



LOOK UP AND STAY ALIVE: A HARVEST SEASON SAFETY REMINDER

Every day, we are faced with hundreds—if not thousands—of decisions that impact our lives. But what if just one decision to put safety first could save your life or the life of someone you care about?

Harvest season is here, bringing long hours and fast-paced work as farmers and farm helpers strive to bring in crops efficiently, often while racing against time and unpredictable weather. But no matter how quickly the work needs to be done, it should never come at the cost of safety.

Farming presents many challenges and hidden dangers. In some cases, one wrong move or a simple failure to look up can result in a serious injury—or even a fatal accident. #1910400 Large farm equipment, low-hanging overhead power lines, and unstable terrain are just a few of the hazards that can turn a normal day in the field into a tragic one.

That's why it's critical for everyone involved in farming operations to know their surroundings and be aware of the risks that exist on their land. A few extra seconds to assess the

situation and look up before operating equipment or moving large machinery could mean the difference between a safe harvest and a life-threatening emergency.

Safety is a shared responsibility. Encouraging communication among team members, watching out for one another, and reporting unsafe conditions can make all the difference. When safety becomes a collective priority, everyone benefits—families, farms, and communities alike.

***One quick glance could save a life.
Before moving equipment, look
up, know your surroundings, and
stay alert. No harvest is worth a
preventable tragedy.***

ceo message
Jim Krueger, President & CEO



PUTTING FINANCIAL
INTEGRITY TO WORK FOR YOU

Financial integrity is important to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, and we know and understand that it is also important to our members. We actively work to navigate the complex and changing energy markets and strive to position the cooperative to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining our commitment to fiscal integrity in how we operate the cooperative, and distribute costs to members.

By maintaining strong financial management practices, we can reinvest in infrastructure, improve services, and offer programs that benefit our members. #289001 We continuously focus on cost-effective strategies to balance the cooperative’s operational expenses with the fluctuating demands and challenges in the energy sector.

Each year, the cooperative conducts a detailed study of its financials so that we can see how our cooperative stacks up against our industry peers. We carefully analyze the data collected, and use it as a powerful benchmarking tool to

help us understand how our rates compare to similarly sized cooperatives in our area and to other cooperatives in our state.

Data collected from 2020 to 2024 on our electric revenue per kilowatt hour sold, tells a story that we continue to be proud of. We are now the second largest of 24 Dairyland Power Cooperative members, and our revenue per kilowatt hour sold continues to be consistently lower than the average of our peers at approximately 12 cents. The driver of this number is largely related to our total controllable expenses per kilowatt hour sold.

To put it plainly, we can conduct our operations at a lower expense than our peers. This is good news for our members as we continue to prioritize identifying operational efficiencies while strategically managing costs that are within our control.

-Jim Krueger

A special thank you to our employees who worked extra hours during the recent storms that impacted our service area. Your service and dedication are appreciated!



MEET ERIN,
OUR NEW MAPPING
INFORMATION
SPECIALIST

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative welcomes Erin Holtorf to the team as a Mapping Information Specialist. Erin joins us with a wealth of knowledge from her previous experience and is looking forward to growing in her understanding of the utility industry. She resides in Austin with her husband of 15 years, and two daughters. Welcome to the cooperative, Erin! We are glad to have you here!

member news

JOIN US AT ALBERT LEA’S
SAFETY DAY

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.

SAVE THE DATES

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative’s Youth Scholarship Night will be held Monday, November 10, 2025, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. More information to come.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative’s 89th Annual Meeting will be held Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

REBATE OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative offers a wide variety of energy efficiency rebates. Details can be found at www.fmec.coop. Rebate applications must be submitted within three months of the equipment or appliance purchase/installation.

PLUG INTO SAFETY
THIS SCHOOL YEAR



As students prepare for the new school year, it’s important to remember safety, especially when it comes to electrical devices and equipment. Inspecting electrical cords for fraying or damage can help prevent electrical shocks or fires.

