Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative
People. Power. Possibilities.

county lines NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025 • VOLUME 86 • NO. 10

FMEC JOINS COOPERATIVES NATIONWIDE TO CELEBRATE AND SERVE

October marks National Cooperative Month, a special month dedicated to celebrating cooperatives, their values, and their significant contributions to the communities they serve and the world. The cooperative business model is unique, prioritizing people over profit, empowering individuals through unity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to positive change.

Cooperatives of all kinds, including energy cooperatives like Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), work together to develop sustainable solutions that address global social, economic, and environmental challenges with a centralized focus on improving communities and the world. FMEC is part of a network of energy cooperatives that work together to drive positive change within the energy industry, and we are proud to serve our member-owners by providing innovative energy solutions that help meet the needs of our members.

There is no better way to start a month dedicated to celebrating cooperatives than by coming together to serve our community.

In partnership with United Way, the Albert Lea YMCA, and Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), FMEC, along with our peers in the energy industry, took action to address needs in our local community for "The Cooperative Day of Service."

Volunteers from DPC, and their 24-member cooperatives came together #1997000 to serve local organizations in the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative service territory as a tangible representation of the 7th Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community.

One volunteer shared, "There is a lot of pride coming together as a cooperative family to do good in the community, and it is amazing to see what a collective group can accomplish in such a short amount of time."

We are looking forward to sharing a detailed recap of the Cooperative Day of Service in the next edition of the County Lines Newsletter.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO

PARTNERSHIPS AND PRIORITIES: MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

Last month, our executive team had the privilege of presenting a new, and updated, Strategic Plan to the Board of Directors during the annual board retreat. This milestone marked the culmination of several months of dedicated collaboration—both internally and with our valued industry partner, Matt Gilley from GreatCo-Ops. Matt's expertise, leadership, and guidance were instrumental throughout this process, and we are deeply grateful for his insights and contributions.

Together, we identified seven strategic priorities that will guide our cooperative toward achieving its long-term goals, while remaining firmly aligned with our mission and vision. #399702 These priorities serve as a clear roadmap for success, providing direction and focus as we navigate the future.

Each priority is supported by specific goals and initiatives to ensure we stay committed to the right projects and continue progressing on a path of sustainable growth and operational excellence.

The Board of Directors plays a critical role in the strategic planning process because they represent the voice of our member owners. Their insights, perspectives, and decisions ensure that our cooperative remains grounded in the values and priorities of the communities we serve. By actively reviewing our strategic priorities, the board helps shape a future that reflects both members' needs and long-term sustainability.

We expect to share final board approval of the plan next month, along with more details of the work to come.

-Jim Krueger

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Talent and Culture
Member Engagement & Satisfaction
Operational Excellence
Financial Strength (Stewardship)
Community and Economic Development
Technology and Innovation
Governance and Integrity

MEET MICHAEL, OUR NEW POWERLINE TREE TRIMMER

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is excited to welcome Michael Truesdell to the tree crew as a Powerline Tree Trimmer. Michael was born and raised in the area and is eager to take on a role that allows him to spend more time at home. His previous experience took him on the road, sometimes for weeks at a time. Mike brings a strong work ethic and the kind of grit that fits right in with our hardworking crews. Welcome to the cooperative! We look forward to working with you.

member news

RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC HEAT TAX EXEMPTION

Residential consumers using electricity as their primary heat source (50% or more) are exempt from sales tax for the billing months of November, December, January, February, March, and April.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative requires a signed certificate stating that your primary source of heat is electricity. The purpose is: 1) It notifies FMEC to remove the sales tax from your bill for the qualifying months. 2) Should FMEC be audited by the Department of Revenue, FMEC would utilize the exemption certificate signed by you as our authority to remove the sales tax. This is for the protection of the cooperative. If FMEC were audited and it was found that the consumer's bill was illegally exempted, it would be the responsibility of the individual consumer to pay any amount due, plus penalties.

If this tax exemption applies to you, please submit a completed certification form to FMEC. The certificate is available from our office or can be downloaded from our website: **www.fmec.coop**. The downloadable form can be found under the **SERVICES** tab, Forms, Downloadable Information, Exemption Forms.

If you have previously submitted a form, there's no need to submit a new form. However, if you are no longer exempt from sales tax, please contact our office.

Separately metered electric heat does not require the completion of this form. Your electric heat usage is already exempt under that agreement.

