



Freeborn
Mower
Electric
Cooperative

People. Power. Possibilities.

county lines

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 82 • NO. 4

**APRIL
2021**

We've changed our name back to **Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative**



Freeborn
Mower
Electric
Cooperative

Name change

Several exciting changes are happening at our cooperative this year! The name change identifies our core business and reflects the long history of success as your local electricity provider. Serving our members and their communities remain our priority.

New logo

Our redesigned logo represents the landscape in which we work, in that we provide electricity by both overhead and underground lines. The colors are a nod to the merged membership of legacy members with our acquired members that took place in 2015. The graphic also memorializes the former logo qualities with the three center lines and represents the importance of the past with an arrow pointing down and for the future with an arrow pointing upward.

NEW

www.fmec.coop

info@fmec.coop

New address coming soon!

Our new facility is nearly complete and we will be moving soon. Watch for more information in next month's newsletter.

A NEW MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to Serving Our Members by Providing Power to Their Lives.

Throughout its 84-year history, this cooperative has continued to evolve. In 2020, our Mission Statement was streamlined to better reflect our commitment to our core business of providing electricity to our cooperative member-owners.



the CEO's MESSAGE

Jim Krueger,
President & CEO

ON THE LEGISLATIVE SCENE

During the February 23rd board meeting, held virtually, we were fortunate to host guests for an important exchange of information and ideas. Joining the meeting were state legislators Senator Gene Dornink, Representative Patricia Mueller and Representative Peggy Bennett. Also participating were Darrick Moe, CEO of Minnesota Rural Electric Association and Kenric Scheevel, Director, External and Member Relations at Dairyland Power Cooperative.

I enjoyed the opportunity to spark a conversation regarding the relationships between our local cooperative, the state-wide association and wholesale power supplier, Dairyland Power. This led into a discussion about a recent cooperative venture that addresses infrastructure development for the growing use of electric vehicles. The CHARGE EV initiative brings electric cooperatives within the Dairyland Power system into a collective effort to provide vehicle charging stations across a wide region, basically the territory served by cooperatives of the Dairyland Power system.

A discussion about the recent power problems in Texas was also an important portion of our meeting. Kenric Scheevel spoke about electric generation and the fuel mix used by Dairyland Power. He explained how the power grid in our area functioned and why Dairyland Power was able to keep the power flowing while there was a major breakdown of the grid in Texas.

Other items discussed were rural broadband legislation, permitting for replacing load control receivers, and the ECO Act/CIP Modernization. Electric cooperatives seek legislation to clarify that additional permits and/or inspections would not be required to replace load control receivers. Such permits, if required, would cost Minnesota electric cooperative members in excess of \$10 million during the next few years and would not provide any value. Absent a statutory fix, cooperatives may not be able to continue their load management programs due to added costs. These programs are important to managing power generation resources for efficiency and cost, while also helping to reduce

**Annual Meeting Recap
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carbon emissions. Member account number four thousand eight hundred fifty-two.

The ECO Act/CIP Modernization mandates annual energy savings goals. Legislation to modernize the mandated approach would provide greater flexibility to the cooperatives, benefit the environment, encourage innovation with evolving technologies, reduce consumer energy bills, and provide more effective tools for reducing carbon emissions.

We are fortunate to have legislators from our local area who are truly interested and involved in the issues facing our industry. Our meeting was very positive and productive. We thank Senator Dornink, Representative Mueller, and Representative Bennett for spending time with us.

—Jim



This is a year of exciting developments!

As you can see by our redesigned logo and newsletter, this cooperative is embracing the future. Besides a return to the name Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, which refocuses attention on our primary role, we'll also soon be moving into a new headquarters facility that will facilitate our work for decades to come.

We honor our cooperative's legacy. We strive to be viewed as a modern, adaptable, and forward-looking power provider.

All of these changes work together to reinforce our commitment to serve the member-owners of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative according to our stated mission, vision, and values.

