



Celebrating October as Co-op Month

October is an eventful month filled with harvest, school, and community activities in full swing. It's also when cooperatives of all types celebrate National Co-op Month.

When Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) celebrates Co-op Month, we are celebrating the foundations of the cooperative, its members, and the cooperative difference. In short, we are focused on serving our members with integrity and respect, while energizing their lives and communities. Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

CAPITAL CREDITS — A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP

Capital Credits represent member equity in FMEC, a business that is member-owned and member-controlled. As you pay your electric bills, FMEC tracks your electric consumption and the patronage revenue received from your account. #252000 If the cooperative has generated excess margins (known as "profit" in other forms of business), the amount is allocated to the members

based on their electric consumption.

Capital Credits are important to ensuring the financial health of the cooperative while also allowing its operation as a not-for-profit entity. Each year, the board of directors determines whether the cooperative's financial position will allow for the return of Capital Credits, what we call "retirement", and if so, the amount to be retired. Prior to their retirement, this money has been put to work within the cooperative, reducing the need to borrow funds.

FMEC TO RETIRE \$849,294 IN CAPITAL CREDITS

Your board of directors recently approved the 2022 general retirement of \$849,294 in Capital Credits. The retirement of Capital Credits is a tangible expression of "the cooperative difference." **Capital Credits are applied to the October bills of qualifying FMEC members as a bill credit*.**

A check will be issued to former FMEC members should they be eligible to receive the disbursement of Capital Credits.

**If a Capital Credit refund is more than \$500, a check will be issued.*

KEEP CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT

A member who terminates service with FMEC no longer receives additional Capital Credit allocations. However, the balance in the member's account will remain until it has been retired in full. Therefore, it is important that former members notify FMEC of any address changes until their account is depleted. In the case of a member's death, Capital Credits become part of the deceased member's estate.



ceo message

Jim Krueger, President & CEO



UNDER REVIEW AND CLOSE SCRUTINY

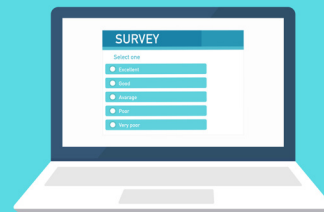
We are all aware of the nation's economic woes including inflationary pressures, supply chain delays, and uncertainty. The electric utility industry, on both the wholesale energy and retail delivery sides, has also been seriously impacted. The cost of energy is rising and while this is probably no surprise to you, it does impact the financial situation of FMEC. #88702 As a result, we've hired an outside professional consulting firm to make a detailed assessment of all of our expenses and how they are recovered through our retail rate structure.

Retail rates are broken down into two main components. The monthly **Service Charge** is meant to recover the actual operating expenses of FMEC. This includes all of the power line equipment, office-related expenses, depreciation, and so forth. It does not include the cost of the electricity consumed.

The **Energy Charge** is shown as a charge per kWh of electricity consumed. It reflects the actual cost of electricity. This includes the fuel and generation of electricity, as well as the transmission grid costs.

Our **Rate Study** is sorting out all of these expenses and matching them to their applicable area within our retail rate structure. This approach ensures fairness and equity in how our costs are recovered. Coupled with our local governance through a member-elected board of directors, equitable cost recovery is an important "cooperative difference." After all, we were built by the members we serve.

Wholesale power costs remain high and as a result, our retail PCA (Power Cost Adjustment) will track with these costs we are experiencing.



MEMBER SURVEY THIS MONTH!

We will be conducting a member survey by email during October. If you are one of the members who has been randomly selected to participate, we would greatly appreciate your time and opinions about the cooperative. Your information and your responses will remain confidential. By participating in the survey, you will help us identify where we are serving you well and where we might need to improve. We will use the results to make decisions on matters important to the future of your cooperative and that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.

In addition, as a thank you for your time, FMEC will hold a drawing for three \$100 bill credits. To enter this drawing, be sure to check "yes" at the end of the survey and provide your contact information. If you choose to be entered in the drawing, the co-op will know that you participated in the survey but will not see your responses linked to your name unless you indicate that you would like someone to contact you.

From time to time, FMEC holds events in which members can participate. Be sure to check "yes" in the appropriate area if you would like to be notified of these opportunities. Thank you for your honest feedback.

member news

WINTER STORAGE CONTROL SCHEDULE REVISED

There will be a slight revision in the electric heating storage control times beginning November 1, 2022.