YOUR COOPERATIVE, YOUR VOICE: 2026 DIRECTOR ELECTION INFORMATION

Throughout our history at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), we have never strayed from our commitment to serve our member-owners. We do not take this responsibility lightly, and part of ensuring we continue to operate with our members' best interests in mind is through the governance of our board of directors. Directors elected from and by our cooperative membership provide the policy direction for FMEC.

2026 DIRECTOR ELECTION INFORMATION

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is governed by nine directors who are member-owners of the cooperative. #1977301. Elections are held in three different districts each year. Board members are elected by the membership and serve a three-year term. Directors meet monthly at the cooperative headquarters, typically on the last Tuesday of each month.

Nominations are now open for interested members in District 3, District 6, and District 9.

- **District 3:** Represents areas northwest of Austin, Sargeant, Brownsdale, Nicolville, and Dexter.
- **District 6:** Represents Hayward, Glenville, and areas west of Gordonsville.
- **District 9:** Represents the northern part of the city of Albert Lea.

If you are a member of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative who lives in one of the districts up for election and would like to run for the position of FMEC director, stay tuned for more details in the November issue of the County Lines Newsletter.

- Board members must attend monthly board meetings and other special meetings as they are called.
- They are responsible for the adoption of policies, to assure the democratic functioning of the cooperative in accordance with the Bylaws, and respect the confidentiality of information provided, among many other duties.

Any member meeting the Bylaw Qualifications who has a desire to become a director of the cooperative, may apply for an open board position. This includes minorities, women, and individuals with a disability.

Recordatorio: Cualquier miembro que cumpla con los requisitos de los reglamentos internos y que tenga interes en ser director/a de la cooperative puede aplicar para puestos vacantes en la mesa directiva. Esto inlcluye miembros de grupos que son minorias, mujeres, y personas con discapacidades.

UPCOMING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP

Did you know that Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative supports our area youth? 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 20, 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.

ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR

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.

LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP

Are you or someone you know interested in becoming a lineworker? We have two $1,000 scholarships that will be awarded to two applicants pursuing a post-secondary education in an electric lineworker program. #399702 The applicants must apply by March 1, 2026 to be considered for this opportunity.

Learn more about these opportunities by visiting our website at www.fmec.coop.

INDUSTRY LEADERS POINT TO NUCLEAR AS ANSWER TO CARBON FREE GOALS

In August, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's President and CEO, Jim Krueger, and several industry leaders convened for the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's Energy Issues Summit, an annual conference for the state's electric cooperative leaders.

Several speakers underscored the importance of nuclear power as a reliable energy source and a key factor in achieving carbon reduction goals for Minnesota and the nation.

Ryan Long, Executive Vice-President, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at Xcel Energy Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, which operates two nuclear plants in Minnesota, acknowledged the need for nuclear to meet carbon free goals.

"If you are very serious about carbon reduction, reliability, and resource adequacy, nuclear has to be part of the conversation," Long stated. "It is a dispatchable, carbon-free, base-load energy source that has been part of our system since the late 1960s. It works."

Robert Bryce, a journalist, author, and nationally recognized energy expert, agreed during his presentation.

"If you are serious about reducing CO2 emissions, you have to be serious about nuclear," he said. #1997000 Bryce questioned Minnesota's ability to reach carbon free goals by 2040, especially without nuclear resources.

Energy density is one of the major benefits of nuclear energy, according to some of the speakers. Bryce said nuclear uses 2,000 times less land than wind and 200 times less land than solar.

Paul Wilson, a professor of nuclear energy at the University of Wisconsin, also emphasized the energy density of nuclear power.

"One of the reasons nuclear energy is gaining attention," Wilson explained, "is its exceptional energy density. Resource consumption, land use — everything — is smaller for nuclear compared to most other energy technologies."

He explained that if all the energy consumed by an average American over their lifetime was provided by nuclear power, the resulting waste would fit into a soda can. Moreover, all spent nuclear fuel is solid, easily contained, carefully tracked, and has a decades long track record of being handled safely.

He presented findings from his research on deep decarbonization, stressing the need for firm, dispatchable, low-emission generation. His studies show the inefficiency of relying only on renewables and energy storage.

Ron Starner, from Site Selection magazine, discussed the growing electric demand required by data centers. U.S. electric demand from data centers will double over the next five years and is expected to reach 35 gigawatts by 2030.