OUR MISSION: Committed to Serving Our Members by Providing Power to Their Lives.

OUR VISION: Be the trusted leader providing energy, service and products.

OUR VALUES:

- **Integrity:** Accountability to the highest ethical standards in our conduct.
- **Safety:** Safety for our employees and public.
- **Quality:** Innovation, efficiency, and continuous improvement in everything we do.
- **Engagement:** Engaged employees, members, and customers.
- **Collaboration:** Working together to share resources, knowledge, and expertise.

Safe and Reliable Electricity

The process behind the promise

What happened in Texas? Could it happen here? Those two questions have been on many people's minds since the February Polar Vortex. The questions are straightforward; the answers are more complex.

Prolonged extreme cold hit a vast area of the United States, including states like Texas that rarely suffer single-digit temperatures. The electric grid in our region withstood the Polar Vortex for three primary reasons:

- Reliable, properly regulated, and carefully controlled interconnections with neighboring utilities
- Sufficient, diverse, and balanced energy resources
- Well maintained and winterized equipment

Our region is unlike Texas which operates its own, deregulated grid—the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). Although ERCOT prepares for varied forecasts like every balancing authority, its planning for extreme winter temperatures was inadequate.

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is part of Dairyland Power Cooperative, a wholesale electric power generation and transmission supplier. In turn, Dairyland Power is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). RTOs are sometimes referred to as the “air traffic controllers” of the energy infrastructure world. MISO is federally regulated and works with its member utilities to ensure a reliable balance of supply and demand on the region's grid.

Here in the Upper Midwest, we also know how to dress for winter. We keep ourselves safe and warm with proper outdoor wear. We apply the same principles to our electrical facilities. Infrastructure in our region is built for extreme cold, with insulation and heated pipes combating Polar Vortex temperatures. This includes wind turbines, which are designed with heating technology to de-ice blades. Wind turbine manufacturers have cold climate solutions available to developers in northern regions. Despite this, wind turbines become unable to generate electricity in the range of 20 to 30 below zero.

Dairyland's backbone power supply assets (coal-fired and natural gas peaking plants) are capable of reliably producing energy, no matter what the weather brings. At the same time, reducing carbon intensity through diversification of generation resources is central to Dairyland's power supply planning. Diversification of generating resources allows for needed flexibility as conditions change. Member account number thirteen thousand one hundred ninety-two.

It is important to acknowledge that every resource has its strengths and limitations. For example, wind and solar energy have the clear advantage over fossil fuels in terms of emissions. However, both are reliant on weather factors (sun and wind) for reliable generation. Although natural gas is a reliable, baseload resource, natural gas pipeline systems are nearly fully subscribed during extremely cold conditions, which can limit capacity for power production.

Dairyland's John P. Madgett (JPM) coal-fired power plant broke gross daily generation records twice in just over a week, once on Feb. 8 and again on Feb. 17. “This achievement is due to excellent plant maintenance and operational practices, which allows JPM to respond to market demands even in times of extreme weather,” said Dairyland's Alma Site Manager Brian Treadway.

In fact, all of Dairyland's baseload units (JPM, Genoa #3 Station and its share of the Weston #4 plant) ran at peak output for multiple days. In addition, when natural gas became in higher demand for home heating, Dairyland's Elk Mound site switched to fuel oil for operations.

A sustainable energy future means:

- Steady, measured investments in renewable energy
- Bridging resources, such as natural gas that can ramp up quickly to produce energy when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow
- Infrastructure investments to support intermittent energy resources
- Beneficial electrification technologies, such as electric vehicles and emerging energy storage solutions

Dairyland Power and member cooperative personnel, including Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, conducted an Emergency Load Reduction Plan drill in early March. It has been an annual drill for the past ten years. The purpose of the five-hour drill is to remain vigilant with hands-on familiarity should the emergency plan be needed in the event of a major system event.