Class 3 Daily Storage control will begin up to 30 minutes earlier than last year or continue up to 30 minutes later, but will be on a first in, first out basis. The control duration is 6.5 hours in the winter or 8 hours in the summer. The actual control durations remain the same as last year or perhaps may be decreased slightly. Expanding the gradual start of the control and restoration windows (ramp in, ramp out) will help reduce a cooperative's non-coincident peak as the control window ends.

NEW CONTROL WINDOWS:

WINTER (6.5 HOURS)

- Morning random start from 5 to 6 a.m., with full restoral by 12:30 p.m.
- Afternoon random start from 3 to 4 p.m., with full restoral by 10:30 p.m.

SUMMER (8 HOURS)

- Random start from noon to 1 p.m., with full restoral by 9 p.m.

If you have questions, please contact our Energy Solutions Department.

See Yourself in Cyber.

October is Cybersecurity
Awareness Month

Improve your cyber
hygiene by doing
these four things:

1. Enable multi-factor authentication
2. Use strong passwords and a password manager
3. Update software regularly
4. Recognize and report phishing attacks



RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR 2022

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) will sponsor two high school students to attend the Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 13th through 18th, 2023.

The Electric Youth Tour brings together students from across the nation for a prestigious leadership experience in our nation's capital city to learn how the government works, what the electric cooperative business model is about, and tour memorials and museums. #2181403 This is an all-expenses paid opportunity.

Applicants must be the child or dependent of a current FMEC member and reside in our service territory. Applicants must be in their junior or senior year at high school. Application materials will be available soon and the deadline to apply is Friday, February 10, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.

MEMBER GOVERNANCE — an essential "cooperative difference"

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is governed by a nine-person board of directors. The directors are elected by their fellow FMEC members residing in the district. Elections are held in three districts each year, with each director elected to serve a three-year term.

THREE DISTRICTS TO HOLD DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

Nominations are now open for interested members in the following Districts:

- **DISTRICT #3:** Represents areas northwest of Austin, Sargeant, Brownsdale, Nicolville, and Dexter.
- **DISTRICT #6:** Represents Hayward, Glenville, and areas west of Gordonsville.
- **DISTRICT #9:** Represents the northern part of the city of Albert Lea.

Nominees must meet all eligibility requirements as specified in the cooperative's Bylaws. Among the qualifications and responsibilities outlined in the Bylaws, nominees must be:

1. a current member receiving electric service at their primary residence, and
2. the primary residence must be in the district in which the director is elected.

**Contact our office for a Director Application Packet.
Applications will be accepted until 3:30 p.m. on January 4, 2023.**

PREPARE FOR HEATING SEASON

Heating Season
Energy Saving Tips

1 Install a programmable thermostat.

Programmable thermostats can make your heating (and cooling) system operate more efficiently. Why heat a home — or cool it for that matter — at the same temperature when no one is in it? Programmable thermostats are easy to install, and ENERGY STAR estimates you can save as much as 10% on heating and cooling costs by properly using one. Set it to the recommended temperatures and then just enjoy the savings.

2 Check, clean, or replace central heating filters.

Check filters monthly and change them every three months, at least. A dirty air filter slows down air flow and makes a system work harder, thereby wasting energy.

3 Replace or weatherstrip windows and doors.

Windows and doors top the list of culprits for air leaks that lower the energy efficiency of your house.

4 Change ceiling fans to rotate the correct way.

Ceiling fans are not just for summer cooling. In the winter, they can also be used to rotate airflow so that heat rising into a high ceiling is blown back down toward the room’s occupants. In the winter, the fan should spin clockwise. #88702 This redistribution of warm air makes a room feel warm and more comfortable, helping to save on heating costs. To change the rotation of the fan, use the toggle switch on the motor housing.

5 Close the vents and doors to unused rooms.

Just make certain that no pipes are susceptible to freezing if the room is unheated for long periods of time.

COMPREHENSIVE IN-HOME ENERGY AUDITS AVAILABLE

FMEC is partnering with Minnesota Energy Resources to help Albert Lea residents figure out what energy-saving improvements make the most sense for their homes.

Appointments are being scheduled for October 11 – 13. This service is valued at more than \$300, but the homeowner only pays \$50. To be eligible, the home must receive natural gas service from Minnesota Energy Resources and electric service from Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

WHAT YOU GET:

- A comprehensive analysis of your home’s energy use, both natural gas and electric.
- A blower door test to locate heating / AC leaks.
- Safety tests: combustion safety, depressurization, and carbon monoxide.
- A comprehensive review of all relevant rebate opportunities.

Call (800) 376-0517 or visit cashrebatesnow.com to schedule!

ENERGY
ASSISTANCE

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program that helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs.

