

JANUARY 2022 • VOLUME 83 • NO. 01



ENGAGING OUR FUTURE

As we kick off 2022, our focus turns to our future — our area youth! Youth represent future cooperative and community leaders and workforce. That's why we are offering students two very exciting opportunities, the Luck of the Draw Scholarship and the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 11, 2022.

We are offering high school seniors graduating in 2022 the opportunity to apply for a chance to win one of ten \$1,000 scholarships! These are randomly drawn "Luck of the Draw" scholarships. The drawing will take place during the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) Annual Meeting on March 26, 2022. If your name is drawn, and you are present at the annual meeting, you will also receive a special gift. #2119101 Applications will be accepted through March 11, 2022!

To Apply:

- Applicant must be a graduating high school senior.
- Parents/legal guardians must be active members of FMEC at the time of the drawing and reside in our service territory.
- Recipients must be enrolled as a full-time college student in the fall of 2022.
- Proof of enrollment must be presented to FMEC before the funds will be disbursed to the school but does not need to accompany the application.
- In the event the student is unable to fulfill his/her enrollment obligations, the award is forfeited.

Scholarship funding is made available through unclaimed Capital Credit dollars.

RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR TO WASHINGTON, D.C. APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 11, 2022!

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) will sponsor two high school (Junior/Senior) student delegates from our service territory, to attend the Rural Electric Youth Tour expenses paid from June 14-19, 2022. Travel and briefings for the students will be coordinated through Minnesota Rural Electric Association. Past participants have described the Youth Tour as "an experience of a lifetime." At a time when energy is at the forefront of the nation's issues, this is a great opportunity to learn how government works and what the electric cooperative business model is all about. There will also be tours of memorials and museums in the city and so much more!

To Apply:

- Applicants must be the child or dependent of current FMEC member and reside in our service territory. Applicants must currently be in their junior or senior year of high school.
- For more information or to apply, contact our office or go to our website www.fmec.coop.
- The deadline to submit an application is Friday, February 11, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.

For more information on either of these programs or to apply, visit www.fmec.coop or contact Lori Jimenez, Administrative/Member Services Representative, at lori.jimenez@fmec.coop or (507) 379-8852. Applications are also available in our office at 3366 Bridge Ave., Albert Lea.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



SERVING YOU IN 2022

As we flip our calendars to a new year, I can't help but think about how far this electric cooperative has come in the course of our 85-year history. I've also been struck by the fact that no matter the decade, circumstances, or times, we have always kept a constant touchpoint — A **FOCUS ON SERVICE**. So, as we start out 2022, we do so by keeping service to our members and their communities as our top priority.

While 2021 is not quite closed out and finalized, it looks like we will finish 2021 with strong financials, putting us on solid footing for this coming year. We accomplished this without changing base rates in 2021 and we also look forward to no change in base rates in 2022.

We look forward to continued growth, both in number of accounts served and in kWh sales. This is reflected in a \$6.6 million work plan. The work plan includes 12 large projects which convert over 43 miles of overhead system to underground. #2274501 These projects will help with overall system reliability by replacing aging infrastructure with new equipment.

Internal and external communications are essential, and we will do our best to keep you informed through a variety of ways. These include the monthly **County Lines** newsletter, our website, and social media. Don't forget that we'll always welcome your questions by email, phone, letter, and office visits. Our goal is to be accessible to those we serve.

To better gauge member satisfaction, we plan to launch a random survey of members, most likely after mid-year. We are fortunate to have robust partnerships within and outside of the industry. These include local governmental bodies and agencies, Dairyland Power Cooperative (supplier of wholesale electricity), Cooperative Response Center (CRC, for after-hours dispatching), and our trade associations — National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), and Touchstone Energy® (unified branding effort to promote the core values of Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and Community).

With everyone pulling together, FMEC looks forward to a bright and successful year ahead. I wish each of our members, our employees, directors, and partners a happy New Year!



