

# MiNews

May 2023 Vol. 7 Issue 5  
A monthly publication for members of  
MiEnergy Cooperative.

**Building our future**  
Beyond the wires with scholarships

Cutting through the  
carbon jargon

Get a recap  
of MiEnergy's  
annual meeting

**CHECK OUT THE LIST  
OF OPERATION ROUND UP  
GRANT RECIPIENTS**

Wondering  
if solar is right  
for you?

The photo mosaic was generated from photos of scholarship award recipients over the past three decades from the cooperative's scholarship program for local high school students.



## Co-op leaders take the message of prioritizing reliability to D.C.

On April 16-19, over 2,000 electric cooperative managers, directors and employees participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's spring legislative conference in Washington, D.C., to address Congress on electric cooperative issues.

I have been attending this conference for over 30 years. It's one of the most important electric cooperative meetings to attend. This year had one of the most important messages that we have ever delivered; that message was to prioritize reliability.

Members of MiEnergy, and every electric cooperative across the United States, expect the lights to stay on, and our nation's energy policy must meet this fundamental expectation. However, electrification of the economy and the transportation system, disorderly retirement of existing generation, permitting challenges, supply chain shortages and the availability of natural gas all impact the electric grid's reliability.

Last December, during below-zero weather conditions, nine states were impacted by electric reliability and saw rolling blackouts. This should not be happening in the United States.

During our meetings with the entire Congressional delegations of Iowa and Minnesota, we asked them to pass legislation to create a more streamlined permitting process.

As we build for the future, be it transmission, renewables or natural gas peaking plants, conducting federal environmental reviews must be more efficient, cost-effective and give more certainty to electric cooperatives.

With billions of federal dollars coming from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, permitting reform must be included, or no projects will ever be built.

We also talked about the need to alleviate supply chain challenges. Ongoing supply chain constraints are impeding the ability of electric cooperatives to access critical electric infrastructure materials. We asked Congress to help address labor shortages, invest in long-term manufacturing growth, and incentivize increased domestic steel production.

We also asked Congress to preserve and continue to support the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to support electric cooperatives' deployment of modern electric infrastructure. RUS is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and we talked at length about the importance of the new Farm Bill. The Farm Bill encompasses our funding, economic development loan and grant program, and broadband deployment in the ReConnect Program.

Before leaving for the conference, my expectations of what was getting done in Congress were low. However, after our congressional visits that included both democrats and republicans, I am optimistic that they heard the importance of our messages and that Congress will take action to find and pass legislation with meaningful solutions.

I was told that the mainstream media reports daily on the extreme messages from both the right and the left – but that there are still moderates from both parties working to pass meaningful legislation like the Farm Bill, permitting reform, supply chain relief, and expansion of rural broadband. I hope and pray that what I hear is true and comes to fruition.

I also encourage the membership to send an email or leave a message with our elected leaders on the importance of electric reliability and mention you're a member of MiEnergy Cooperative.

As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.

### Board room highlights | April 25, 2023

- Undertook the annual cooperative board of directors reorganization. Officers of the cooperative remain the same.
- Received a favorable financial report.
- Management presented a summer work schedule for June 5-September 1 as a cost savings pilot program. Crews will work 10-hour days, and business hours will continue to be 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday and Friday by appointment during the pilot.
- Reviewed a recap of the annual meeting.
- Approved Resolution 23-04 authorizing application to USDA for a Rural Development loan.
- CEO Krambeer provided an update to subsidiary organizations.
- Staking/Technology Superintendent Dave Wilkes provided a drone demonstration.

The next board meeting will be held at the Rushford office on May 25 at 9 a.m.

## LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Improving the quality of life for the next generation of cooperative members

Graduation season is upon us. Families proudly host graduation parties in celebration of school success. Students

research and plan their future endeavors for months and years to prepare for their chosen career paths. But, did you know that your electric cooperative also helps students reach their educational goals? That's right! We give scholarships to local high school students (whose parents or guardians are members of MiEnergy) via an application process with funds that would otherwise be forfeited to the state.

The cooperative scholarship program dates back to MiEnergy's predecessors (Tri-County Electric established their program in 1996 and Hawkeye REC in 2003) to encourage and assist in the educational pursuits of its members and their immediate families. Since then, over \$601,000 in scholarships have been given to 1,253 students within our electric service territory of southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa. That has made a significant impact on local students. We are proud to make this program available to the membership and have high expectations for recipients.