CLASSIFIED Marketplace

FOR SALE

Vehicles/Motorized:

2002 TOYOTA PRIUS. 144,000 miles, runs good. \$1,500 OBO. Call or leave message (507) 377-1086.

Farm:

MINNEAPOLIS MOLINE G TRACTOR. Old tractor, new engine. \$3,000. Call (507) 219-9030.

LANDOLL BRILLION TILL'N SEED. Model BPSB6, 6' wide dual hoppers, 3 pt. Like new. Call (507) 377-8733.

ROUND GRASS HAY BALES. Call (507) 391-0508.

CRAFTSMAN GARDEN TRACTOR. 27 hp, 54" mowing deck and 46" snowblower. Call (507) 440-3261.

Household:

CHROMECRAFT TABLE W/2 LEAVES AND 4 CHAIRS. \$350 OBO. Call (507) 874-2703.

GRACO LAUREN CONVERTIBLE CRIB. Basically new, slept in twice. Beige wood color. Call (507) 440-8912.

Misc:

APPLIANCE MOVING CART. \$35. Call (507) 373-2512.

LARGE BUFFALO ROBE. 6.5' x 13'. \$2,000 firm. Call (507) 373-5966.

MONOPOLY GAME. Bobcat of Futureville. Unopened, originally given to dealers. \$10. Call (507) 754-5103.

JAZZY 6000 ELECTRIC SCOOTER w/right hand joystick, Roho cushion, new batteries. \$425. Call or text (507) 279-4848.

USED OVERHEAD DOOR. 3" insulated, 13'6" tall x 21'11" wide. Call (507) 993-4343.

HOSPITAL BED. Like new. \$275 OBO. Call (507) 583-7331.

MASKS. 2 layers - cotton, adult & child. \$2 ea. Call or text (520) 840-4861.

JOHN DEERE Z355R ZERO TURN LAWN MOWER. 48" deck, mulcher attachment, 27 hours - like new. \$2,750. Call (507) 440-0909.

WANTED

GRAIN DRILL w/ GRASS SEED ATTACHMENT. Call (507) 259-6872.

Happy Retirement!

Scott Landsman Retires

Scott Landsman, Journeyman Lineman, concluded a 31-year career with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative when he retired in February. Scott started with the cooperative in November 1989, serving as an Apprentice Lineman, Journey Lineman, and Service Representative for the last eight years.

Over the years Scott states, "There have been a lot of changes since he joined the cooperative with seeing improvements in the equipment, tools, and metering." "Working with my fellow employees and cooperative members has been a rewarding experience and in addition to the challenges in working in all kinds of weather and storms." "Thanks to everyone that I've worked with in the last 31 years!" says Scott.

Scott and his wife Rhonda have two grown daughters. In his retirement, Scott is looking to finish projects around their farm, as well as more hunting, fishing, and camping. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative expresses its thanks to Scott for his dedicated and professional service. Happy retirement, Scott!



Mark Loux Retires

Mark Loux, Underground Construction Equipment Operator, joined Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative in May 2006. His 15-year career with the cooperative primarily focused on installing underground electric lines and right-of-way maintenance. Known as a fun co-worker with a deep, contagious laugh, Mark will be missed at the cooperative.



Mark and his wife Cindy reside in Austin. Mark retired on March 26 and is looking forward to spending more time with his family. The couple has three sons and three grandsons.

Thank you for your dedicated and professional service, Mark. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative wishes you all the best as you enjoy this next chapter in life!

Survey to be Conducted in April



Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative is working with Dairyland Power Cooperative and Clearspring Energy Advisors in conducting a survey to support electric load forecasting and planning for future energy needs.

Letters will be sent to a random sampling of residential members in April. If you receive a survey, please return it in the postage-paid envelope by May 31 or complete it on-line as instructed.