SALUTE TO RETIRING DISTRICT 2 DIRECTOR BURTON MAGNUSON

Through the years, Burton Magnuson has been part of an ever-evolving industry. The boards on which he has served have addressed and overseen changes in electric generation, transmission, and distribution. Strategic planning has been a major component on all levels. Holding true to the cooperative business model and recognizing the vital importance of accountability to cooperative members and reliability of service have remained his steadfast focus.

"My time in these positions has been very rewarding, especially serving with the best management, staff, directors, chairs and CEOs at FMEC and Dairyland," he said. "There has been excellent leadership. I will miss everybody, but the time has come for me to wind down and enjoy family and personal activities with my wife Paula. Thank you to all."

Our most sincere wishes for a long and healthy retirement go to Burton and Paula. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and leadership with FMEC. He will not seek reelection to the FMEC Board of Directors in 2022.

member news

NOVA Power Portal™

Members who are interested in installing their own distributed energy resource such as a solar interconnection, must use NOVA Power Portal™. Applications and resource documents are available through our website. Search under Services, Renewables, and then the Interconnection Information tab. We also invite you to contact the FMEC office to discuss your plans.

PUBLIC PHOTOS POLICY

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) reserves the right to photograph participants in cooperative programs and special events. FMEC may choose to use these photographs in print, internet, or other communications of the cooperative. No person may use or reproduce these photographs for any purpose not previously authorized by the board, without express written permission of the FMEC Board of Directors.

PRIVACY NOTICE

As a member of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, you trust us with certain personal information. We value your trust and take it very seriously. The cooperative has enacted and enforces a Privacy Policy which is continuously reviewed to ensure it meets current standards and that your information remains secure.

The Privacy Notice and Disclosure Statement is included with your January billing statement. A link to this information will be included for members who have electronic billing. For questions about the member information we collect, why, and how it is treated, please refer to the Privacy Notice posted on our website or contact our office. To change any personal information you provide to us, contact:

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 611 | 3366 Bridge Ave
Albert Lea, MN 56007
(507) 373-6421

MEMBERS ENJOYED CO-OP FESTIVITIES

Members enjoyed a festive atmosphere during the December 8th Holiday Open House at the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) headquarters, which marked the 85th anniversary of our co-op! Santa made an appearance to the delight of children and adults alike. Thank you to Marian Trytten for greeting members with musical entertainment in the lobby. Donations of new toys and non-perishable food items were collected for the local Salvation Army.



Minnesota Representative Patricia Mueller said, "I enjoyed the 85th anniversary of FMEC! I read about their history, toured the new facility, and ate some delicious cake. #2010800 The co-op model is a testament to the value of locally owned and controlled. It is a privilege to represent them at the Capitol."

The cooperative also participated in the inaugural Santa Cruise through downtown Albert Lea on the evening of December 9th. A cooperative truck and trailer lit up the parade route. Our "Willie Wiredhand" mascot waved to the crowd and our employees did their best to keep the Grinch from stealing the lights! The design and coordinating crew did an amazing job. Thank you to employees Aaron Olson, Alex Nelson, Allen Hendriks, Deb Kolling, Mary Thompson, Mike Weiss, and RaAnna Pectorious!



CO-OP PRINCIPLE #2: DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

As of the application deadline of December 10, 2021, the following names have been placed into nomination for the position of director in their respective Districts.

