

JULY 2022 • VOLUME 83 • NO. 07



Rooted In Safety

Throughout our decades of service in southern Minnesota, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative has experienced waves of change. One constant, however, has been a commitment to the health and safety of all cooperative employees. This also holds true in our daily interactions with members and the public. You might say we're deeply rooted in a culture of safety.

We recognize that working with electricity is inherently dangerous. To work safely, our outdoor crews must be well-trained and practiced in the proper use of equipment and tools. Care and maintenance of equipment is also stressed. Rigorous safety training, along with first aid and rescue scenarios, are routinely practiced.

Creating awareness of potential hazards is just as important for our inside workers as it is for outdoor crews. #2020000 The proper responses during emergency situations and recommended first aid procedures are taught to all inside personnel.

Any accident, injury, or near-miss incident is documented and analyzed. These are used as teaching tools. Routine safety inspections not only identify potential safety and health hazards but provide a basis for recommended actions. We also have a Safety Committee which meets monthly to prepare various



safety trainings and provide employees with important information.

You may have seen lineworkers gathered at a work site participating in a tailgate safety session before starting their tasks. This is an important daily review of the project at hand and a discussion of any special precautions that must be taken.

The safety of our outdoor crews also depends on you. When you see road signs and cones along the highway, please slow down and give our workers the space they need!

PHOTOS:

Lieutenant Laskowski from Albert Lea Fire Rescue conducted fire extinguisher training with FMEC employees in June.

ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



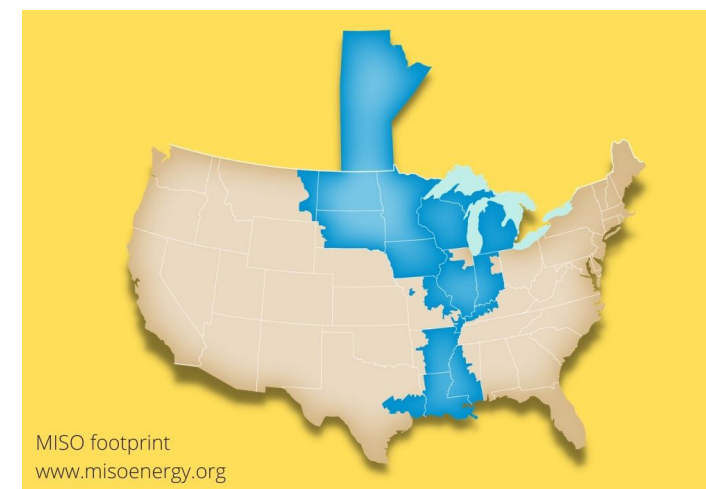
GRID CONGESTION AND OTHER VULNERABILITIES

Recently, a lot has been covered in news media about vulnerabilities with the nation's electric grid. The coverage was heightened when a mid-May heatwave created high demand for electricity and pushed limited generation sources to the max. In fact, on May 12th, our regional electric grid, managed by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator), declared a Maximum Generation Warning. MISO uses Max Gen procedures to help address grid constraints. On that date, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) worked closely with wholesale power supplier Dairyland Power Cooperative to reduce our cooperative's electricity demand through our existing load management program.

That being said, a concern remains that additional Maximum Generation situations may occur this summer.

FMEC is a retail electric distribution cooperative. Our cooperative members are the final consumers. The electricity that we provide to our members is purchased through generation and transmission providers, such as Dairyland Power. Transmission line congestion happens when the grid operator experiences trouble in moving the electricity from where it is generated to where it is needed. This can result in not only lost opportunities to utilize renewable energy when it is produced, but also higher costs. #1771001 In May, one of the congested areas impacted the flow of electricity from wind farms in Iowa and southern Minnesota to the rest of the MISO North and Central regions.

As we move through the summer months, I ask that you consume electricity efficiently and responsibly. You may wish to check our website for rebate information regarding energy efficiency improvements with your appliances and equipment. Pay attention to our cooperative's Peak Alert messages and do what you can to reduce your electric use. Additionally, do the Summer Shift by voluntarily shifting what electric use that you can to outside the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. weekdays. We appreciate your help in curbing exceedingly high electrical demand during Peak Alert hours.