College students should pay close attention to overloading outlets, especially in dorm rooms where outlets may be limited or shared. Overloading #2064201 outlets can lead to overheating and pose a potential risk of fire.

Cellphones or iPads can also pose a serious fire risk when they get too hot. It’s important to always plug in and set your cell phone or iPad on a hard surface and remember to never sleep with a device in your bed. This causes overheating and poses a risk of a fire.

It’s also important to keep beverages away from laptops, Chromebooks, or tablets. Spills can cause electrical short circuits and damage your devices. If possible, secure your beverage in a container that has a locking lid.

Students that are riding a bus should always remember to stay a safe distance away from power lines and electrical equipment such as green pad-mount transformers while waiting at the bus stop. Climbing trees near powerlines is dangerous and poses a serious risk of electric shock or electrocution.

Lastly, it’s important to familiarize students of all ages with the school’s emergency procedures for electrical incidents, including knowing where the nearest fire extinguisher is and how to safely evacuate the building. By following these electrical safety tips, students can enjoy a safe and productive school year.

HARVEST SAVINGS THIS FALL: SIMPLE WAYS TO SAVE ON ENERGY

As the crisp Minnesota air rolls in and leaves begin to turn, it's a smart time to make sure your home is ready for cooler weather. Fall offers the perfect opportunity to reduce energy use, lower your monthly bills, and stay comfortable all with just a few intentional changes. Not sure where to start? Here are three simple, high-impact tips to help you save energy this season.

One simple, yet effective method is to take advantage of the sun's natural heat. By opening shades and allowing sunlight to stream into your home, you can warm your living space without relying on artificial heating. Beyond the energy savings, natural light offers emotional benefits as well—exposure to sunlight triggers a chemical reaction in the brain that can boost mood and reduce stress. It's a winning combination: a warmer home and a brighter mindset, all from the simple act of letting the light in.

Being mindful of your thermostat settings and turning the temperature down while asleep or away from home can significantly reduce your energy bills. #289001 A programmable thermostat helps eliminate the hassle of making manual adjustments and makes it easier to align temperature settings with your daily routine, minimizing energy waste and saving money.

Heating systems are often overlooked when it comes to home maintenance, yet they are a critical component of any home. Without regular inspections by a licensed professional, these systems can operate inefficiently and lead to higher energy costs. Fortunately, minor fixes or adjustments made during routine check-ups can serve as effective preventative measures, helping to avoid more expensive repairs down the line.

For additional tips on energy savings, visit www.energy.gov

EASY ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR THE FALL



SEAL AIR LEAKS

Use weatherstripping or caulk around doors, windows, and baseboards to stop cold drafts.



SCHEDULE A FURNACE TUNE-UP

Make sure your heating system is working efficiently before the cold hits.



SWITCH CEILING FAN DIRECTION

Set fans to spin clockwise at low speed to circulate warm air down.



USE LED LIGHTING

As the days get shorter switch to LEDs for energy-efficient lighting inside and out.



REPLACE OR CLEAN FILTERS

Dirty filters make your HVAC system work harder. Check them monthly.



LET THE SUN IN

Open window treatments on south-facing windows during the day for natural heat, then close them at night to keep it in.



INSULATE EXPOSED PIPES AND DUCTWORK

Prevent heat loss and protect against freezing.

NOTICE OF COLD WEATHER RULE

Minnesota Statue 216B.097 regulates the disconnection of residential accounts during the heating season. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is prohibited from disconnecting the utility service of a residential member during the period between October 1 and April 30 **if** the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all** the following conditions are met:

1. You declare the inability to pay by completing the Inability to Pay Form. Household income must include proof of one-month gross total household income or be verified on a form provided either by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative or by a local energy assistance provider.
2. Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income and/or you are a recipient of energy assistance for this heating season.
3. You must have entered into a payment agreement and remain current under that agreement.