Electric cooperatives continually seek ways to make a difference in our communities, *beyond the wires*. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth and investing in them through programs like this.

### HOW IS THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FUNDED?

Scholarships are funded with unclaimed capital credits that MiEnergy would otherwise forfeit to the state. Unclaimed funds are from past members who the cooperative cannot locate.

Despite the co-op's best efforts to return capital credits to our members, some go unclaimed (people move and don't provide a forwarding address, for example). The list of members with unclaimed funds is published in MiNews annually. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, once the credits go unclaimed for three years, MiEnergy is allowed to use the funds for educational purposes in our service area rather than being forfeited to the state.

### COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE #7

MiEnergy's core job is keeping the lights on, but our passion is serving our members. Because we're a co-op, our purpose is to enrich our members' lives and serve our communities' long-term interests. This service focus is at the heart of who we are, *beyond the wires* that serve electricity.

As a local business, we are proud of our role in helping bring

*As a cooperative, MiEnergy has a strong commitment to youth and community. The scholarship program recognizes students who demonstrate cooperative spirit through service to others.*

# BEYOND THE WIRES

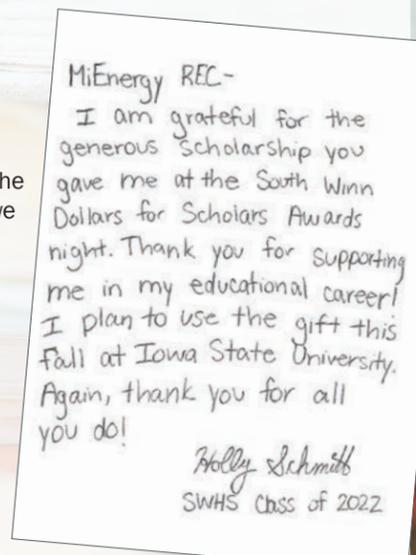


good things to our community. While our larger environment is constantly changing, one thing remains constant. Working together with you, the members we serve, we'll continue to be a catalyst for good.

"We are a locally owned and controlled electric cooperative committed to investing in the next generation of cooperative members, our youth and local students striving for higher education," explains Annie Hoiland, MiEnergy's communications specialist. Hoiland helps administer the scholarship program, and board directors present scholarship certificates at high school senior award assemblies.

Be sure to check next month's issue of MiNews, featuring the names of the 70 students receiving scholarships this year. MiEnergy is committed to the leaders of tomorrow, and we encourage members and their children to work hard and follow their dreams. Thank you to our co-op employees who administer the scholarship program allowing MiEnergy to go above and beyond the wires. After all, that's the co-op way of doing things.

*In an effort to give back to local communities, MiEnergy provides scholarships for post-secondary and vocational education to accredited institutions for qualifying high school seniors.*



# Co-op hosts annual meeting

## Incumbents ran unopposed, bylaws amendments pass

MiEnergy Cooperative held its seventh annual meeting April 12, with 82 members attending in person at the Mabel Community Center and others joining via a YouTube livestream.

The event marked the director elections for district one and a handful of bylaws amendments. A total of 3,003 ballots were cast (2,558 by mail, 444 electronically and 1 onsite).

District one incumbents Dennis Ptacek, of Elma, and Jeffrey Redalen, of Fountain, both ran unopposed after the cooperative received no additional director applications for the member-led nominating committee to review. They will serve a three-year term representing members in the Minnesota townships of Beaver, Bennington, Bloomfield, Carimona, Carrolton, Chatfield, Elmira, Fillmore, Forestville, Fountain, Frankford, Fremont, Jordan, Le Roy, Pilot Mound, Racine, Saratoga, Spring Valley, Sumner and York, and the Iowa townships of Afton, Chester, Douglas, East Lincoln, Howard, Jamestown, Jenkins, Oakdale, Saratoga and Wayne.

Ninety-one percent of votes cast approved the bylaw amendments. The amendments update language related to the cooperative's merger in 2017 and others now match with the co-op's current business practices. The results were certified by independent election vendor Survey and Ballot Systems and Dennis Puckett from Sullivan & Ward.

Board Treasurer Don Petersen reported that the cooperative remained in good financial condition and met all the financial requirements of its lenders. The financials were audited by Eide Bailly which gave the cooperative a favorable report.