District 2
Jay A. Neitzell
John M. Penkava
Jeffrey T. Titus

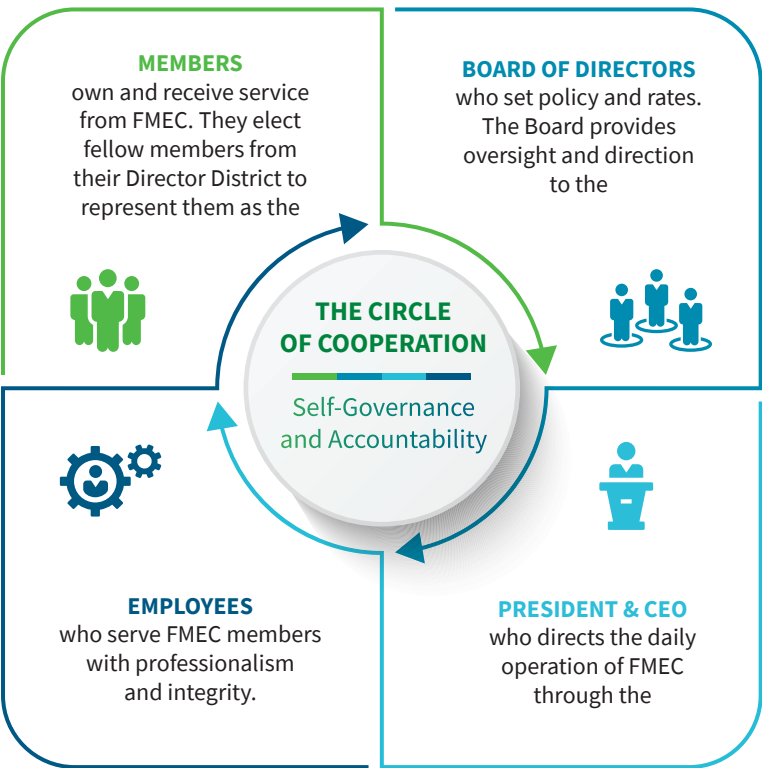
District 5
Frank Fryer (incumbent)

District 8
William Trygstad (incumbent)

THE ELECTION PROCESS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) also has a provision for filing as a nominee by petition once the normal application process has concluded. An official petition form is available from our office. To nominate by petition requires the signatures of fifteen (15) members of the district in support of the particular nominee named on the petition form. The petition form must be submitted to the FMEC office by 3:30 p.m. on Monday, January 17, 2022.

Should only one nominee in the district come forward before the January 17, 2022 petition deadline, that applicant will be deemed elected as director. #2274501 Should more than one nominee come forth prior to the petition deadline, either by direct nomination or petition, a biography of each nominee along with a mail ballot will be sent to all members in that district on Monday,



January 31, 2022. Returned ballots are due by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, February 18, 2022.

There are also provisions for electronic voting in these elections. Electronic voting instructions will be included with the ballot materials. Electronic votes must be cast by the same deadline as the mail ballots.

- Applications for director were due by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, December 10, 2021.
- Postcards were mailed on December 22, 2021, to members in each of the three Districts holding an election. The postcard notified members of those who applied to be a Director.



Mark your calendar!
The Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will take place in person and virtually on March 26, 2022.

**MARCH 26
2022**

ELECTION TECHNOLOGY AND YOUR SECURITY

In 2020, FMEC began offering electronic voting as a convenient way to engage more members in our grassroots election process. It has been a popular option, especially during the pandemic.

The election of our Board of Directors by cooperative members is fundamental to governance as a cooperative business. The board and cooperative management have done due diligence in selecting Survey & Ballot Systems, a firm specializing in keeping electronic voting secure.

Members choosing electronic voting through the Survey & Ballots Systems will only be granted access after confirming two pieces of information — their FMEC member number and a unique election passcode provided by Survey & Ballots Systems.

EVERY VOTING METHOD COVERED

KEEP METER ACCESS CLEAR

- Do not pile debris or other items below your electric meter or around any utility facilities. While we do have automated meter reading, there are still times when cooperative employees need safe access. This is even more important when items may be covered and hidden by snow.
- Don't store anything around your meter or against an underground transformer.
- **Meter tampering is illegal and extremely dangerous. Never attempt to fix, alter, or tamper with your meter. If you notice an issue, contact our office immediately.**

BUILDING OR EXPANDING IN 2022?

