



ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: MEMBERS, UPDATES, AND COOPERATIVE BUSINESS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) members gathered on April 21 at Albert Lea High School for FMEC's 89th Annual Meeting. We appreciate everyone who attended, connected with cooperative leaders, and took part in the democratic process that helps guide our member-owned cooperative.

Jack Korman, Board Chair, opened the meeting and announced the results of the director elections, with members re-electing Steve Garbisch to represent District 3, Matt Maras to represent District 6, and Larry Irvine to represent District 9. We thank all candidates and members who participated in this important part of cooperative governance.

This year's guest speaker was Jason Herbert, Vice President of External Affairs at Dairyland Power Cooperative. #1726203 Herbert shared insight into key challenges facing the electric industry, opportunities ahead for electric cooperatives, Dairyland's generation and resource portfolio, new and upcoming projects, and long-range transmission planning.

FMEC President and CEO, Jim Krueger, also addressed members with updates on reliability, affordability, power supply, and future planning. He discussed how Winter Storm Fern exposed vulnerabilities in the U.S. power grid, bringing unprecedented cold and snow and showing how extreme weather can impact electricity delivery and power supply costs.

Krueger also reviewed Dairyland's projected 2036 generation mix, which shows increased use of renewable energy resources as part of a balanced and evolving power supply portfolio.

FMEC ended the year in a strong financial position, with revenue totaling \$60 million and expenses of \$55 million, generating net margins of approximately \$5 million. As a member-owned cooperative, positive margins help support long-term financial stability and make it possible to return money to members through capital credit retirements.

Thank you to all members who attended this year's Annual Meeting. Your participation and engagement help keep FMEC strong, community-focused, and dedicated to serving the members and communities we call home.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE OF RELIABLE SERVICE

This year's Annual Meeting highlighted Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's 2025 performance as well as the amazing work that was accomplished by our collective efforts to better the communities we serve. The theme for the Annual Meeting was "The Power of Us" and was centered around the simple idea that what we can do together is much more than what we can accomplish alone.

We welcomed Dairyland Power Cooperative's Jeremy Herbert, Vice President of External Affairs, who spent much of his time sharing about the advocacy efforts in Washington D.C., specifically regarding New Era grants that will significantly impact the future generation portfolio with many renewable projects underway.

On another important note, I shared the results of the rate study recently finalized by FMEC. #1425600 This study, conducted by an independent third-party firm who specializes in utility rates, confirmed that our current rate structure is not sufficient to generate the revenue needed for the cooperative to operate efficiently.

Therefore, members will see a rate adjustment beginning with their October billing statement. Details regarding each rate component change will be included in the July billing statement.

We have worked diligently to carefully evaluate several

different proposals to ensure we remain aligned with the financial goals of the cooperative. The reality is that when it comes to rate adjustments, it is a very complex issue, and there are no "perfect" proposals. However, we remain steadfast and focused on our mission of providing safe and reliable service to our members.

Every investment we make in the distribution system comes with a cost, and those costs continue to be impacted by inflationary pressures on materials, labor, and equipment. These factors, combined with the need to maintain and improve our infrastructure, make periodic adjustments necessary to ensure long-term operational stability.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their continued leadership and advocacy on behalf of our members. Their thoughtful oversight throughout this process, helps ensure that FMEC operates with fiscal responsibility as a top priority.

Sincerely,
Jim Krueger

member news

OFFICE CLOSED

Our office will be closed on Friday, July 3, 2026 in observance of Independence Day.

COMING SOON: A NEW FMEC WEBSITE

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is working on a new website designed to better serve our members and make information easier to find.

As we prepare for the launch, you may begin to notice a few updates or changes online. #1425600 We appreciate your patience during this transition and look forward to sharing the new website with you soon.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICE STATEMENT

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) will always strive to furnish continuous service yet acknowledges that interruptions are possible for a variety of reasons. By accepting service, the member agrees to hold the cooperative harmless from any losses or damage to life or property resulting from power interruptions caused by circumstances beyond the cooperative's control, and/or failure on the members' part to have their premises wired according to the National Electric Code and the State of Minnesota Wiring Regulations. The member has the sole responsibility for any wiring done, and the maintenance of said wiring, beyond the metering point. The cooperative shall not be responsible for voltage reduction brought on by its wholesale power supplier. Refer to our website or contact the office if you want to view Policy 4.001 — Continuity of Service.