PLAN AHEAD FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE

When can I apply?

The Energy Assistance Program runs from October 1 through May each year. You can apply once per heating season.

Where do I get an application?

Visit www.semccac.org, call (800) 944-3281, or stop by your local Semccac office. Need help completing it? Call to schedule an appointment.

What do I need to submit?

Follow the instructions included with the application to provide income and benefit verification.

Where do I send my application?

Mail: Semccac, PO Box 549, Rushford, MN 55971
Email: eap@semccac.org
Fax: (507) 864-2597

How long does it take?

Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. You'll receive confirmation when your application is received. Most are processed in 30–60 days. Incomplete applications will delay the process.

Do I have to wait for a disconnect notice to apply?

No. Apply early if you believe you're eligible, funds are limited.

What if I still need help?

If you've received a Primary Energy Grant, you may qualify for Crisis funds. Call SEMCAC if you're facing disconnection.

NEED HELP PAYING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL? CONTACT AN ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDER

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. To learn more about EAP or to apply for assistance, contact the agency that serves your area.

EAP RESOURCES:

SEMCCAC

(507) 864-7515 | (800) 944-3281 | www.semccac.org

Minnesota Valley Action Council

(507) 345-6822 | (800) 767-7139

North Iowa Community Action

(641) 423-9028 | (800) 873-1899

Three Rivers Community Action

(507) 316-0610 | (800) 277-8418





SOLAR STEPS FORWARD: WORKING TOWARDS A GREENER GRID

In February 2023, Minnesota enacted legislation focused on carbon-free energy, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change and create new clean energy jobs throughout the state. Since the adoption of this legislation, cooperatives have collaborated with state and local governments to establish a viable plan to achieve a carbon-free energy environment by 2040.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is actively working to understand the local implications of this legislation as we strive to embrace innovation and implement cleaner energy sources in our service area. As part of this initiative, we are working with industry partners to develop two new solar fields—one in Grand Meadow and the other in Albert Lea.

These solar fields are at different stages of development. The Albert Lea solar field is currently beginning the installation of solar panels and covers 40 acres, making it visible from I-90. The Grand Meadow solar field is in its early construction phase, with initial fencing nearing completion. #1910400 This field is located next to a Dairyland Power Cooperative substation on 210th Street.

These new power generation sources will allow the cooperative to realize nominal financial gains, which, over time, will positively impact our members. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative will be able to purchase power from the solar fields and sell it back to Dairyland Power Cooperative while making a small margin which will be used to offset purchased power costs. Though this seems like it doesn't make a significant impact, these small financial gains will, over time, positively impact rates passed on to our members.

As FMEC continues to pursue locally sourced sustainable energy generation opportunities, we are proud to introduce these new solar fields in our service territory. FMEC remains committed to achieving the state's clean energy goals in partnership with Dairyland Power Cooperative and will continue to pursue innovative ways to support a cleaner environment.



Bancroft solar field in Albert Lea, July 14, 2025.



Early solar panel installation at Bancroft solar field, Albert Lea, August 5, 2025.



COMMUNITY GIVING IN ACTION: Operation Round Up® Awards Over \$28,000

In the third quarter, the Freeborn Mower Operation Round Up® program generously donated \$28,175 to 42 local organizations, supporting our local communities. #2064201 The volunteer board of trustees directed funds toward various causes, such as:

- Educational institutions
- Emergency services
- Freeborn and Mower County Fairs

This collective generosity significantly impacts the areas we serve, helping to enhance our communities. Many of the programs supported wouldn't be able to complete their projects without the support of Operation Round Up®.

Upcoming Application Deadline:

- The next application deadline is September 15, with approved funding to be distributed in late October.
- To apply visit: www.fmec.coop/operation-round

CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

1997 HD CUSTOM HERITAGE SOFTAIL. Low miles, excellent condition. \$6,500 OBO. Call (507) 320-2330. Leave msg.

HOUSEHOLD:

GLAZED FLOOR TILE 16" X 16" 5/16. Home Depot. #34 color shade. 11 pieces per box. \$25 per box. Call (507) 391-4299.