Tony Clark, executive director of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, provided a regulatory perspective and also highlighted the need for more reliable power. He cited four major trends in the utility industry: rapid demand growth, large-scale retirements of dispatchable generation, carbon constrained policy environment, and no easy near-term carbon free capacity replacement.

These speakers, along with others, provided a highly educational and inspirational conference for Minnesota's electric cooperative leaders.

"It's always beneficial to hear the viewpoints and perspectives of experts in the energy industry and how we might take their knowledge and apply it to our home cooperative," said Jim Krueger.

OCTOBER IS CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

With the holiday season fast approaching, it's more important than ever to stay vigilant against gift card scams.

Scammers often exploit this time of year by impersonating government officials or representatives from well-known companies, pressuring individuals to resolve fake debts or legal issues by paying with gift cards. These imposter scams are designed to create panic and urgency, leading victims to act quickly without verifying the legitimacy of the request.

Another growing threat involves tampered gift cards. This is where criminals scratch off PINs on store shelves and wait for unsuspecting buyers to activate them, allowing the scammers to drain the funds remotely. #1977301 Online scams are also rampant, with fake sellers on platforms like Facebook Marketplace asking for gift card payments for items that never arrive.

To protect yourself, remember these key tips:

- Inspect physical cards for signs of tampering before purchase.
- Only buy gift cards from official retailer websites or trusted vendors.
- Be cautious of unsolicited messages offering free or discounted gift cards—they're almost always scams.
- Always remember that if it seems suspicious, reduce the speed of your clicking and thoroughly investigate any activity or request that appears abnormal. Staying informed and alert is your best defense this season.

WINTER LOAD MANAGEMENT REMINDERS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers members load management programs to help reduce electricity consumption during high-demand times, while energy market prices are elevated. These programs support our commitment to grid reliability, and serve to lower overall energy costs, promote sustainable energy use, and ensure dependable service for all members.

Residential electric water heaters and auto-start generators enrolled in load management will be controlled in the following situations:

- During a Maximum Generation Event, a minimum of four times per year (once each season) to a maximum of 16 times per year. A Max Gen Event can be declared at any time of the year.
- When electricity prices increase in the MISO market, or when local conditions may impact reliability of the FMEC system, we take proactive steps to ensure continued service and stability for our members.

Additionally, winter load control events will be split into morning and evening events during December through February. During times of highest demand for electricity, enrolled interruptible heat (dual fuel) loads will be managed in the mornings, beginning at 6:55 a.m., with restoral starting at 10:00 a.m. Enrolled dairy water heaters, grain dryers, and manual stand-by generators are on the traditional winter schedule of control beginning at 4:55 p.m., with all loads restored by 8:30 p.m.

If you're a member and want to learn more or enroll, you can contact FMEC's Energy Solutions Department at (507) 373-6421

COUNTY LINES NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

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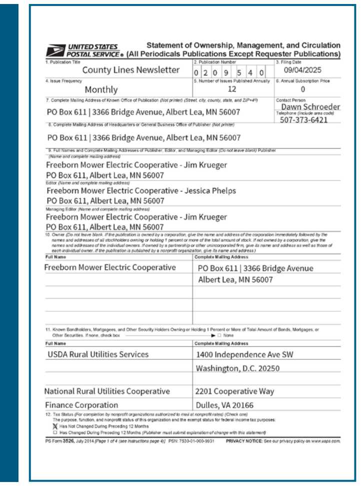

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

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   - Managing Editor: Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative - Jim Krueger, PO Box 611, Albert Lea, MN 56007
10. Owner

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative	PO Box 611 | 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, MN 56007

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities.

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
USDA Rural Utilities Services	1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, D.C. 20250
National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation	2201 Cooperative Way, Dulles, VA 20166

12. Tax Status: X Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months

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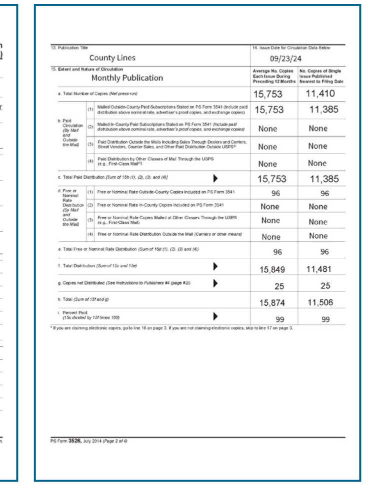