HELP US WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES



MELISSA PALMA HERNANDEZ

Melissa Palma Hernandez (front left) joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on April 20 as a Member Support Specialist. Melissa looks forward to getting to know her new coworkers and developing new skills while supporting our members. One of her most memorable adventures was hiking the Narrows and Scout Lookout during a vacation in Zion National Park.

WYATT KRIESEL

Wyatt Kriesel (back left) joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on April 13 as a Powerline Tree Trimmer. Wyatt is excited to meet new people, work in an area he is familiar with, and continue building new skills in his role. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time at the cabin. One of Wyatt's most adventurous experiences was taking a fishing trip to Alaska.

JENNA SCHMIDT

Jenna Schmidt (front right) joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on April 7 as our Communications & Marketing Specialist. She is excited to work with our team and is looking forward to serving our members and the community. Jenna enjoys spending time with her family and puppy, Melvin. Her dream vacation is a road trip from Yellowstone to Grand Teton National Park.

BLAKE SONNEK

Blake Sonnek (back right) joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on April 6 as a Powerline Tree Trimmer. He is looking forward to growing and learning more about the powerline trade and industry. In his free time, Blake enjoys playing golf and lifting weights. His dream vacation would be to travel to Hawaii and play golf. His most adventurous experiences so far include parasailing and taking a helicopter ride in Florida.

Welcome to our cooperative, Melissa, Wyatt, Jenna, and Blake.



ANNUAL MEETING PHOTOS



POWER OUTAGE PREP FOR SUMMER STORMS

Summer brings sunshine, longer days, and time outdoors, but it can also bring strong thunderstorms, high winds, lightning, and heavy rain. When severe weather moves through, power outages can happen quickly.

At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we work year-round to maintain and strengthen the electric system. Even with ongoing maintenance, tree trimming, equipment upgrades, and storm preparation, outages can still occur when severe weather damages power lines, poles, and equipment.

That's why it is important to have a plan before the storm clouds roll in.

PREPARE AN OUTAGE KIT

Keep a basic emergency kit in an easy-to-find location. Include:

- Flashlights and extra batteries.
- A battery-powered or hand-crank radio.
- Bottled water and nonperishable food.
- Phone chargers or portable battery packs.
- Necessary medications.
- Basic first-aid supplies.
- Supplies for infants, pets, or family members with special medical needs.

KNOW HOW TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

If your power goes out, report the outage to FMEC as soon as it is safe to do so. Avoid assuming a neighbor has already called it in. Reporting your outage helps our crews identify the location and size of the outage and begin restoration work as quickly and safely as possible.

STAY SAFE AROUND DOWNED LINES

Never approach a downed power line. Always assume it is energized, even if it is not sparking or making noise. Keep people, pets, vehicles, and equipment far away, and report the situation immediately.

USE GENERATORS SAFELY

If you use a generator, always operate it outdoors and away from windows, doors, and vents. Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless a properly installed transfer switch is in place. This protects your home and helps keep lineworkers safe as they restore power.

AFTER THE STORM

Once the storm has passed, give crews room to work. Restoration can take time, especially when damage is widespread. FMEC crews work as efficiently as possible, but safety always comes first.

A little preparation now can make a big difference later. Before summer storm season is in full swing, take a few minutes to review your family's outage plan and make sure you are ready.

REPORT YOUR POWER OUTAGE

Power outages and emergencies may be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please be prepared to provide your name, account number, service address, phone number, and the cause of the outage if known.



PHONE
(800) 734-6421



ONLINE
Log into your
SmartHub account.