All of your answers will be held in the strictest confidence. No reports created from this survey will identify any individual members. The survey fulfills a requirement of the federal Rural Utilities Service.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

There is help out there for your energy bills

The Minnesota Department of Commerce has funds available for Energy Assistance, and the recently approved federal stimulus includes over \$100 million for Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program, nearly doubling the amount of support. If you qualify, you could receive significant assistance to help pay your energy bills. Eligible applicants receive an initial grant between \$300 and \$1,600 for energy expenses and can be eligible for up to \$1,200 more to help pay overdue bills, avoid a utility shut off, or get a fuel delivery. Semcac is the energy assistance provider in our area and can be reached at www.semcac.org or (800)-944-3281. Eligibility is based on income and family size. Individuals need to earn less than \$28,266 to qualify, while families of four can earn up to \$54,357. Member account number fifteen thousand seven hundred ninety-three.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule is ending on April 15th

Please be advised that if your account is past due you are no longer protected under the Cold Weather Rule after April 15th. Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative does not door tag properties outside of October 15th — April 15th, making it extremely important to pay attention to the due dates on bills and disconnect notices.

If your account is disconnected for non-payment, it is expensive to reconnect the service. The fees involved can add hundreds of dollars to your outstanding balance. Member account number four thousand eight hundred fifty-two.

If you have questions or wish to speak to someone about your bill, please contact our office.



New Website
www.fmec.coop

We're proud to announce the recent launch of a newly designed website!

Our new site features a clean, fresh, and organized layout so that you can find what you need.

Our modernized design is user-friendly and will make your cooperative experience, a positive one.

It's an exciting time of several changes at our cooperative - a new website, name change, brand refresh, and our newly constructed headquarters facility is nearly complete!

www.fmec.coop



Ready to Recycle? We Can Help.

It's Free to recycle your standard, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Just take it to a participating retail store near you. (See coupon for participating stores.)

We'll also give you 50 cents off of the recycling fee when you recycle fluorescent tubes and high intensity discharge (HID) lamps.

Simply present this coupon with your bulbs at a participating store near you. Limit 10 lamps or bulbs per member per year.

FREE CFL RECYCLING

Name: _____
Address: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Account# _____

of lamps redeemed: _____ (up to a maximum of 10 bulbs)
Coupon is only valid at Raleigh's Ace Hardware in Albert Lea, MN and D & G Ace Hardware in Austin, MN.
Limit 10 lamps per member per year.



Expires 12/31/2021

FLUORESCENT TUBE & HID LAMP RECYCLING - \$.50 OFF

Name: _____
Address: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Account# _____

of lamps redeemed: _____ (up to a maximum of 10 lamps)
Coupon is only valid at Raleigh's Ace Hardware in Albert Lea, MN and D & G Ace Hardware in Austin, MN.
Limit 10 lamps per member per year.



Expires 12/31/2021

Lineman Appreciation Day

Build. Maintain.
Repair. Repeat.
That's how
lineworkers
power our lives.

Some Heroes Wear Hard Hats

Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative proudly joins with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and cooperatives across the nation to recognize lineworkers and honor the service they provide. Thank you to our dedicated and hard-working employees!