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c. Total Paid Distribution	15,753	11,385
d. (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	96	96
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e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	96	96
f. Total Distribution	15,849	11,481
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h. Total	15,874	11,506
i. Percent Paid	99	99

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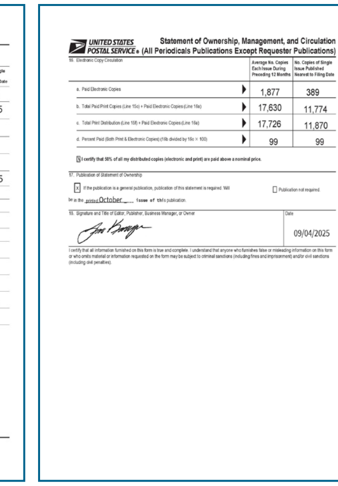

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c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	17,726	11,870
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X I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

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18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner — Date: 09/04/2025

CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

1999 S10 4x4 BLAZER. PS, AT, air, loaded, 4.3. $2,000. Call (507) 318-8158.

1955 DODGE CUSTOM ROYAL LANCER. $17,000. Call (507) 391-0461.

GO-KART WITH BRIGGS & STRATTON ENGINE. $350. Call (507) 373-0263.

2013 FORD F-150 PICKUP CLUB CAB. 1 owner, 239,653 miles. $3,000, OBO. Call (507) 269-8992.

FARM:

HYDRAULIC LIVESTOCK TRAILER. 6'x14'x 44" sides. Lowers to the ground. $1,000. Call (507) 438-6742.

HOUSEHOLD:

3-PIECE CORNINGWARE BOWLS. With mushroom motif. Call (507) 383-8806.

ANTIQUE SINGER SEWING MACHINE PLUS CHAIR. It needs very little work on it. You haul. $100. Call (507) 415-4431.

MISCELLANEOUS:

2-12' WILDERNESS SYSTEMS TARPON KAYAKS. 2 paddles, 2 lifejackets. $750 for all. Call (507) 318-9317.

MEN'S BLACK JUSTIN ROPER WESTERN BOOTS. 10D, (virtually new $125). $100, OBO. Call (507) 754-5103.

LADIES' BLACK CALVIN KLEIN FORMAL DRESS. Size 12, sleeveless, lined, knee length. Perfect condition. $20. Call (507) 460-8168.

LARGE PET PORTER. Durable plastic shell with metal mesh door. Call (507) 373-3633.

4 CONTINENTAL TIRES 265/45R21. Off Chevy Blazer. 20,000 miles. Call (507) 373-9037.

AVIA WOMEN'S RUNNING SHOES. Brand new. Size 9.5, worn once. $25. Call (507) 377-3299.

X-LARGE HEAVY DUTY BLACK INSULATED CARHARTT COVERALLS. Like new. Call (507) 279-1856.

HIGHLAND BEEF. Homegrown, locally in Glenville. Harvest dates in December. Call or text (507) 402-1462.

PETS/ANIMALS:

RAGDOLL SIAMESE SEAL POINT FEMALE KITTEN. 7 months old. $150 to a responsible person. Call (507) 273-2141.

WANTED

OLD CROCKS & CROCK BOWLS. Call (507) 402-0880.

USED STUMP GRINDER. Call (507) 438-1132.

JD #35 STEEL/OR RUBBER HAY CONDITIONER FOR JD 2320 SWATHER – 59" ROLLS. Call (507) 440-9095.

FREE

3-MONTH-OLD KITTENS. Friendly, playful, outdoor kittens. Mom is a good "mouser". Leave message. Call (507) 582-7746.

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 Daniel Blandard for spotting their account number in the September 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 | 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.

COLD WEATHER RULE IN EFFECT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members who may have difficulty paying their winter energy bills are reminded the Cold Weather Rule is in effect from October 1 through April 30.

If you are unable to pay your electric bill by the due date, you must contact our office to arrange a payment plan. Your service may be discontinued, even during the winter months if you fail to respond to the disconnect notice.

LET'S COOK

TROPICAL CHICKEN SALAD

Submitted By: Kathy Wilker

- 3 C. cubed cooked chicken
- 1 C. chopped celery
- ½ C. chopped onion
- 1 C. diced pineapple
- 1 C. orange sections
- 1 C. small English walnut pieces.
- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice
- 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 Tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. white pepper, optional
- 1 C. mayonnaise

Directions:
Combine all ingredients, mix well, and refrigerate. Keep chilled.

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.*