To learn more about EAP or to apply for assistance, contact the agency that services your area. You will also find more information at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance>

ENERGY ASSISTANCE
PROVIDERS:

SEMCAC
(800) 944-3281 | www.semcac.org

Freeborn County Human Services
(507) 377-5400

Mower County Human Services
(507) 437-9701

Minnesota Valley Action Council
(507) 345-6822 | (800) 767-7139

Minnesota Prairie County Alliance
(888) 850-9419

Faribault County Human Services
(507) 526-3265

Fillmore County Social Services
(507) 765-2175

North Iowa Community Action
(641) 423-9028 | (800) 873-1899

HERE TO HELP

If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for an Energy Assistance Program, please contact our office to set up a payment plan.

COLD WEATHER
RULE REMINDER

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative members who may have trouble paying their winter energy bills are reminded that the Cold Weather Rule took effect October 1.

If you are unable to pay your electric bill by the due date, you must contact our office, to arrange a payment plan. Your service may be disconnected, even during the winter months if you fail to respond to the disconnect notice.



Residential Electric
Heat Tax Exemption

Electricity sold to residential consumers who use electricity as their primary source of heat (50% or more) is exempt from sales tax for the billing months of November, December, January, February, March, and April. All electricity used through the same meter will be exempt for the same six-month period.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (FMEC) requires a signed certificate stating that your primary source of heat is electricity. The purposes of this certificate are: 1) It notifies FMEC to remove the sales tax from your bill for the qualifying months. 2) Should FMEC be audited by the Department of Revenue, FMEC would utilize the exemption certificate signed by you, as our authority to remove the sales tax. #252000 This is for the protection of the Cooperative. If FMEC were audited and it was found that the consumer’s bill was illegally exempted, it would be the responsibility of the individual consumer to pay any amount.

The form is available from our office or for download from our website: www.fmec.coop under the tab SERVICES/FORMS/Downloadable Information/Exemption Forms.



Long hours, increased stress, tight schedules, and fatigue can make it tempting to take shortcuts as you bring in the crop. This can be extremely dangerous! It only takes a split second for someone to come into contact with electricity. The danger is real and could be deadly!

- **Look up and look around!** Start the day with a safety meeting. Review the need to keep ladders, augers, and all farm equipment far away from power lines for your safety and those working around you. The risk of electrocution around grain-handling equipment and storage areas is high.
- **Plan your route.** Remember that your equipment may be taller in transport than during field use. Know your clearances near your grain bins and overhead powerlines. Use a spotter to make sure a 10-foot clearance is maintained from overhead powerlines. Also, be aware of the location of power pole guy wires. Accidentally pulling down a guy wire may break a pole or dislodge an energized power line.
- **Train your team.** It's harvest crunch time and everyone working on the farm must be ready for the task. Evaluate the jobs that you have tasked your harvest help with and ensure they are not taking on more responsibility than they are mentally, cognitively, and physically able to accomplish. Always provide training for youth or temporary workers prior to starting any work and check in with them at regular intervals, checking on their understanding of the process, their progress, and safety.
- **Know how to exit safely.** If your farm equipment does come in contact with a power line, remain seated until help arrives. Call 911! Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts

and lands incorrectly or tries to climb back on. Warn others to stay at least 50 feet away, and to not approach you or the tractor, combine, or truck. Should there be an immediate danger, like a fire, put your feet together and jump as far away as you can – keeping your feet together as you land and shuffling as you move away. #2181403 Do not allow any part of your body to contact the ground and electrified equipment at the same time.

- **Affix a slow-moving vehicle sign and caution lights.** Be aware that a majority of roadway accidents involving farm equipment happen at dawn and at dusk. A combination of low light conditions, peak traffic times for the public, farm machinery entering or exiting the fields, and slowly moving equipment can lead to danger.
- **Shield from moving parts.** Machinery entanglements are the leading cause of injury and death on the farm. Do everything you can do to prevent it – including guarding or shielding all moving parts on machinery, and also keeping bystanders and children away. Components may continue to rotate for several minutes after the power is shut off. Don't open doors until all parts have stopped moving.
- **Designate a safe play area.** Make sure children are kept far away from moving farm equipment.

FALL SAFETY REMINDER

DO NOT BURN NEAR UTILITY EQUIPMENT
If your autumn clean-up includes burning ditches, do not burn near the base of power poles or around underground electric utility boxes!