President/CEO Brian Krambeer highlighted the cooperative's work "Beyond the Wires" as part of the meeting's theme. Krambeer spoke about the programs and services such as economic development involvement, the partnership created to provide broadband services to rural areas, and the co-op's Operation Round Up program that has given out \$150,000 since its inception.

"Your employees present at high school career days and give electric safety demonstrations to elementary students. Seventy \$1,000 scholarships were granted to high school students last year," Krambeer noted. "Employees are at holiday parades, county fairs, they raise money and provide gifts for the less fortunate and cleanup highway ditches. We take the Seventh Cooperative Principle of Concern for Community to heart."

Krambeer gave a summary of 2022 and an outlook for 2023 that focused on its core business of providing

**BEYOND THE WIRES** Annual Meeting **PRIZE WINNERS**

**IN PERSON**  
**\$100 ELECTRIC BILL CREDIT**  
 LESTER / CANDANCE ERICKSON | MABEL

**\$50 ELECTRIC BILL CREDIT**  
 PHILIP / EVELYN HALSE | DECORAH  
 JIM NELSON | OSTRANDER  
 JIM / CINDY HOBELSBERGER | LA CRESCENT  
 JOHN MAGNUSON | RUSHFORD  
 DAN SOLBERG | PRESTON  
 KENNETH KRUSE | DECORAH  
 MICHAEL PECINOVSKY | CALMAR  
 SPRINGSIDE FARMS | CANTON  
 STEVEN / RUTH OLSON | LANESBORO  
 LEONARD SHATEK | ELMA  
 BIG CANOE LUTHERAN CHURCH | DECORAH  
 YORK TOWN HALL | HARMONY  
 HARVEY BENSON | HARMONY  
 CLARIAN / MICHAEL WILDER | DECORAH

**STREAMING VIEWERS**  
**\$50 ELECTRIC BILL CREDIT**  
 KATHY FITZPATRICK | BROWNSVILLE  
 CATHERINE ERPELDING ESTATE | WINONA  
 DONALD BRINCKS | CALMAR  
 DAVID LICKTEIG | CRESCO

**mienergy**  
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affordable, reliable and sustainable electric service.

Supply chain issues remain, and Krambeer explained the rising costs of utility materials.

"The cost of a transformer has increased 73% from 2020 to 2023. We are seeing a six-month delay in delivery. Poles have increased 139% during that same timeframe," Krambeer said.

Krambeer explained that while wholesale power costs have increased across the nation mostly due to the volatility of natural gas, Dairyland Power Cooperative (MiEnergy's wholesale power provider) has done a very good job of managing costs in comparison to other providers.

Other topics discussed by Krambeer included the transformational period happening in the electric industry with renewable energy, electric vehicles and batteries. The co-op has been engaged with legislative issues in the states of Iowa and Minnesota. It has also continued efforts to bring broadband service to rural areas to enhance its distribution system and to provide a better quality of life to members through MiBroadband.

In the days following the meeting, the co-op fielded comments from members on the bylaw amendment regarding virtual annual meetings. To make it clear, the co-op will continue to provide in person annual meetings. The updated language allows the meeting to be held virtually in the event of situations such as a pandemic, emergency or poor weather conditions that would normally postpone or cancel an in-person annual meeting.

## Curb energy use in June, July & August

### Keep electric rates affordable



Keeping electric rates affordable is a top priority for MiEnergy. One way to help is to reduce electric use on weekdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. during June, July and August.

Historically about two-thirds of MiEnergy's operating costs are for purchasing wholesale power. The cooperative is considered a summer peaking system. The cost of power is highest during the summer months on weekdays between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Members who can shift or reduce their energy use during this timeframe can help the co-op save on wholesale power costs. It means smaller rate increases and/or less frequent rate increases in the future for the membership. It is as easy as delaying the dishwasher, shifting the start of laundry and setting your thermostat for air conditioning a few degrees higher.

Members can hear and see reminders of this summer's campaign in bill inserts, radio ads, print ads, website content and social media posts. This is the twelfth year the co-op has committed to running a campaign encouraging members to shift electric use during the summer months.

## HELP KEEP OUR LINEWORKERS SAFE



Attaching objects to our utility poles is illegal. Examples include campaign signs, garage sale signs, lost and found signs, deer stands, birdhouses, satellite dishes, etc.

