



## Members Celebrate 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

While the blustery winds gusted outdoors, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members were warmly greeted to the Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative annual meeting held Saturday, March 26 at the Albert Lea High School. Some members chose the option to attend virtually.

During his remarks, President and CEO Jim Krueger emphasized the many ways that Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative serves its member-owners by providing power to their lives. “Since our last annual meeting we have completed and moved into our new headquarter facility at 3366 Bridge Avenue. We broke ground in May 2020 and in just over a year, we were able to move in and re-open our lobby to the membership,” he stated. He continued to cover operational and financial highlights, legislative involvement, employee retirements and new hires, 2021 workplan accomplishments, and community involvement by the cooperative. #1605000 He also spoke about the widespread damage created by tornadoes in December 2021 when severe winds knocked down power lines and poles, uprooted trees, and took out transmission lines resulting in the loss of power at five substations. The result

was about 50 broken poles and more than \$200,000 in expenses to restore power.

“As we move into the new year and beyond, know that we strive to be a modern, adaptable, and forward-looking power provider – a reliable source for electricity and information. Now in our 85th year, we will continue to honor our cooperative’s legacy with a continued focus on serving our member-owners,” said Krueger.

Three District Directors were seated in their positions, each for a three-year term. They were Jay Neitzell in District 2; Frank Fryer in District 5; and Bill Trygstad in District 8. Special recognition was given to Burt Magnuson for his 15 years of dedicated service and leadership as retiring Director for District 2. When Magnuson was elected, he mentioned that honoring the Cooperative’s Mission Statement was his goal. Throughout his 5 terms, he certainly achieved that goal.

***View additional photos of the Annual Meeting on page 3.***



*“Thank you to all who participated in our annual meeting. It was great to meet again in person. I hope that you spoke with our employees at the various information booths, enjoyed some games, visited with neighbors and friends, and had a great breakfast.” — JIM KRUEGER, PRESIDENT & CEO*



## ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO

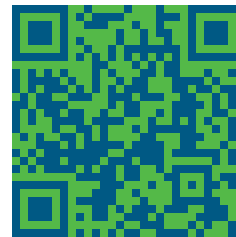


## SAFETY IS ALWAYS A PRIORITY

While we recognize Electrical Safety Month each May, we don't need a calendar to know the importance of practicing safety. At Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, we make the safety of our employees and the public a priority every day of the year. When you work in the electric utility industry there is absolutely no room for error. We understand that electricity is often taken for granted, but we also know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year. To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. We must continue to do everything we can through education and practice to prioritize safety for the sake of our employees and community members.

An example of our safety outreach is a "hot line" demonstration, such as was presented recently to the Hayward Fire Department by Eric Ruddle, Apprentice Lineworker, and Ethan Eggum, Working Foreman. If

your organization is interested in an electric safety demonstration, please contact our office.



*I also invite you to scan the QR Code on this page to access an important safety video.*

Make electrical safety a priority this month, and every month. Here are a few practical safety tips to review with your family:

- Don't overload a circuit by plugging in too many electric devices or tools.
- Frayed or damaged power cords or extension cords must be replaced as they could cause a shock when handled.
- Never "daisy chain" extension cords together as this can lead to overheating and a potential fire.
- When using an extension cord, make certain to not exceed the rated wattage of the cord.
- Pay attention to clearances from overhead power lines when operating farm equipment or any equipment with a boom or bucket.
- Ensure that portable electrical tools are equipped with three-prong grounded plugs to deter shocks.
- Call 811 to have underground utility facilities located and marked before doing any digging or excavation work. #2095900
- Talk to your children about playing it safe around electricity. This includes warning them not to play on or around a padmount transformer, the green utility box that may be in your yard.
- Electricity and water are a dangerous combination. Never use electrical appliances or devices in damp conditions, near a bathtub or pool, or in a flooded basement.

## member news

### OFFICE CLOSED FOR MEMORIAL DAY

Our office will be closed on Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> in observance of Memorial Day. Thank you to all the brave men and women who selflessly gave the ultimate sacrifice to secure our freedom.