Dairyland Power operates transmission power lines in our region. FMEC and Dairyland Power are working concurrently to be able to respond to any emergency grid conditions in a real-time manner. Dairyland's 24 member cooperatives serve about 284,000 homes, farms, and businesses in a four-state region included in MISO. Likewise, Dairyland's system operators are in daily contact with MISO to understand where power needs are and how Dairyland's resources can best support the regional grid.

member news

OFFICE CLOSED FOR THE 4TH OF JULY

Our office will be closed on Monday, July 4th for Independence Day. Have a safe and happy holiday.

2021 CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATION NOTICE

The allocation of the 2021 margins has been completed. If you had service in 2021 and are an active member of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC), look for your Capital Credit allocation in the message box on your July billing statement. Members who became inactive during the year, will receive an allocation notice in a separate mailing.

Allocation of Capital Credits is based on the cooperative principle of doing business at cost. Any earnings remaining after paying expenses are allocated back to members as Capital Credits. Capital Credits represent your share of ownership and become your capital investment in FMEC. They are held by the cooperative until a general retirement is approved by action of the Board of Directors.

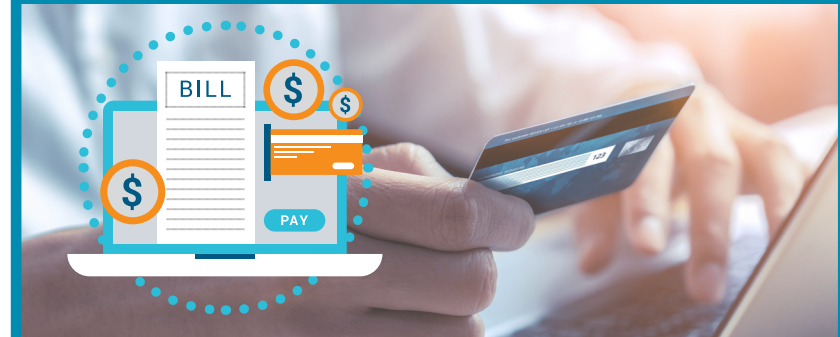
Capital Credits belong to the member, therefore, it is important to keep your current address on file with FMEC, even if you move out of the service area, so that retirement checks can be sent to you.

For more information about Capital Credits, please contact Joanne Miller at (507) 379-8860.

FACILITY USE NOTICE

Many questions have been directed to Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) regarding use of the Conference Center in our headquarters building. Use of the Conference Center will be restricted to reservations made exclusively by FMEC employees on behalf of a local organization for business, educational, or training purposes only. #446001 The facility will be available only on FMEC business days, Monday through Friday during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to no later than 3:00 p.m. No reservations will be taken for holidays or regularly scheduled board meeting dates.

For your convenience — Introducing Paperless Billing



SIGN UP TO WIN!

Sign up via SmartHub now through December 31, 2022 to be entered into a drawing for one of four prizes:

\$1,000 CASH

\$500 CASH

YETI® COOLER

\$100 BILL CREDIT

LEARN MORE AT WWW.FMEC.COOP

IT'S parade SEASON



COST OF SERVICE STUDY UNDERWAY

During this time of rapid inflation, it is important that we understand how our costs to provide you with electric service, 24/7 and 365 days a year, may be shifting. This involves us taking a comprehensive look at all of our input costs. Energy costs are based only on kilowatt-hour expenses.

Additionally, there is another component to the rate you pay. This is reflected in the monthly Basic Service Charge. #446001 It is comprised of all the various expenses that relate to the delivery of electricity no matter how many, if any, kilowatt-hours you consume.

We are currently engaged in a Cost of Service Study with a rate consultant. A detailed and comprehensive Cost of Service Study helps us prepare for the future in order to keep the cooperative financially secure. It also indicates how changing expenses should be recovered through our rate structure. This is a member owned and member

controlled cooperative, so rates are always wholly reviewed and authorized by the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative board of directors.