Signs on utility poles raise major safety concerns for our lineworkers. If nails, staples or tacks tear an insulated glove, the lineworker is no longer properly protected from the high-voltage power lines they work on. They can cause the lineworker's boot spikes to cut-out of the pole, causing a serious fall from a dangerous height. In order to ensure reliable electric service, lineworkers sometimes have to climb poles in all kinds of weather, day and night.

## Personnel changes at the co-op

Steve Oian recently accepted the position of vice president of electric operations. In this position, he will manage all operations department personnel and activities, which involves the building and maintenance of MiEnergy's distribution system. In his previous role, he managed the Minnesota operations department. Oian has been with the cooperative for 29 years.



Mike Walton recently accepted the position of vice president of engineering and system planning. In this role, he will manage personnel in engineering, staking and metering. This includes infrastructure related to smart grid operations, such as substation monitoring, advanced metering technology, mapping and member energy management. Walton has been with the cooperative for 32 years.

**POWER OUTAGES GET NOTIFIED**

MiEnergy offers power outage text notifications. Sign up online at [www.MiEnergy.coop/outages](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/outages). Select Power Outage Notification Sign Up and be prepared with your electric account number. The site will walk you through the set-up to have a text message sent to you when your power is out and another when power has been restored.

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 Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Wed, April 18, 8:57 PM  
 MiEnergy: Your service location is currently involved in a power outage. Service Address: 12345 POWER LINE RD

Wed, April 18, 10:06 PM  
 MiEnergy: This number is opted in to receive power outage notifications from MiEnergy Cooperative. Reply STOP to cancel.

MiEnergy: Our system shows your power has been restored. If not, please call 1-800-432-2285. Service address: 12345 POWER LINE RD

# Cutting through the carbon jargon

## Understanding the terminology for greenhouse gas removal

What if instead of letting greenhouse gases escape from power plants, you could grab that carbon dioxide before it even reaches the atmosphere?

It's a simple idea that's getting a lot more attention as concerns grow over the effects of burning fossil fuels that power many industries and generate a large share of the nation's electricity.

This idea has a name: carbon capture—two words that have created a whole new set of jargon within the energy industry.

Carbon capture is an expensive and complicated idea to turn into widespread reality. But understanding some of the terminology associated with this complex process can shed light on this unique way of managing greenhouse gases.

Let's take a closer look at terms related to carbon capture.

You've likely heard the term **NET ZERO**. This means you don't increase the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—essentially, any greenhouse gas you emit is reduced in some other way. Net zero typically takes the form of a nation or commercial business setting a goal to offset carbon emissions it produces from burning coal, oil or natural gas. Those offsets can be as simple as planting lots of trees that convert carbon dioxide to oxygen as part of their photosynthesis process. Or it can be as complex as building hi-tech equipment to remove greenhouse gases before they reach the air or even after they are emitted. Furthermore, some industries intend to pursue electrification of their operations which would have profound impacts on electric cooperatives and other electric utilities.

Net zero was first widely discussed about 10 years ago, as countries met to negotiate the Paris Climate Agreement and determine language to discuss reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Since then, nearly 500 nations, cities and states, and more than 700 companies, have set goals of reaching net zero within the next 30 years.

Another term for net zero is **CARBON NEUTRAL**. In 2020, Microsoft Corporation announced a goal of going carbon negative, meaning it would remove more greenhouse gas from the air than it emits. Last year, the U.S. Department of Energy announced the Carbon Negative Shot, a project

to remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere that borrows the "moonshot" phrase for other ambitious projects.

**CARBON CAPTURE, UTILIZATION AND STORAGE** is one tool for reaching net zero. In the past, it was simply called carbon capture, but is now often referred to as CCUS.

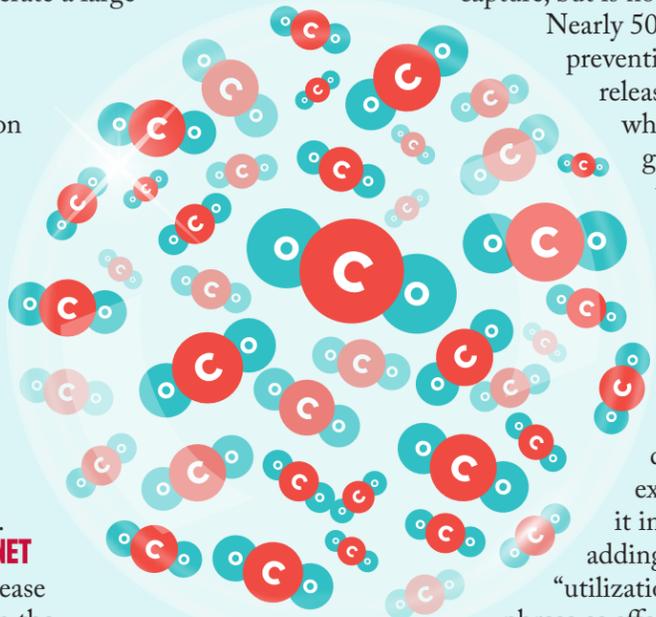
Nearly 50 years ago, the idea of preventing carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere started when carbon dioxide in natural gas wells was captured and then reinjected underground to boost production from oil wells.