"May we never forget freedom isn't free."  
— Unknown

### NOTICE OF INTERCONNECTION

In accordance with the adopted Cooperative Rules implementing 216.B.164, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers which satisfy the conditions and become a qualifying facility.

FMEC is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. #2070000 The current interconnection documents can be found on the cooperative's website. Click on Services/Energy Services/Renewables/Interconnection Information. Proceed by using the NOVA Power Portal.

All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any disputes over interconnection, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the cooperative. For further information contact our office at (507) 373-6421 or (800) 734-6421.

### 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.

## ANNUAL MEETING PHOTO GALLERY



*The Energy Solutions Team enjoyed visiting with members while playing the "Spin The Wheel" game.*



*Jack Korman, Board Chair, addressed the crowd.*



*Burton Magnuson was recognized for his many years as a Director and Secretary of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative and as Director to Dairyland Power Cooperative.*



*A FMEC truck and electric car were displayed.*



*Jack Korman, FMEC Board Chair, seats newly elected directors.*



*Tom Vega was on hand to answer questions about Heartland Security. Heartland Security designs and installs a wide variety of custom home and business security systems that protect property and people.*



*Members enjoyed breakfast prior to the Annual Meeting. Hy-Vee catered the meal, assisted by the Twin Lakes 4-H Club.*





# GET READY FOR STORM SEASON

*While it was unusual to have tornadoes last December, we know that during the months ahead we need to stay alert for possible severe weather. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) is fully staffed, up to date with supplies and equipment, and ready to respond to whatever nature brews.*

“When problems develop, we work as quickly and safely as possible, to restore power. Safety is our top priority for our employees and local communities,” shared FMEC Manager of Operations Jack Kortan. “Our crews are always on call and cooperative members can report an outage at any time since we have a 24/7 dispatch center, Cooperative Response Center (CRC). Additionally, our lineworkers use updated technology, and iPads, giving them electronic access to all the information they need.”

Storm damage often includes broken poles, trees or branches over powerlines, and downed lines. Never approach these situations and always assume that the powerline is energized. Call 911 or our office to report the hazard and warn others to stay away.



*“When problems develop, we work as quickly and safely as possible, to restore power. Safety is our top priority for our employees and local communities.”*

**-JACK KORTAN,  
MANAGER OF OPERATIONS**

This is also a good time to remind you to watch for our trucks and crews working along roadsides. Please slow down, move over, and give them plenty of room to perform their jobs.

### WHEN A WIDESPREAD OUTAGE OCCURS

Our protocol is to safely restore electric service to the greatest number of affected members as quickly as possible, working our way back to single account locations.

### PLAN AHEAD

*FEMA offers disaster preparedness materials at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).*

One is a fillable card around which you can build your family communication plan. We also suggest that you gather items for an emergency kit. Flashlights with fresh batteries, canned goods, can opener, medicines, baby supplies, water and so forth will be valuable should you be without power for an extended period of time. Avoid opening your refrigerator and freezer during extended power outages. The items inside will remain cold for a much longer time, and maybe until power is restored, if you leave the appliance doors shut.



First, we assess if there has been loss of power on the transmission lines which bring high voltage electricity to the distribution substations. If either the transmission line or substation has been damaged, repairs must be made to these before any electricity will flow to FMEC members. If these are functioning properly, we then move on to patrol the main feeder lines from the substations, making needed repairs. Once the feeder lines are operational, we inspect the tap lines for damage and make repairs. Repairs to individual service lines to a member’s metering point are the last to be restored.

Of course, repair work and removal of fallen trees, broken poles and such, can happen simultaneously with the other repairs. However, to restore power in the most effective manner, we must follow the protocol explained. Inspecting physical damage to power lines takes time. Feeder lines may also extend miles from the substations. This explains why you may see our trucks passing your home several times before your power is restored.

If you know of an area where powerline damage has occurred, please contact the cooperative with that information to help speed up the restoration process.