COUNTY LINES NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

United States Postal Service Requirement for Second Class Publications

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

County Lines Newsletter 09/15/2022

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4. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (not printer): PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007

5. Complete Mailing Address of the Publisher: PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007

6. Complete Mailing Address of the Editor: PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007

7. Complete Mailing Address of the Business Manager: PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007

8. Complete Mailing Address of the Owner: PO Box 611, Albert Lea MN 56007

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CLASSIFIED marketplace

FOR SALE

VEHICLES/MOTORIZED:

2011 LINCOLN MKT. 4 door, AWD. \$15,000 OBO. Call (507) 383-9314.

FARM:

DODA 6" MANURE PUMP & LOAD STAND. Call (507) 440-2620.

COMPLETE FRONT END WEIGHTS for 4020 J.D. tractor. Brackets and 4 weights. Call (507) 826-3271.

STEEL 2-WHEEL SKID LOADER TILT TRAILER. 12' X 6'. \$500. Call (507) 383-0802.

M - FARMALL. \$1750. Call (507) 402-1985.

HOUSEHOLD:

HEARTHSTONE CAST IRON WOODSTOVE, HERITAGE MODEL. Chimney parts as well as accessories. \$1,500. Call or Text (651) 206-4249.

ANTIQUE ROUND OAK TABLE. 5 leaves. Very good condition. \$300. Call (507) 852-3499 and leave message.

FELT TOP AIR MATTRESS. Electric inflating & deflating. Like new. \$35. Call (507) 373-0093.

CORNER UNIT TV STAND. 3-tier, metal/wood look. 4'11" H x 49" W. U-haul. \$30. Call (507) 402-8071.

MISC:

TREADMILL. Works good. You haul. \$150. Call (507) 383-0129.

QUANTUM ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR w/ charger, car carrier, cover, and wiring. \$1,500. Call (507) 383-5023.

WERNER 24' ALUMINUM EXTENSION LADDER. Like new. \$150. Call (507) 369-5050.

CRAFTSMAN FLOOR MT DRILL PRESS. Model #113.213170, 1.5 hp, 5/8" chuck, 16 speed, 200-3630 rpm. \$600. Call (507) 889-3148.

4 PERSON SEA-DOO PADDLE BOAT w/ cushion seats, matching cover. Like new. \$399. Call (507) 481-8945.

JOHN DEERE SNOWBLOWER. 8 horse, 24", 2 stage. Good condition. \$250. Call (507) 391-3883.

EXERCISE SYSTEMS. Total Gym Premier, Ab Doer, and 8 colored interlocking floor mats. All new. Call (507) 373-7228.

MATS. 6 new yoga mats 68" x 24" and 2 exercise mats 72" x 28". Call (507) 377-8318.

FRUIT JARS. Pints/quarts. Negotiable on price. Call (507) 256-4307.

15 FOOT LADDER TREE STANDS new in box. Two-person or single. Call (507) 440-3261.

33 1/3 - 50'S & 60'S ALBUMS. Lawrence Welk, Readers Digest, etc. Need to see to appreciate. Call (507) 448-3491, leave message.

JOHN DEERE RIDING LAWNMOWER LA 105. Low hours. Call (507) 219-8068.

PETS/ANIMALS:

GIVE AWAY – MALE HOUSE CAT. Neutered, 3 years old, pretty long hair. All accessories too. Call (651) 357-3222.

WANTED

LIGHTNING ROD BALLS & WEATHERVANES. Call (507) 402-0880.

FREE

UPRIGHT GRAND PIANO. Includes matching bench. Excellent condition! You haul. Call (507) 254-8752.

MARKETPLACE RULES

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 go to the website, use the instructions above, and click on the **NEWSLETTER** tab to electronically submit an ad. Ads will not be accepted over the phone.

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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 three (3) member account numbers 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.

Congratulations to Charles Majerus. He spotted his account number in the September 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



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.



YOU ARE INVITED! ChargedUP

WHEN: Tuesday, October 4, 2022
3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

WHERE: Hosted by Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative in our parking lot at 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea.

Learn about the features of electric vehicles, electric bikes, electric lawn and garden tools, and more! Several items will be on display.



Check out battery powered lawn and garden tools.



Refreshments available.



Drawings for an Electric Leaf Blower and Lawn Mower!

LET'S COOK



QUICK APPLE CRISP

Submitted By:
Debra Madson

Ingredients:

- 5 C. diced apples
- 1 C. brown sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ C. oatmeal
- $\frac{3}{4}$ C. flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C. butter

Directions:

Mix all ingredients except for the apples together. Put diced apples in a 9 x 13 pan and sprinkle the mixture over the apples. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.