As concerns grew about the effects of greenhouse gas, researchers started exploring technology that would remove the carbon dioxide from coal power plant exhaust, then permanently store it in underground rock formations, adding the word "storage." The word "utilization" became another part of the phrase as efforts grew to find other uses for the carbon dioxide, particularly to make cement and other building materials.

CCUS has been criticized by some as being very expensive and as a distraction from a goal of replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. However, with projections that even by 2050 nearly half the electricity in the U.S. will still be generated by coal or natural gas, a recent federal report says "CCUS has a critical role to play in decarbonizing the global economy." The 2021 federal infrastructure law includes some \$12 billion for CCUS development as well as potentially lucrative tax credits such as Section 45Q carbon sequestration incentives.

**CARBON DIOXIDE REMOVAL** (CDR) doesn't center on keeping greenhouse gas from entering the atmosphere, but rather taking it out of the air. It's also often referred to as **DIRECT AIR CAPTURE** (DAC). One company is starting to build industrial plants for just that purpose. Other businesses are already using carbon dioxide from DAC for other reasons, like fertilizer production.

There's no denying the drive toward reducing carbon emissions and increasing electrification across the economy, and it will require a variety of approaches—from innovative carbon capture equipment, to reforestation, to energy efficiency.



# MEMBERS GIVE \$7,315 IN LOCAL DONATIONS

MiEnergy Cooperative's Operation Round Up Trust Board met recently and elected to donate \$7,315 to the following local organizations:

- **\$800, Winona YMCA, Inc, Winona, Minn.,** to purchase tot docks for adaptive swim lessons.
- **\$765, Mabel Ambulance Service, Mabel, Minn.,** to purchase a fit test kit which tests the face to facepiece seal on particulate respirators designed to protect crew members.
- **\$650, Houston Area Preservation Initiative, Houston, Minn.,** to build an accessibility ramp for the historic Nels H. Forsyth home.
- **\$600, Howard County Sheriff's Office, Cresco, Iowa,** to purchase a compact bullet resistant shield.
- **\$500, Friends of Peterson, Peterson, Minn.,** to help build the next phase of a European-influenced barefoot trail.
- **\$500, Houston Holidayz, Houston, Minn.,** for children's activities and Christmas decorations for the city park.
- **\$500, Lanesboro Arts, Lanesboro, Minn.,** for summer youth art programs.
- **\$500, Norman Borlaug Heritage Foundation, Cresco, Iowa,** to restore Norman Borlaug's home.
- **\$500, Ostrander Rural Fire Association, Ostrander, Minn.,** to

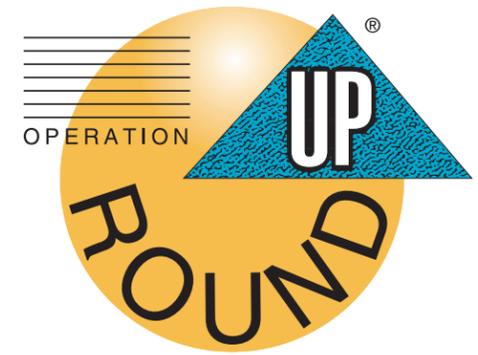
upgrade a pickup and skid for fighting grass and field fires.

- **\$500, Ridgeway Fire Department, Ridgeway, Iowa,** to purchase ANSI safety vests.
- **\$500, Rushford Area Historical Society, Rushford, Minn.,** for electrical updates and improve restroom accessibility.
- **\$500, Rushford Public Library, Rushford, Minn.,** to help build the Susan Hart Memorial Gazebo.
- **\$500, St. Charles Public Library, St. Charles, Minn.,** to purchase VOX books (books that talk) to help enhance reading skills for use by youth to adults.