### REPORTING AN OUTAGE

Before calling, make certain the problem isn’t on your side of the meter. Start by checking your circuit breaker box for any tripped breakers. #1605000 Has your electric service entrance been damaged or any electric conductor from the metering point to your service entrance been damaged or disconnected? Have you tried rebooting your electronic device? Members will be charged a service call if the equipment failure is on the member’s side of the electric meter.

#### CALL (800) 734-6421 TO REPORT A POWER OUTAGE.

Calls are answered 24/7. Please provide the following information:

- Name
- Service location
- Phone number where you can be reached
- Cause of outage (if known)

**YOU CAN ALSO REPORT AN OUTAGE THROUGH YOUR SMARTHUB ACCOUNT FROM A PORTABLE DEVICE.**

A map of power outage locations is available at [www.fmec.coop](http://www.fmec.coop) – Outage Center tab at the top.

## THINKING ABOUT A GENERATOR?

It is essential that standby generators are sized properly for their anticipated use, and installed correctly, and are routinely maintained.



Portable generators and large inverters, up to 7,500 watts, can be connected to the home’s breaker panel. They can be used to power the larger power users in a home, such as a 10k BTU air conditioner, gas furnace, refrigeration, and so forth. **These devices require a transfer switch, properly installed by an electrician.**

Whole home standby generators, up to 20,000 watts, must be permanently installed. **These also require a transfer switch, properly installed by an electrician.** These generators will start automatically during a power outage and will allow enough power to operate nearly all home appliances and electronics simultaneously. It can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane.

Smaller, recreational, and midsize inverters are limited in the number and wattage of what they can operate. These devices are not connected directly to your home’s breaker panel.

**An improperly installed standby generator can be an electrical hazard!** They can create back feed, putting out electricity across the utility’s power lines, endangering our lineworkers and community members. Transfer switches save lives!

Please call us with questions about installing a standby generator.





## RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR 2022

### Students to Experience D.C. Co-op Style!

Congratulations to Karley Guenther and Carrie Warmka! They will be heading to Washington, D.C. in June to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This exciting leadership opportunity is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Minnesota Rural Electric Association. #2095900 Karley and Carrie earned this award though Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative's local application process.

## “LUCK OF THE DRAW” SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

### Congratulations to the following ten high school seniors!

Each was recently awarded a \$1,000 scholarship through the Luck of the Draw Scholarship program at Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. The random drawing was held during our recent annual meeting. Best wishes as these students\* move to post-secondary education!

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| • Isaac Beck       | • Taya Jeffrey   |
| • Lindsey Bizjak   | • Bailey Johnson |
| • Weston Dahl      | • Cai Nelson     |
| • Logan Hajek      | • Vayda Stadheim |
| • Bayley Halvorsen | • Brianna Tucke  |



Know what's below. **Call before you dig.**



From planting shrubs to building a fence, many outdoor projects require digging. Before the shoveling begins, make sure to call 811 or visit [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org). It could prevent serious injury or even save your life.

## LOAN PROGRAM HELPS MEMBERS WITH IMPROVEMENTS

*To promote the efficient use of electricity and beneficial electrification, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is providing a financing program to help members pay for residential energy improvements and backup power.*

These low-cost loans can be used to install energy-efficient electric HVAC equipment, electric water heating equipment, insulation, windows, doors, permanent standby generators, whole house battery backup, electric vehicle charging equipment, and ENERGY STAR electric appliances. Other energy-efficient residential upgrades may be determined appropriate for this loan program, at the discretion of the President & CEO or his appointees. Loans will only be made to property owners.

Available financing varies between \$1,000 to \$7,500, borrowed over a period of two to five years. The Prime Interest Rate as published at the time of application will be used. A one-time loan origination fee of \$50 will be payable at signing and prior to any loans being made.

The member must have one year of service with the cooperative and a satisfactory payment record to be considered for the loan program. A member may not have more than one loan at a time. All provisions of FMEC Board Policy 4.004 — Beneficial Electrification Financing will apply.

## WHAT IS BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION?

Beneficial Electrification refers to the application of electricity to end uses when doing so satisfies at least one of the following conditions, without adversely affecting the others:

- Saves consumers money over time.
- Benefits the environment and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improves product quality or consumer quality of life.
- Fosters a more resilient electrical grid.