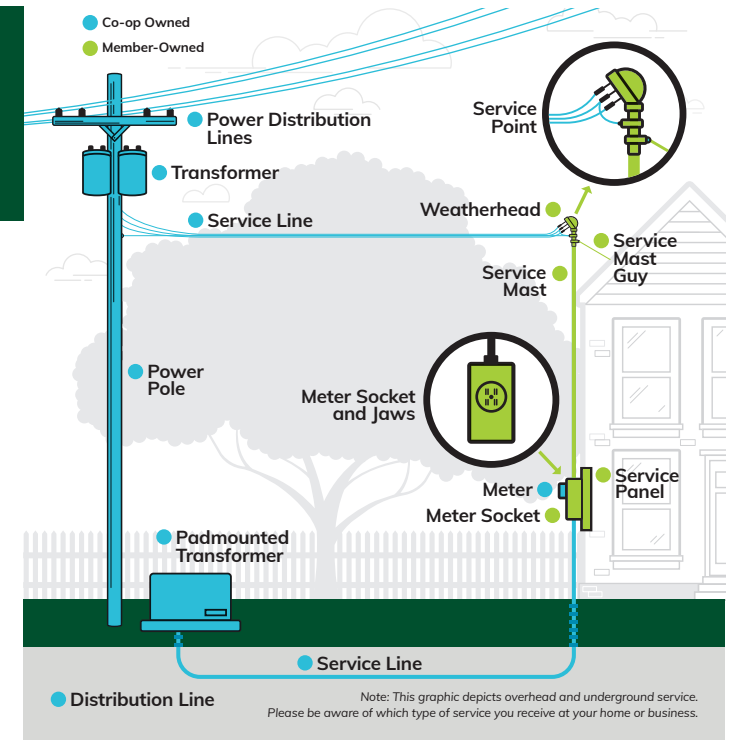


MOBILE APP
Download the
SmartHub app.

WHO OWNS WHAT Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

With so many different pieces of equipment that make up the electrical system, it can be confusing when it comes to who owns what equipment at your residence or business.

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in light blue) and the member (in lime green). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. #1980504 If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



SMALL SHIFTS, BIG SUMMER IMPACT

Do The SUMMER SHIFT



When temperatures climb, so does the demand for electricity. Air conditioners run longer, refrigerators work harder, and everyday activities like cooking, laundry, and dishes often happen during the hottest parts of the day.

For Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), summer peak demand typically occurs on weekdays between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., especially on extremely hot days.

That matters because FMEC's wholesale power costs are directly tied to the highest level of electric demand during peak times. When members reduce or shift electric use during these hours, it can help lower the demand-related portion of the cooperative's wholesale power bill and support more stable retail rates over time.

HOW TO DO THE SUMMER SHIFT

When possible, move high-energy activities to early morning or later evening hours. Try to:

- Run the dishwasher before bed.
- Do laundry later in the evening.

- Charge electric vehicles outside of peak hours.
- Grill outside or use smaller appliances, like an air fryer or slow cooker.
- Avoid using the oven during the warmest part of the day.

SMALL COMFORT CHANGES HELP, TOO

You can also reduce strain on your cooling system by:

- Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher during peak hours.
- Using ceiling fans to feel cooler.
- Closing blinds or curtains to block direct sunlight.
- Spacing out high-energy tasks instead of running everything at once.

On their own, these actions may seem small. But when many FMEC members make small shifts at the same time, the impact adds up.

Together, we can reduce peak demand, ease pressure on the electric grid, and help hold down wholesale power costs.

**OPERATION ROUND UP®
DISTRIBUTES MORE
THAN \$32,000 TO
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The Operation Round Up® program distributed \$32,473.40 to local nonprofit and charitable organizations on April 15, 2026.

Operation Round Up® is a nonprofit, opt-out giving program made possible by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members who round up their monthly electric bills. For just pennies a month, participating members help raise thousands of dollars each year to support the communities we serve.

The program is managed by a five-member board of trustees made up of cooperative members from across FMEC's service territory. The board meets quarterly to review applications and distribute funds to charitable, educational, and nonprofit organizations serving Freeborn and Mower counties.

Giving back to the communities we serve is one of our core cooperative principles, and Operation Round Up® is one meaningful way FMEC members continue to make a local impact. #1980504 Since the program began in 2003, Operation Round Up® has distributed \$1,399,268 to organizations throughout the area.

For more information or to apply, visit www.fmec.coop.

The next application deadline is June 15.



Summer in Minnesota can bring a little bit of everything, sunshine, humidity, backyard projects, ball games, lake days, and those extra-warm afternoons when the air conditioner becomes everyone's favorite appliance.