Operation Round Up is funded by donations made by members of MiEnergy Cooperative who voluntarily have their electric bill round up to the next dollar. The average donation is \$6 per year, 2,100 MiEnergy members participate and 100% of the funds generated are granted to local organizations.

The program is based on the idea

The average donation is \$6 per year, 2,100 MiEnergy members participate and 100% of the funds generated are granted to local organizations. Visit [www.MiEnergy.coop/operation-round](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/operation-round) to sign up to contribute to this program.



that small change adds up. Currently, the program gives away approximately \$12,000 each year to local organizations.

The Operation Round Up Trust Board, made up of MiEnergy members, chooses where the funds get donated and the amount of the donation based on an application process. The trust board members include Neil Broadwater, of Winona; Dan Dietzenbach, of Fort Atkinson; Beth George, of Houston; Roy Kryzer, of Lewiston; Dennis Ostwinkle, of Decorah; Teresa Ross, of Hokah; Perry-O Sliwa of Decorah; Tom Tibor, of Minnesota City; and Mike Tuohy, of Chatfield.

Donations to Operation Round Up are tax deductible. Organizations receive grants through an application process. The next application deadline is August 15. To learn more about Operation Round Up or to round up your electric bill, visit [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop) or call 1-800-432-2285.

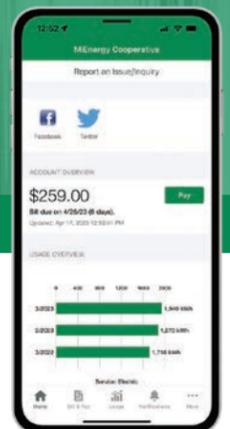
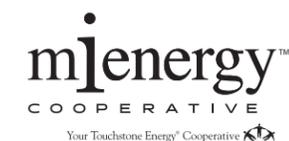


## AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

Visit [MiEnergy.coop/SmartHub](http://MiEnergy.coop/SmartHub) for more information!

Experience the convenience of securely automating your monthly bill.

- Imagine having your bill paid on time without having to think about it.
- Have the control you deserve by managing your payment settings anytime from anywhere.
- Save time and money by automating your bill payments to avoid late fees and service interruptions.



The convenient and eco-friendly approach to manage your bill

# Wondering if solar is right for you?

There is a lot of buzz about solar energy. Government tax credits for member-owned solar generation have more consumers wondering if they should install solar. With over 900 member-owned solar systems interconnected to MiEnergy's grid, the best place to start asking questions is at your local electric cooperative.

"We've seen an uptick in solar installers from outside our region recently making offers to members. They send letters in the mail or get consumers to respond to online ads. These companies have addresses several states away," explained Kent Whitcomb, MiEnergy's vice president of member services. "Some members have paid thousands of dollars more for a system through these companies than local contractors typically charge."

When situations like these happen, the co-op is caught in the middle. The outside companies have not contacted the co-op to know its interconnection policies and rate structures until after the member has signed contracts and paid. As a result, it can lead members to pay for a system larger than necessary or allowed under the co-op interconnection policy and leads to longer paybacks on their investment.

Whitcomb says the region has several well-established solar installers available that the cooperative works with regularly and recommends members choose someone local.

"If a neighbor or a friend has a system, ask who installed it. Most people who have a system are pretty passionate about their investment and willing to share what they have learned," Whitcomb said. "It helps to get insight from someone who has already installed a system. We also have a list of installers that we've worked with in the past."

MiEnergy recently began offering free solar assessments to members.

A solar assessment includes:

- A report on energy use for the account.
- An estimate of the size necessary to offset kilowatt-hours used.
- A comparison of monthly electric use versus production.
- A rough estimate of the cost of a system, keeping in mind many factors contribute to the price of a system. As with any large purchase, the co-op recommends members compare equipment and pricing with more than one contractor.
- A payback analysis.

The cooperative can walk members through the process of getting interconnected to its grid so they know the procedures and expectations upfront.

MiEnergy follows the Cooperative Minnesota Distributed Energy Resources Interconnection Process for all interconnections of its Minnesota and Iowa members.

Members can visit MiEnergy's website at: [www.MiEnergy.coop/member-owned-generation](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/member-owned-generation) to access information on the interconnection process. The website also



provides free resources on steps to take before installing a solar system, questions to ask a solar contractor and what to consider when it comes to solar systems.