While we are conducting this study, we are also keenly aware of how the electric sector is experiencing unprecedented challenges to the supply chain. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has actively raised attention among federal policymakers throughout the executive and legislative branches to ensure they fully grasp the scope of how supply chain delays and shortages are impacting the electric sector. Locally, we are doing our best to stay ahead in our equipment inventory. It is important for service reliability, new service extensions, and power restoration following storms.

ACCOUNTING IN THE CO-OP BUSINESS MODEL

The field of accounting is complex and when it comes to electric cooperative accounting, processes differ from other forms of business. A primary reason for the differences is that our foremost purpose is service for the betterment of our member-owners instead of creating profit. Of course, the electric cooperative must not operate in the red. We are accountable to our members and keeping their business financially strong and stable.

When the cooperative's revenue is greater than its expenses, the difference is called the margin. The margin is held for a period of time to benefit the operation of the cooperative, until the board of directors authorizes a retirement, or return of the margin to the cooperative members. This is done through our system of Capital Credits. Each cooperative member is assigned a Capital Credit account into which a monetary amount of the generated margin is held. The amount of the Capital Credit allocation is determined by the amount of patronage the member had with the cooperative in the year the margins were generated. In this way the cooperative operates as a not-for-profit business.

With some expenses, for instance vehicles, asset capitalization is used. Asset capitalization is another way in which accounting in an electric cooperative is different than other business types. For-profit businesses tend to reduce their income in the short-term by expensing as much as possible to reduce their tax bill. In a cooperative, we prefer to capitalize assets whenever possible. This is done to keep asset values and return on investments from being understated. Capitalizing in this manner spreads out the cost over all members and across all years that it is used. This is fairer to the cooperative membership since it eliminates putting all the burden of the asset's expense on just a few members over a shortened time period.



ENERGY SOLUTIONS



ENERGY SAVINGS in the LAUNDRY ROOM




Today's home appliances are the most energy efficient they have ever been. If you are in the market for an appliance always look for the ENERGY STAR label!

WHEN WASHING:

- Switch from warm or hot water to cold. Improvements in laundry detergents allow impressive results from cool or cold water.
- Wash full loads. It will take the same amount of electricity to operate your washer for a small load as it will for a full load.
- Use the high-speed or extended spin feature. The more moisture removed before drying, the better. It saves on drying time and reduces wear of the fabric.

WHEN DRYING:

- Do not mix light-weight clothing with heavier items. Dry them in separate loads since the light-weight items do not need as much dryer time.
- Use the lowest drying temperature you can. Make use of remaining heat in the dryer to finish the load by using the "cool down" cycle.
- Wool or rubber dryer balls will keep clothes separated for faster drying and reduce static.
- Take advantage of heat remaining from the previous cycle. Switch loads while the dryer is still warm.
- Keep your lint filter clean. A clean filter is needed for ideal air flow and dryer operation.



DID YOU KNOW?

FMEC offers its members the following rebates for these ENERGY STAR certified appliances.

Electric Clothes Dryer	\$25 each
Heat Pump Clothes Dryer	\$50 each
Clothes Washer	\$25 each
Dehumidifier	\$25 each
Dishwasher	\$25 each
Refrigerator (Min. 10 Cu. Ft.)	\$25 each

Recycling rebates are also available for refrigerators, freezers, and window air conditioners that are in working order when recycled. #1771001 Check our website for details or contact our office with questions.



PICTURE THIS!

Your photo in a calendar!

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. No photos of people will be accepted.

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 a photograph that the member took himself/herself.
- You must be 18 years of age to submit a photo.
- 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, with a horizontal orientation.
- Photos will be accepted until September 1st, 2022.

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS BY EMAIL AT:
michelle.rayman@fmec.coop

WELCOME

LUCAS VAN ENGELENBURG & ALEX HENSCHEL

Lucas Van Engelenburg and Alex Henschel have been hired as temporary lineworkers for 1,000 hours each, assisting in carrying out our 2022 work plans. Both have attended electric utility line school and are anxious to gain valuable experience while working with the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) crews. #2020000 We are pleased to have their assistance.



As with most who chose electric utility line work as a career, they both enjoy the outdoors for work and recreation. Lucas is from Alden, MN and is a member of the Alden Fire Department. Alex resides in Emmons, MN and describes himself as an avid outdoorsman.

