



## Leadership Experience in D.C. — Co-op Style!

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) sponsored high school students Karley Guenther and Carrie Warmka to a premiere leadership event in Washington, D.C. in June. As participants in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, they toured historic sites, met with government leaders, and learned about the workings of government. The week-long event was organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA). FMEC employees Mary Thompson and Paul Raatz served as chaperones to the Minnesota student delegation.

“My experience in Washington D.C. was a life changing one. #2086001 Seeing the monuments, museums, documents, and speaking with representatives of our state put the sacrifices and inner workings of our country into perspective,” said Carrie Warmka. “I also met some of the most wonderful people and had a ton of fun with them.”

Karley Guenther recalled the experience, “My time in D.C. exposed me to so many wonderful experiences that will impact me for a lifetime! From meeting new friends to visiting important museums, monuments, and other

historical sites, this trip has influenced what I want to do for a future career as I head into college, and how I can continue to see our country’s history!”

Gayle Karol, MREA chaperone and tour coordinator, posted the following to the Minnesota student delegation: “Thank you for an amazing week in D.C. last week! You can all be extremely proud of the way you conducted yourselves and how you represented Minnesota and your sponsoring co-ops. You are truly a fine group of bright young men and women. I could never have imagined a kinder, more respectful, fun group of young adults!”

“This is a trip of a lifetime. Every junior and senior should apply for this amazing all-expense paid experience,” explained Mary Thompson. Paul Raatz added, “Seeing the eyes of the youth delegates light up with every amazing monument, building, and place was so much fun to see. The best part of the trip was seeing the group of 36 youth bond so quickly with each other like they had known each other for years.”

[See more photos on page six.](#)

## ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



## RISING ENERGY COSTS

In today's economic climate, we are all concerned about rising costs. Here at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), we are no different. The cooperative faces upward pressure in the cost of utility supplies and equipment. We are impacted, just like you, with the cost to fuel our vehicle fleet. Let me assure you that we strive, in any way we can, to use our resources efficiently, be proactive, and to stay prepared to combat rising costs and supply chain issues. As a member-owned and not-for-profit cooperative, providing our members with great service remains our objective. We are proud to power your lives!

### Is Your Electric Bill Higher Than Expected?

FMEC uses Sensus® Advanced Metering infrastructure. Coupled with SmartHub, these technologies allow you to monitor and analyze your household electric use. If you are concerned about high electric usage, the first step is to have an awareness of your lifestyle and how you consume electricity.

Realize that your household is unique. Variables affecting electric use include the number of household residents, the size of the home, the type and number of appliances, the operating efficiency of appliances, your HVAC system, water heater, outbuildings, hot tubs, and so forth. Heating and cooling costs can fluctuate with weather conditions. Even hosting guests and increased cooking may impact your electric bill.

It is difficult to say how much electricity an average household will consume. However, FMEC data indicates that on average, those that became FMEC members through the acquisition of Alliant service territory several years ago use 717 kWh per month. These accounts are primarily in a city with access to municipal water and sewer.

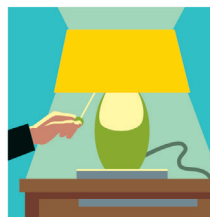
The average legacy member (those located in the cooperative's original service area) will use 1216 kWh

per month. These members include farmsteads and have private wells, which accounts for the consumption difference with city dwellings.

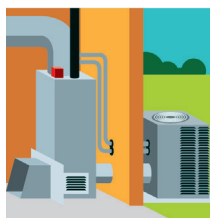
The total average for both groups of members is 896 kWh per month.

The comparative data for your account kWh usage, as found on SmartHub, is a great resource to understanding your electric consumption. Also, we have some comprehensive resources available on our website, [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop). Look under the Services tab. I'm sure you'll find the information contained in the Use Energy Wisely Guide and the Home Energy Savings Guide to be extremely valuable. #1426900 Take a little time to work through these guides. Then, if you still have questions about electrical use and costs, our staff will be happy to help provide answers.

## BUDGET FRIENDLY EFFICIENCY TIPS



**Lighting:** LED Bulbs save 60 percent or more energy than incandescent bulbs and can now be purchased at box retailers for \$1 or less.



**Heating and Cooling:** Replace air filters every one to three months and seal/insulate ductwork to maximize the efficiency of your home's heating and cooling system.



**Appliances and Electronics:** Keep appliances and electronics free from lint and dust, and use a power strip to turn off electronics when not in use, avoiding "energy vampires."

## member news

### OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

Our office will be closed on Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup> for Labor Day. In case of emergency or power outage, calls to our regular phone number will be routed to our after-hours call center.

### SEPTEMBER 1ST — DEADLINE FOR PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

Have you taken an outstanding scenic photo of southern Minnesota?

We are asking for photos taken by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members to build our photo inventory for a 2023 calendar. We would like photos that depict the four seasons of the year in southern Minnesota.