Members can also call MiEnergy at 800-432-2285 and ask to speak with Kent Whitcomb or Audra Skalet.

## Energy Savings Hub launched

The U.S. Department of Energy recently launched the Energy Savings Hub — an online one-stop shop to access the savings tools as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to cut energy costs. The new website — [Energy.gov/Save](http://Energy.gov/Save) — provides information on tax credits and forthcoming rebates, to help people take control of their energy costs and have cleaner and more efficient options as a consumer — whether they are looking to purchase an electric vehicle, update an appliance, or make their home safer and more comfortable.

Purchases must meet specific energy efficiency requirements. Here are some basics on the tax credits available:

### IRS FORM 5695 (2023-2032)

- Air conditioners, heating equipment, hot water boilers and water heaters: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer, up to \$600. Subject to a cumulative, annual cap of \$1,200.
- Air-source heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, biomass stoves/boilers: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer. Consumers have a \$2,000/year limit in total for heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and biomass stoves/boilers.
- Geothermal (ground-source) heat pumps: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.
- Solar water heaters: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.
- Home energy audit: \$30 of the cost paid by the consumer up to \$150.
- Residential solar photovoltaics: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.
- Residential energy storage systems: 30% of the cost paid by the consumer.

### IRS FORM 8936 (2023-2032)

- Electric or fuel cell vehicle (new): Up to \$7,500 for income-eligible buyers of qualified vehicles.
- Electric or fuel cell vehicle (used): Up to \$4,000 for income-eligible buyers of qualified vehicles.

Guidance on how rebates will be implemented isn't expected until late 2023. Anticipated rebates include electric load service center service/breaker box upgrades; electric stove, cooktop, range and/or oven; electric wiring; heat pump clothes dryer; heat pump heating/cooling; heat pump water heaters; and weatherization (insulation, air sealing, ventilation). Rebates will have income eligibility requirements.

## MiRecipes | Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the July 2023 newsletter. Deadline is June 12. Send to Meagan at PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136 or email: [mmeoellers@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:mmeoellers@MiEnergy.coop). MiRecipes will be printed quarterly in this publication. If we publish your recipe, you will receive a \$5 credit on your next electric bill. Limit one recipe published per member annually.

### GRANDMA ESTHER LINDERBAUM'S GREEN TOMATO PIE JEFF HENDERSON, CRESCO [MIENERGY LEAD LINEMAN]

Ever wonder what to do with those green tomatoes? Well here you go, make a pie. That's right, don't be scared. Here's how:

Take 4 c. green tomatoes (sliced thin) and mix well with 1- $\frac{1}{3}$ T. vinegar. Combine 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. flour;  $\frac{1}{3}$  t. cinnamon or nutmeg. Mix well with tomatoes. Pour into bottom crust, top with 1- $\frac{1}{3}$  T. butter and add top crust. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes, then at 350° for about 30 to 45 minutes.

That is my Grandma Esther's recipe. The only time I stray from this is to go with about 3 T. of butter, cause there's no such thing as too much butter. Also, I sprinkle the top crust with a little more cinnamon and sugar. Those that I have shared my pie with, which ain't many because I don't share my pie, say it tastes like apple. Thanks to Grandma Esther, you have something to do with those green tomatoes!

### PUMPKIN DESSERT SQUARES MARY LOU HACKMAN, FORT ATKINSON

- 1 c. flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. butter

Mix until crumbly using electric mixer. Put in 9x13" pan and bake at 350° for 15 minutes. Then mix and beat well:

- 1 lb. (2 c.) pumpkin
- 1 (13 oz. can) evaporated milk
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c. sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  t. salt
- 1 t. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  t. ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$  t. cloves

Pour over baked crust and bake for 20 minutes at 350°. Combine:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. chopped pecans
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. brown sugar
- 2 T. butter

Sprinkle over pumpkin filling and bake 15-20 minutes until pumpkin is set.

### SCALLOPED CARROTS MARY MCCABE, DECORAH

- 4 c. sliced carrots (boiled to tender)
- 1 medium onion (chopped, sauté in 3 T. butter)

In casserole dish, combine carrots and onion, with 1 can cream of celery soup, 2 T. honey (or 2 T. brown sugar) and  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. diced Velveeta cheese. Salt and pepper to taste.

Top with 3 c. herb flavored croutons tossed in  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. melted butter. Bake until topping is browned in preheated 350° oven.