LEATHER RECLINING LIFT CHAIR.

Shows some wear, but works fine. \$200. Call (507) 351-3654.

NEW PAMPERED CHEF 8" FRY PAN, SILICONE SPATULA, AVOCADO TOOL. \$85 for all or OBO. Call (507) 373-0093.

GENERAL ELECTRIC UPRIGHT FROST-FREE FREEZER. 6' H x 3' W. Good working condition. \$500 OBO. Call (507) 383-1120.

SHARK FREESTYLE CORDLESS VACUUM SV1100 SERIES.

With owner's manual. Never used. \$55. Call (507) 383-2258.

FARM:

GLENER R60 COMBINE 6 ROW30 HEAD 2846/4314 HOURS. Call (507) 373-0195 or (507) 391-2191.

MISCELLANEOUS:

ELECTRIC HEALTH GEAR EXERCISE BIKE MODEL UB500. Programmable with pulse monitoring system. Has instructional booklet. \$100. Call (507) 377-3140.

DOG SUPPLIES. Medium bed, Sm. & Lg. kennels, pet stroller, steps, and XL male dog diapers. Call (507) 606-5415.

CRAFTSMAN RADIAL ARM SAW AND BANDSAW. Bandsaw w/stand, \$80. Radial arm w/stand on rollers \$120. Call (507) 330-1889.

6350 AMP GENERAC GENERATOR ON TRAILER. Call (507) 219-8068 or (507) 219-9555.

LARGE HEAVY DUTY METAL WHEELBARROW. \$30. Call (507) 433-2712.

1941 FRANKLIN MINT FARMALL MODEL H TRACTOR. With authentic operating features. \$50. Call (507) 373-1575.

PETS/ANIMALS:

FREE LAYING HEN & ROOSTER. One year old. Call (507) 383-8395.

FREE MUSCOVY DUCKS & BARN CATS. Call before 6:00 p.m. (507) 318-6279.

WANTED

6" OR 8" CAB KING OR COMPARABLE LAPIDARY ROCK GRINDING EQUIPMENT. Call (507) 318-9223.

PRE-1970 MAGAZINES & POSTCARDS. Call (507) 402-0880.

THE BOOK MARTIN LUTHER. By Harry Fosdick. Landmark Series C1956. Call (507) 391-2826.

USED GAS GOLF CART. Call (507) 373-0263.

USED CLEAN STAINLESS STEEL ELECTRIC RANGE. Coil top w/self-clean oven. Call (507) 377-2757.

FREE

HOME GYM EQUIPMENT. Magnum 369 weight bench, Nordic Track aerobic cross-trainer. Good condition. Call (507) 438-9289.

KIMBALL PIANO & BENCH. Good condition. Text or call and leave message. Call (507) 279-2845.

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.

FINANCE CLOSED FOR SYSTEM MAINTENANCE **CLOSED FOR SYSTEM MAINTENANCE** **CLOSED FOR SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**



The Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative office will close at 11 a.m. on September 10, 2025, for a business system upgrade.

Payment options for online, by phone, and kiosk **will not** be available during this time.
(A maintenance message will display if a payment attempt is made.)

We thank you for your patience as we install these updates in our system.



LET'S COOK



MOUNTAIN DEW SALAD

Submitted By:
Beverly Schroeder

- 1 Lg. box lemon Jello
- 2 C. boiling water
- 1 Can Mountain Dew soda
- 1 - 20 oz. can of pineapple tidbits (drained)
- 1 Pkg. miniature marshmallows
- 1 Can of lemon pie filling
- 8 Oz. Cool Whip

Directions:

Mix Jello, water, pop, and pineapple. Let set until firm. Add the rest of the ingredients. Makes a large bowl.

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.