- a home
- a livestock containment building
- a grain drying operation
- a business or industrial site

Your existing electric service may need updating to serve additional load. Please contact us as soon as possible to get on our construction schedule and help ensure that the necessary electrical equipment can be available since acquiring some equipment may be delayed. Also, let us help you stay in compliance with the current electrical codes and requirements.

DECEMBER STORMS

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative received the first outage call around 7:00 p.m. Wednesday evening, December 15th. Crews were called in and worked through the night to reduce outages from 5,700 down to about 600 as of Thursday morning.

Several large areas within Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative’s service territory were greatly affected by the severe weather. Storm damage was widespread and sprinkled throughout both counties. High winds and tornadoes knocked down power lines and poles, uprooted trees, and took out transmission lines resulting in the loss of power at five substations.

Power was restored to most affected members by mid-day Friday. Crews worked over the weekend to finish up small items and worked with the local transmission company, ITC Midwest, to restore remaining accounts.



2022 ELECTRIC\$ENSE® REBATES AND INCENTIVES

Make the most of your energy dollars! Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative promotes energy efficiency in the purchase and installation of electric appliances and equipment. Forms are downloadable from www.fmec.coop or by contacting our Energy Solutions Department at (800) 734-6421.

The 2022 Electric\$ense® Incentive Program will run from January 1 through December 31, 2022. It may close prior to December 31 if program funds are depleted. The Electric\$ense® Incentive Program is subject to change without notice.

- **AC Tune Up**
- **Agricultural, Commercial, and Industrial** (commercial vending machine controls, commercial air source heat pump & PTHPs, circulation fan, exhaust fan, electric forklift battery charger, dairy plate cooler / well water pre-cooler, dairy refrigeration heat recovery with electric backup, low/zero energy livestock waterer, scroll refrigerant compressor, variable frequency drive)
- **ENERGY STAR Appliances** (clothes dryer, clothes dryer – heat pump, clothes washer, dehumidifier, dishwasher, freezer, inductive range, refrigerator)
- **Appliance Recycling** (must be a working freezer, refrigerator, or room air conditioner)
- **Energy Audits / Recommended Improvements**
- **Compressed Air Audit**
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Station**
- **Electric Vehicle Smart Charger with integrated metering**
- **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation HVAC** (heat pump – air source, heat pump – geothermal, new furnace with ECM blower motor)
- **LED Lighting or Occupancy Sensor**
- **Touchstone Energy New Home**
- **Electric Water Heater**
- **Heat Pump Water Heater**
- **Solar Storage Water Heater with Electric Auxiliary Tank**
- **Lighting Recycling**

Members must submit an incentive application **within three (3) months of purchase date** for Appliance, Conservation, and Lighting measures. Incentive applications must be submitted **within 3 months of install date** for Water Heaters, HVAC, Commercial, Industrial, and Agricultural measures.

Please contact our office for incentive details or visit the Rebates tab on our website. #2119101

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF STORM DEBRIS

Tree and storm debris from recent storms, when possible, should be composted, chipped, or transported to a brush collection site. #2010800
The burning of building materials, including treated wood, insulation, or shingles, is prohibited.

Be sure to check the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fire danger and burning restrictions webpage before burning any debris.

www.dnr.state.mn.us

Recycle Holiday Light Strings

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is collecting holiday light strings (whether the lights are working or not) to be recycled at Jobs Plus, Inc. in Waseca, MN.

Recycle light strings now through January 21, 2022. Collection bins are located inside the front entrance of the cooperative’s office near the lobby.

CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

FOR SALE

FARM:

MASSEY HARRIS 30. Runs good. \$800 OBO. Call (507) 383-6388.

HOUSEHOLD:

ANTIQUE TEA POTS. Variety (7), Hall, Pier One, etc. \$50 for all. Call (507) 377-6064.

ELNA 1970’S SEWING MACHINE CABINET. \$20. Call (507) 297-5942.