## WELCOME BEN STIERNAGLE

*Ben Stiernagle joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative on March 28 as a member of our Tree Crew.*

Ben has some tree service experience and is looking forward to learning more about trimming trees, right-of-way maintenance, and the entire electric distribution industry. #2070000 Originally from Albert Lea, he now resides outside of Hartland. He likes spending time with his girlfriend and enjoys fishing. Welcome to our cooperative, Ben!

## CLASSIFIED *marketplace*

### FOR SALE

#### VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

**2004 GMC ENVOY 4X4.** Black, 173,000 miles, Bluetooth, very smooth runner, reliable. \$3,500. Call (507) 438-6001.

#### FARM:

**3 POINT BACKHOE** fits on tractor. **NEW HOLLAND** and **H & S MANURE SPREADER.** Call (507) 391-0508.

**SNOW PUSHER** for skid loader. Real heavy duty rubber track. 4' tall, 12' wide. \$1,800 OBO. Call (507) 440-8549.

**48" FORKS** for skid loader. Walk through type. Call (507) 383-0410.

#### HOUSEHOLD:

**BATHROOM VANITY/SINK** and **FAUCET.** \$15. Call (507) 383-7282.

**CHROME CRAFT TABLE & 4 CHAIRS.** Table w/leaf – 60" x 42". Chairs – beige material on rollers. \$300. Call (507) 437-1615.

#### MISC:

**DECORATIVE BIRD HOUSE.** Gray/white. \$3. Call (507) 460-8168.

**H & I SPLIT BAMBOO FLY RODS** w/ extra tips. **2 WICKER CREEL BASKETS** w/ harness. Call (507) 373-8638.

**NECHI SERGER.** 2 years old, never used. \$190. Texts only (507) 391-1688.

**GRACO HIGHCHAIR** and **PACK & PLAY.** Chair – excellent condition. \$60. P&P – very good condition. \$20. Call (507) 402-6713.

**IHS AIR COOLER.** Model A4024, portable, with or without water, air filter, humidifier, and fan. \$50. Call (507) 874-3730.

**1970 14' CRESTLINER BOAT,** w/trailer, 9.9 hp Johnson, depth finder, trolling motor, complete package. \$1,800 OBO. Call (507) 373-4165.

**1912 MODEL 66 SINGER TREADLE SEWING MACHINE** in 7 drawer cabinet. Working condition. Attachments & electric motor. Call (507) 383-3292.

**2019 ALUMACRAFT 14.5' BOAT** w/ cover & trailer, 40 hp Yamaha, trolling motor. Used 10 hours. \$16,000. Call (507) 582-3596.

**DOCK.** 5 sections, 8' x 3', all poles and hardware. \$400. (507) 383-1482.

**TOOLS.** IMP 8 socket set, 14 socket set, 16 socket set. 1-ratchet, 2 ext., 2 brk bar. Call (507) 391-0763.

### WANTED

**2 OR 3 HOLSTEIN STEERS.** About 500#. "Have pasture, need steers". Call (507) 402-4477.

**USED WALKER.** Good quality w/seat for average sized female. Call or text photos to (507) 438-6469.

**OLD LICENSE PLATES.** (507) 402-0880.

#### MATURE FEMALE HOUSE CAT.

Have loving, caring home. Call (320) 496-0490 or (507) 509-3321, leave message.

### FREE

**OLDER PIANO.** You haul. Call (507) 383-8491.

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)

## 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](http://www.fmec.coop)

[info@fmec.coop](mailto: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.*



## LET'S COOK



### CHICKEN STUFFING HOT DISH

Submitted By: Julie Clayton

#### Ingredients:

- 1 bag of stuffing or 3 boxes of Stove Top stuffing. Cook as directed using chicken broth instead of water.
- Cook and cut up 3 chicken breasts.
- 1 jar of chicken gravy.

#### Directions:

Grease pan. Mix all together. Bake at 350° for one hour, or place in crockpot on low for 6 hours.

Members may submit one short recipe per month by email at [michelle.rayman@fmec.coop](mailto: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.