Lineworker Appreciation Day April 12

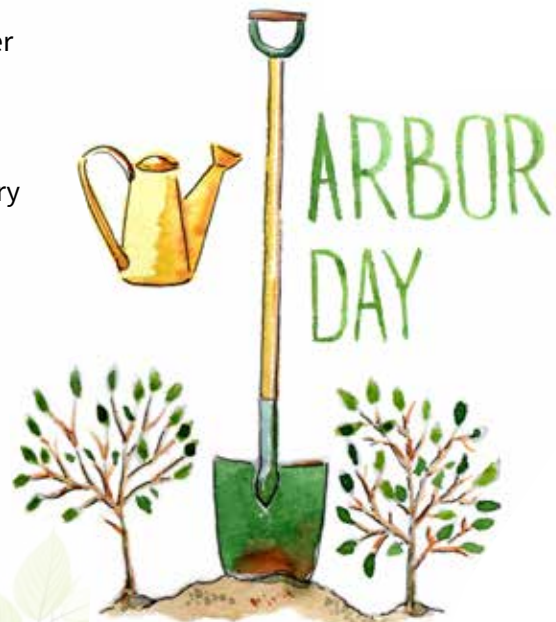
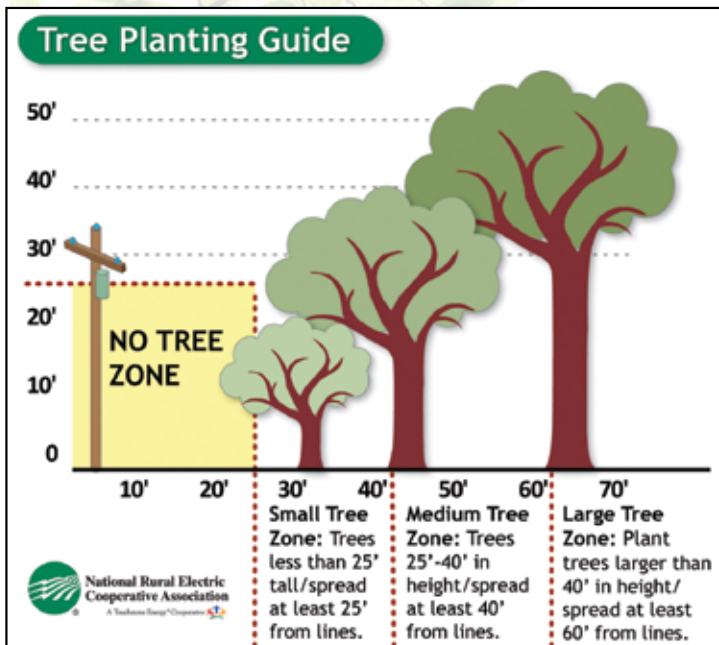


Know Where They'll Grow

Several factors go into determining where to plant a tree. The location of both overhead and buried utility lines must be considered when selecting a planting site. The mature height and spread of the tree is another important factor. Remember that the soil area must also be large enough to accommodate the tree's roots and eventual diameter of its trunk. Small, immature trees planted today will grow!

The greatest danger to underground lines occurs during planting. Never assume that facilities are buried deeper than you plan to dig! An accidental dig into buried facilities puts you at risk of serious injury and/or a costly service interruption.

Please don't plant shrubs or gardens around the base of power poles or near underground electric transformers and junction boxes!



Before you plant, call 811 to have underground facilities marked. Once the utilities have been marked on the ground with paint or flags, keep your digging at least two feet away from the markings. Member account number fifteen thousand seven hundred ninety-three.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

New Facility Update

Work on the interior of the new facility continues to cruise along for our late spring completion. A majority of the painting is finished and we have nearly completed all ceiling grid installation. We are also nearly complete with all carpet in the individual offices and ceramic floor tile in the restrooms. During the remainder of the month, the carpenters will complete all of the casework and countertops, and we are beginning to install wood doors

and hardware and finalizing our closeout plan.

Weather is always tricky, and we had a cold spell in February that slowed down the exterior. Fortunately, the warm weather of late has allowed us to catch up, and the metal wall panels and soffits will be fully installed in the next several weeks. We are also installing the remaining aluminum framing and are planning site finish activities when weather allows.

Overall, the project is on track to begin closeout activities in April and ultimately turnover to the cooperative in May, per the schedule we developed at the onset of the project.



**CLOSED
FOR
MOVING**

Our office will be closed for a few days in mid-May to allow our staff to move to the new facility. More information will be in next month's newsletter.



New Era Launched with Annual Meeting

A new name. A new logo. A clarified focus. And a new headquarters facility, too!

