Call (507) 383-4909.

COLLECTABLE QUARTERS.

Uncirculated US States quarters complete & National Park quarters in folders. \$16 each set. Call (507) 373-0093.

PETS/ANIMALS:

MIXED BARNYARD CHICKS. Call (507) 475-1468.

WANTED

SNOWBLOWER. Good, used, walk behind. Call (507) 402-2134.

SMOOTH SURFACE HARDBOARD SIDING. 12" wide, length can vary, usually 16' long. Call (507) 460-9745.

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. Congratulations to Tiffany Uttecht for spotting her account number in the April newsletter.



FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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

Board Meetings:

Typically the last Tuesday of each month.

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



Get warned about water.

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LET'S COOK



ALMOND BARS Submitted By: Vickie Nelson

- 4 eggs
- 2 C. sugar
- 1 C. melted butter
- 2 C. flour
- 2 ½ Tsp. almond extract
- Confectioners' sugar, optional

Directions:

In a mixing bowl, beat eggs and sugar until lemon-colored. Add butter, flour, and extract; mix well. Spread in a greased 13x9 baking pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar if desired.

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.