FMEC recognizes its role in preparing a future workforce. The professional field of Electric Utility Lineworker is demanding, both physically and mentally, requiring a combination of course instruction and applied experience. Industry forecasts show a strong future demand for qualified lineworkers. Information about scholarships for lineworker training is posted on our website (www.fmec.coop).

KNOW WHAT'S BELOW: STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

If you plan on doing any digging on your property, make sure you remember to "Call 811 Before You Dig". It is very important to have all underground utilities located before digging to prevent costly and potentially dangerous contact with buried utility lines.

1 NOTIFY	2 WAIT	3 CONFIRM	4 RESPECT	5 CAUTION
Call 811 or make a request online 2-3 days before you plan to start your project.	Wait 2-3 days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will mark underground lines.	Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.	Respect the markers and use them as a guide for the duration of your project.	Dig with caution. If you can't avoid digging near the provided markers consider moving your project.

Some underground lines in your work area may not be utility owned and private facilities do not get marked when you call 811. Always use caution when digging.

CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

2000 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX. 202,000 miles, runs good, starts in all weather. Call (507) 481-7956.

FARM:

10,000 BUSHEL BIN. Call (507) 993-5425.

ANITQUE SICKLE MOWER. Pull type, Minnesota No 4. \$200. Call (507) 383-0802.

FORD 201 TANDEM DISC. 8', good condition. \$1,500. Call (507) 383-3973.

HOUSEHOLD:

GE WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER. 5,000 BTU, about 2 years old. \$50. Call (507) 383-9055.

TWIN BED FRAME & BOX SPRING. TWIN or DOUBLE BED FRAME. Call (507) 373-8715.

NEW KING SIZE DOWN COMFORTER. 101" X 86", mauve. Was \$160 now \$75. Call (507) 377-6064.

ROOM AIR CONDITIONER.

5,000 BTU. \$55. Call (507) 373-8858.

MISC:

POWER WASHER. Sears 3000, good 8 horse motor, pump needs work. \$65 cash only. Call (507) 402-2579.

3 SLEEPING BAGS. Good condition. Best offer. Call (507) 324-5680.

53 BRICKS & 19 - 15 X 15 PATIO BLOCKS. Call (507) 440-0679.

2009 RED HONDA GOLDWING GL1800 & MATCHING TRAILER. 35,400 miles. \$9,000 OBO. Call (507) 259-4159.

MOTORCYCLE GEAR. HJC full face helmet XL, 2 leather jackets, and chaps. Call (507) 440-7931.

2 OZARK TRAIL STADIUM SEATS. New \$39.99, asking \$15.00 ea. Call (507) 373-0093.

BASS PRO SHOPS INFLATABLE FLOTATION VEST. Adult. \$50. Call (507) 373-8661.

1959 12' ALUMINUM BOAT. No trailer, no motor. Watercraft registration decal good through Dec. 31, 2022. \$100. Call (507) 279-7052.

3 VINTAGE SCHWINN WOMEN'S BICYCLES. 26", 3-speed, good condition. Best offer. Call (507) 324-5680.

SCHWINN SIERRA GS MEN'S MOUNTAIN BIKE. 3 speed, very good condition. \$175 firm. Call (507) 373-2234.

PETS/ANIMALS:

BARNYARD CHICKS. Call (507) 475-1468.

WANTED

FOUNTAIN PENS. Call (507) 402-0880.

FREE

BUTLER BIN. 14'W X 10', no floor. You move. Call (507) 438-3500.

KITTENS. 3 months old, very friendly, house raised, multi colors. Call (507) 438-5379.

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

Congratulations to James Bottema. He spotted his account number in the June newsletter.



FREEBORN MOWER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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.

RECIPES WANTED

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.

If your recipe is published you will receive a \$10 electric bill credit.



LET'S COOK



KID'S PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

Submitted By: Dorothy Miller

Ingredients:

- 1 C. peanut butter
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- ½ C. miniature chocolate chips

Directions:

Mix together peanut butter, sugar, and egg. Fold in chocolate chips. Drop by tablespoons on to a non-stick cookie sheet. Flatten with fork. Bake 350 degrees for 15-18 minutes.

(Makes about 20 cookies.)