#### RULES FOR SUBMITTING PHOTOS:

- The number of photos submitted per member is limited to two (2).
- Members submitting a photo must possess the rights to the photo, in other words, it must be an original photograph taken by the member submitting it.
- You must be 18 years of age to submit a photo.
- No photos of people will be accepted.
- Submissions should be made electronically as a JPG file.
- Submissions must include the following: Name of the Member/Photographer; account number; address; phone number; email address; and a brief description of the photo.
- Digital files should be at least 300 dpi at a size of 12" x 9" or larger, in a horizontal view.
- Photos will be accepted until September 1st, 2022.

Submit photos at [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop) or by email to: [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](mailto:michelle.rayman@fmec.coop)

## Bill Payment, Usage Monitoring, and Account Management with SmartHub



*It's easy and convenient to use the free SmartHub account portal on your computer or mobile device.*

SmartHub allows you to view your kWh usage and billing, manage payments, notify Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) of account and service issues, and receive special messaging from the cooperative.

You can pay your bill and review your payment history, as well as electric consumption. #1814500 The first time you make a payment through SmartHub, you'll be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions.

SmartHub, puts powerful knowledge at your fingertips. Use it to help you spot consumption trends over time and help you better manage your electric use. Just set your own usage thresholds and you'll know when you're using more electricity than you'd like, so household members can adjust their electric consumption behavior.

*Not a SmartHub user yet? Access this application directly from our website by registering your FMEC account!*

## SIGN UP TO WIN!

*Sign up via SmartHub now through December 31, 2022 to be entered into a drawing for one of four prizes listed below. Scan the QR code or visit [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop)!*

**\$1,000 CASH**

**\$500 CASH**

**YETI® COOLER**

**\$100 BILL CREDIT**



## ELECTRIC VEHICLES



*The popularity and adoption of electric vehicles are on the rise. In fact, it's anticipated that automakers will be investing \$330 billion in the technology by 2025. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is a trusted source for all your energy needs and electric vehicles are part of the mix in energy efficiency.*

### PUBLIC CHARGING

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) recognizes the need for convenient, publicly available electric



vehicle charging stations. FMEC has joined with other electric cooperatives across the nation to develop Levels 2 and 3 charging stations within cooperative service territories. You'll find a CHARGE station locator map on the FMEC website under Services/Electric Vehicle or at [www.CHARGE.coop](http://www.CHARGE.coop).

Electric Cooperatives power 56% of the land mass of the United States and energize over 20 million homes, businesses, farms, and schools. 42 million people receive their power from electric co-ops. CHARGE™ brings together a network of Electric Vehicle Charging to connect EV owners, allowing them to travel across the United States.

### HOME CHARGING

#### Homeowner EV Charging Station Rebates Available

For those members considering an electric vehicle (EV), FMEC is offering a rebate during the 2022 Energy Efficiency Rebate season. To qualify, charger installation must be on load control as defined by FMEC.

- An Electric Vehicle Charging Station has a rebate of \$400 per installation.

### CHARGER LEVELS

- 1** This requires access to a 120-volt electrical outlet in an area where the vehicle can be charged overnight. Have a qualified electrician make any needed electrical system upgrades.
- 2** This requires installation of a 240-volt hardwired EV charger or the appropriate 240-volt receptacle for the plug-connected charger. Have a qualified electrician complete the installation.
- 3** This is also called a DC Fast Charger. These are Public EV Charging Stations.

The majority of EV owners charge their vehicles at home. Proper electric infrastructure must be available at the homeowner's site to accommodate a home charger. The vehicle parking space should be clear of objects that may obstruct the access to the plug in. The cord should not wrap around or drape over the vehicle.

Please note that various models of electric vehicles may require specific chargers and/or adapters.

## EV COMMUNITY

### Electric Vehicle Car Club



Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative recently partnered with our national branding entity, Touchstone Energy Cooperative, to launch a free EV Car Club to our members. We're currently building the program and invite you to participate and provide feedback as we develop it. #2086001 By signing up for this electronic newsletter, we will send you our quarterly electric vehicle newsletter to keep you updated on the EV Car Club program and EV education opportunities.



The Touchstone Energy® Electric Vehicle Car Club (EVCC) provides opportunities for cooperative members to gain a greater understanding of electric vehicles and participate in a community with other EV owners. Being part of the EVCC means you get a front row seat to educational opportunities on ownership and charging options and have some fun with local EV activities.

## FMEC WELCOMES NEW INDUSTRIAL ACCOUNT

Vortex Cold Storage, LLC recently opened a new warehouse in Albert Lea, strategically located near the intersection of Interstate Highways 90 and 35. The facility's energy efficiency design and state-of-the-art technologies provide customizable warehouse storage. The 176,000 square foot facility is Safe Quality Food (SQF) certified and offers food storage at temperatures from 40F to -20F. It will provide needed warehousing for several businesses.



*Business and industrial accounts are an important segment of FMEC's membership.*

"The addition of the Vortex Cold Storage facility will bring many opportunities to the community and Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC)," explains Bryan Skogheim, FMEC Director of Business Development & Energy Solutions. "FMEC, along with partners from the City of Albert Lea and Albert Lea Economic Development Agency, worked together to create an attractive package to lure this company to Albert Lea. FMEC provided a USDA loan for a small portion of the project, as well as a \$30,000 energy efficiency rebate for the state-of-the-art construction and energy efficient building components."