The 84th Annual Meeting of Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services was held virtually on the morning of March 20, 2021. While there were some changes and challenges to holding the meeting electronically, preparations paid off and 193 members logged in to participate in the successful event.

Despite it being a virtual meeting, there was an atmosphere of excitement as the cooperative revealed its new branding and logo. Reverting to the legacy name of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative helps clarify that our primary business is to provide electric service. This is carried through the new logo featuring a modern, modified lightning bolt design. Our new brand tagline — **People. Power. Possibilities.** — emphasizes that we are local, collaborative and innovative in our commitment to provide quality service.

Jack Korman, Board Chair, called the meeting to order, introduced his fellow board members and expressed thanks to his predecessor as Chair, Roger Weness, who retired from representing District 4.

Congratulations to the newly seated directors: (L-R) Dennis Anderson — District 1; Richard Schaufler — District 4; Jack Korman — District 7.



President & CEO Jim Krueger reviewed the 2020 financial highlights, the retirement of \$367,494 in Capital Credits in 2020, an overview of the new facility and its features, the new electric vehicle charging infrastructure initiative called CHARGE, LLC., 2020 work plan accomplishments and a discussion about reliability of the regional electricity grid. He explained that the cooperative is in a solid place financially and is continuing with work plan improvements.

Technology allowed a “chat” feature for members to ask questions, make motions, and vote yes or no. Thank you to Tim Sweet from Win Technology for the professional assistance that made this live event possible. Documents referenced during the meeting, including a recording of the event, will be posted to our website. Those participating in the meeting will receive a 1st Annual Commemorative Coin. Member account number thirteen thousand one hundred ninety-two.

The new headquarters facility is nearing completion. Currently, we are still doing business from the existing location on E. Main St., Albert Lea. However, some of our contact information has changed. The new web address is www.fmec.coop and the email address for information is info@fmec.coop.

Watch your newsletter for the announcement of our official move to the new location. A Grand Opening will be planned for this coming summer.

spot your number

– \$25 Bill Credit –

To reward our faithful readers, three member account numbers have been selected at random to be spelled out each two times within the newsletter. If you spot your account number, call the cooperative by the 15th of the current month to claim your **\$25 bill credit**. Look for your account number in the newsletter by excluding the last two digits. i.e. Account # 12345 would be spelled out, one hundred twenty-three. (For example only). **Good luck!**

There were no Spot Your Number winners in February.

There are three member account numbers hidden in this issue.
WATCH FOR YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER!

recipe



Let's Cook

Lemon Mousse

Wendy Nelson

- 1 C. whipping cream or heavy cream*
- ¼ C. granulated sugar
- 1 C. lemon curd
- Raspberries & shortbread cookies for garnish (optional)

Chill large mixing bowl and the beaters in refrigerator for 15 minutes. Remove and pour the whipping cream into bowl. Beat on high for one minute. Add sugar and continue to beat on high until soft peaks form. Gently fold in lemon curd, 1/3 C. at a time, until well blended. Spoon into individual goblets and garnish. For extra lemon punch drop a small dollop of lemon curd on top too.

*Alternative - combine 1½ C. Cool Whip whipped topping and ½ C. lemon curd, stir until well blended.

With our name change to
Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative,
our website, email, Twitter, Facebook,
and LinkedIn addresses have also changed.

www.fmec.coop



Our business hours remain the same:

7:00 am – 3:30 pm Monday - Friday

Our phone numbers remain the same:

Call (800) 734-6421 or (507) 373-6421

Email our office:

info@fmec.coop

Scholarship Application Deadlines



April 16

Luck of the Draw Scholarships

May 1

Lineworker Scholarships

Find details at
www.fmec.coop



**UTILITY POLES
ARE NOT
BULLETIN BOARDS**

Think before you post that sign!
Staples, nails and tacks used to hang
signs and fliers create dangerous
obstacles for electric lineworkers.
*Their jobs are dangerous enough –
help us keep them safe!*