MISC:

CLAM (VOYAGEUR) PORTABLE ICE SHELTER. \$400 OBO. Call (507) 514-3622.

2013 WILDWOOD XLITE CAMPER TRAILER. 30’. Asking \$10,000. Call (507) 402-2648.

1981 HONDA 750 CUSTOM. About 10,000 miles, needs some gaskets, and seals. Running when stored. Call (507) 433-5920.

STACK-ON GUN CABINET. 10-gun, double door security, \$250. Call (507) 320-7253.

2 SNOWBLOWERS. Both in good condition – Ariens, 24”, 8hp, 2 stage. \$525. Yardman, 5.5hp, single stage. \$225. Call (507) 373-6780.

2 JOHN DEERE SPITFIRE SNOWMOBILES. 1 – 340 and 1 – 250. \$750 ea. Call (507) 402-0514.

1970’s VINTAGE DOCTOR PEPPER POP MACHINE. Glass top panel w/light & painted lady, in working order. \$175. Call (507) 243-3291.

PETS/ANIMALS:

MINIATURE FEMALE DONKEY. Dark brown, friendly, 34” tall, 5 years old. \$1,100. Call (507) 841-1649.

WANTED

OLD FARM WATER PUMP. Call (651) 249-3068.

VINTAGE LIGHT UP CERAMIC CHRISTMAS TREE. Call (507) 440-4312.

CAMPING SLEEPING COTS. With or without mattress pads. Call/text (507) 438-6469 & leave a message.

OLD COLEMAN LANTERNS. Call (507) 402-0880.

HORSE DRAWN BOB SLED. Call (651) 249-3068.

LIGHT UP CHRISTMAS PLASTIC BLOW MOLDS. Call (507) 440-4312.

FREE

BAKERS RACK. 71” H x 31 ½” W, 4 shelves, foldable. Leave message. Call (507) 852-3499.

CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE RULES

Classified Marketplace ads are printed in our monthly **County Lines** newsletter **FREE OF CHARGE** to our current members.

- Ad deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue in which it will be printed. Ads received after the 15th of the month will be printed a month later. Example: An ad received on or before June 15th will appear in the July issue. If it is received on June 16th or later, it will appear in the August issue.
- A Classified Marketplace section appears in each issue except for our special Annual Report issue, typically in March.
- We take ads in these categories: For Sale; Wanted; Free/Giveaway
- Ads can be for: Vehicles/Motorized; Animals; Household; Farm; Miscellaneous
- No business ads will be accepted. Ads must be submitted in writing or electronically, not by phone call.
- Ads will not be repeated.

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 michelle.rayman@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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Postmaster: Send address corrections to:

County Lines, P.O. Box 611, Albert Lea, MN 56007-0611

County Lines is published monthly, except for the Annual Report edition issued in March, by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, MN 56007. This monthly publication is designed to provide information about the cooperative to the member-owners of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

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 15th of the current month to claim your \$25 bill credit.

Congratulations to David Horning. He spotted his account number in the December 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



Next Board Meeting:

January 25

Office Hours:

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

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

BATMOBILE? BUCKET TRUCK.



We're not your typical company, we're a local, not-for-profit electric cooperative. That's because we don't have customers, we have members. Putting people first is our super power.

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION. Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

LET'S COOK



CHICKEN CHESTNUT CHOICE

Submitted By: Linda Emerick

Ingredients:

- 1-12.5 oz. can of canned chicken or 1 ½ C. cut up cooked chicken
- 1 box Uncle Ben's Long Grain Wild Rice with herbs
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- ½ C. mayonnaise
- 1 can French cut green beans, drained
- 2 tbsp. chopped green pepper

Directions:

Cook rice according to package directions. Add all other ingredients to cooked rice. Bake in buttered casserole dish for 30-35 minutes at 350 degrees uncovered.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email at michelle.rayman@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.