Before the heat really settles in, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is here to help members get their cooling systems ready for the season with available energy efficiency rebates.

Members can receive a \$25 rebate as a credit on their electric bill for a qualified central air conditioner or air-source heat pump tune-up. #1726203 Think of it as a summer checkup for your cooling system. A tune-up can help your system run more efficiently by checking things like refrigerant levels, airflow, controls, filters, and overall performance.

If your cooling system is ready for a bigger upgrade, FMEC also offers rebates for qualifying air-source heat pumps and mini-split systems. Eligible systems can receive a \$300 per ton rebate when they meet the required efficiency ratings. Air-source heat pumps can help keep your home cool all summer long and provide efficient heating support when cooler weather returns.

Rebates are available through December 31, 2026, or until funds are depleted, and required documentation must be submitted no later than three months after the purchase or improvement is completed.

So before the ice cream starts melting, the fans start working overtime, and everyone begins arguing over the thermostat, take a few minutes to check out FMEC's cooling rebates.

For rebate forms, eligibility details, or more information, visit www.fmec.coop.



Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's Safety Superstars Program is a free, hands-on electric safety presentation available to schools and community organizations in our service area.

Designed especially for 3rd–5th grade students, the program teaches kids how electricity works, how to use energy wisely, and how to stay safe around power lines, transformers, downed wires, and other electrical equipment. Students experience live demonstrations, real-world safety scenarios, interactive Q&A, and a close-up look at the protective gear lineworkers use on the job.

Whether you are a teacher, youth leader, or community organizer, this program is a memorable way to bring important safety lessons to your classroom or group.

BRING THE SAFETY SUPERSTARS PROGRAM TO YOUR CLASSROOM OR ORGANIZATION

Help the kids in your community learn safety lessons that could one day save a life. FMEC offers this free, hands-on program to local schools and community groups throughout our service area.



Request your presentation today and let us help your students become Safety Superstars. Scan the QR code or visit www.fmec.coop/safety-demonstration.

CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:
2017 CLUB CAR 4-PASSENGER GOLF CART. LED lights. Excellent condition. \$5,250. OBO. Call (507) 438-1848.

FARM:
18 FT STOCK TRAILER. \$300. Call (507) 297-5624.

HOUSEHOLD:
CORNER CURIO CABINET. Mirror background, glass shelves. Call (507) 402-0519.

MISCELLANEOUS:
500 GALLON DIESEL TANK WITH ELECTRIC PUMP. Call (507) 383-0410.

LIKE NEW FOLDING ADJUSTABLE WALKER. 2-wheel/2-tennis balls. \$25. Call (507) 460-8017.

SET OF TWO COLORED BLOCKED STAINED GLASS WINDOWS. 27" X 27" – Clear glass center. Call (507) 402-8071 after 9 a.m.

WANTED

WOOD AND STEEL PLANES. Call (507) 402-0880.

USED GOLF CART. Gas-powered. Call (507) 567-2373.

FREE

MOORE-O-MATIC GARAGE DOOR OPENER. Worked well, needs a pulley. Bought from Total Glass. (507) 373-2816.

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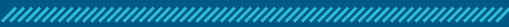
President: Jim Krueger, President & CEO
Telephone: (507) 373-6421

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.

STOP BY AND SEE FMEC AT WIND DOWN WEDNESDAY!

FMEC will be at Wind Down Wednesday on June 10 from 3-8 p.m., and we'd love to visit with you.

Stop by our booth to meet members of the FMEC team, ask questions, and learn more about the work we do to keep our local communities powered. As your member-owned electric cooperative, we're always looking for better ways to serve you and be a trusted resource for energy-related information.



LET'S COOK



GUACAMOLE

Submitted By:
Karen Olson

- 2 avocados, smashed
- ½ bunch cilantro
- 2 Roma tomatoes, seeded
- 1 jalapeno pepper (or red pepper flakes)
- 2 green onions, or 1 sliced red onion

Directions:

Chop all together very small. Combine with 1 juiced lime, salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste. Adjust ingredients as you like. More salt for veggie dip, less for chip dip.

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.