*Bryan Skogheim (r), FMEC Director of Energy Solutions & Business Development presents a rebate check to Scott Holk (l), Director of Operations for Vortex Cold Storage, LLC.*

# IT'S parade SEASON



Alden Parade



Albert Lea Parade



Albert Lea Parade



Grand Meadow Parade

## YOUTH TOUR SO MANY MEMORIES TO RECOUNT AND SHARE!



Karley (l) and Carrie (r) stand in front of the U.S. Capitol.

Influenced by their Youth Tour experience, the FMEC student delegates were eager to share their favorite memories.

For instance, Carrie Warmka recalled when a group of friends all bought matching rock necklaces and “Benjamin Franklin” sunglasses to wear in some of their photos. #1814500 Karley Guenther enjoyed having lunch outside the National Cathedral and being part of a small group that woke up very early on their last morning together to watch the sunrise.



## Back TO School SUPPLY DRIVE



**DONATE NOW  
THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

*School supply donations may be left at the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative office.  
3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea*

*Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is collecting school supply donations.*

Support local students as they return to the classroom by ensuring they have the tools for success. #1426900 Donations will be divided between schools in Freeborn and Mower Counties.

## CLASSIFIED marketplace

### FOR SALE

#### FARM:

**GRASS HAY.** Approximately 60 square bales from last year. \$3/bale. Call (507) 324-5680.

#### HOUSEHOLD:

**TABLE.** Heavy wood, drop leaf with brass toes. Open 42 x 56, closed 42 x 24. \$50. Call (507) 473-2905.

**KIRBY SENTRIA UPRIGHT VACUUM.** 2 filter pkgs, several accessories, and long hose. Works good. \$90 OBO. Call (507) 383-5658.

**EASY REST ADJUSTABLE SINGLE BED** with massage. One year old. \$1,600. Call (507) 279-4710.

#### MISC:

**WEIDER & TOTAL GYM.** Call (507) 440-0679.

**2 PING G10'S GOLF CLUBS.** 24 degree & 25 degree. Both \$25. Call (507) 373-8661.

**LARGE METAL BIRD CAGE** on wheels. Best offer. Call (507) 324-5680.

**BIRD HOUSES.** Call (507) 373-8715.

**WEBBER GRILL** with tank. Bought Oct 2021 for \$500. Now \$350. Call (507) 377-6064.

**1973 TEXAN PICKUP CAMPER.** 8', working fridge, stove, and furnace. \$500 OBO. Call (507) 319-0307.

**2004 POLARIS 600 ATV** with snowplow. Good condition. Call (507) 421-3816.

**4 FIRESTONE ALL SEASON TIRES.** Size 225/65 R17. Like new. \$50 each. Call (507) 377-0535.

**1989 YAMAHA VIRAGO.** 47,000 miles. Runs great. \$1,500. Call (507) 318-3216.

**1998 CRESTLINER 1850 SPORTFISH.** 4.3 V6 MerCruiser I/O with ShoreLand'r trailer. Call (507) 383-8214.

**2 SKILLSAWS.** Both 7 1/4", brands Skilsaw and Black & Decker. \$7.50 ea. Call (507) 448-3491.

**16' ALUMINUM LADDER.** Multipurpose. \$75. Call (507) 373-8858.

#### PETS/ANIMALS:

**BABY GUINEAS (KEETS).** Call (507) 475-1468.

### WANTED

**OLD GAS/OIL CONTAINERS & SIGNS.** Call (507) 402-0880.

**PULL TYPE LAWN SPRAYER** to be pulled behind a lawn tractor. Call (507) 852-2502.

**4 WHEEL ATV & SMALL 2 WHEEL TRAILER.** Call (218) 324-1821 Albert Lea number.

### FREE

**FRUIT JARS.** All sizes. Call (507) 377-3997.

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](http://www.fmec.coop). Select **MY COOPERATIVE**. Click on **NEWSLETTER** under **NEWS & INFO** tab. You may also email ads to [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](mailto:michelle.rayman@fmec.coop) or send by mail to County Lines, PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007.

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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 in the newsletter, each two times.

If you spot your account number, contact the cooperative by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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



#### Office Hours:

Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

#### Board Meetings:

Typically the last Tuesday of each month.

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

## Get notified when it matters.



### GET NOTIFICATIONS AND VIDEO ALERTS WHEN ACTIVITY OCCURS.

As part of a monitored security system, receive email, text, or image alerts when alarms are triggered, doors or windows opened, the power goes out or any other activity occurs.



SECURITY AUTOMATION VIDEO MEDICAL ALERTS  
888.264.6380 heartlandss.com

## LET'S COOK



### PEACHY PICANTE PORK

Submitted By:  
Linda Opstad

#### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. cubed boneless pork
- 3 T. water
- 1 packet of taco seasoning
- 8 oz. Picante
- 4 T. peach preserves

#### Directions:

Simmer in a pan for 25 minutes.  
Serve over rice.

(Serves four)