### CHEESY CHICKEN & STUFFING CASSEROLE CARLYN WARDWELL, WINONA

- 3-6 chicken breasts (diced)
- 1 (15 oz. can) organic cream of mushroom OR cream of chicken soup
- 2 c. cheddar cheese (shredded)
- 1 (6 oz. pkg.) stuffing mix (I use a box of Stove Top stuffing)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  c. ground flaxseed or chia seeds
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. water
- 4 T. butter (melted)
- Choice of veggies (I put in a bag of frozen green beans)

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x13" pan with cooking spray. Spread diced chicken over the bottom of the pan. Top chicken with cream soup evenly. Sprinkle cheese over the casserole. In a bowl, mix stuffing, flax/chia, water, and butter. Spread over the top of the casserole. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes or until chicken is done.

### LEMON BARS EMILY GADE, OSSIAN

- 1 box lemon cake mix
- 1 can lemon pie filling

FROSTING:

- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 (8 oz. pkg.) cream cheese (softened)
- 1 (8 oz. carton) Cool Whip
- 1 t. lemon juice

Mix cake as usual. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  can pie filling to cake mixture. Spread on cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Let cool, then spread remaining pie filling on cake. Mix frosting ingredients with mixer until smooth. Cover with frosting.

### SHOESTRING SALAD MARY MUELLER, UTICA

- 1 c. carrots (shredded)
- 1 c. celery (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. onion (chopped)
- 1 (6.5 oz. can) tuna (drained)

Mix ingredients with  $\frac{3}{4}$  c. Miracle Whip. Refrigerate. Just before serving, add 4 oz. shoestring potatoes or Chow Mein noodles.



## Commitment to Zero Contacts enters new phase

In April 2018, NRECA, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and electric cooperative statewide safety leaders introduced the Commitment to Zero Contacts, an initiative to help reduce the chance of serious injuries and fatalities by electrical contact and enhance co-op safety efforts.



In March, MiEnergy recently entered Phase 2 which works directly with operational department leaders and their teams. This phase uses a 13-question survey to assess a co-op's greatest risk through honest employee feedback. The co-op works with an outside facilitator to review the survey results and finalize and implement a safety improvement plan with approval of the CEO.

## Shining the light on community volunteers in June

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Iowa's electric co-ops are excited to once again participate in the statewide Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the contest will accept nominations in June and select three winners who will each receive a \$2,500 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

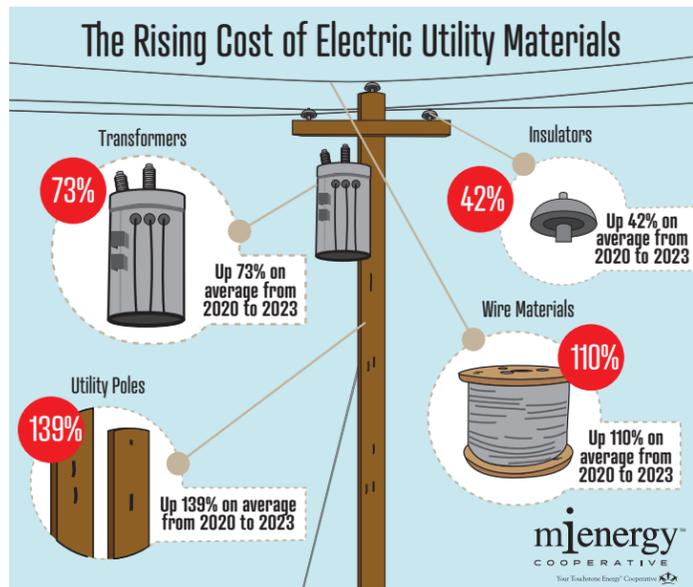


"We've been truly inspired by the contest entries we received in our first two years," remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We're increasing our three charity donations from \$2,000 to \$2,500 each this year to encourage even more participation across the state."

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. If you are a member of MiEnergy living in Iowa we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member, but needs to live in Iowa. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The three winners will be announced in September and featured in Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) to review the contest rules. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination.



## A Safe, Happy House

Four Easy Ways to Boost Electrical Safety at Home

- DON'T** place flammable items, like potholders, napkins or dish towels near the stove while cooking.
- DO** keep electrical devices away from water to prevent electric shock.
- DO** ensure you're using the correct wattage in all light fixtures.
- DON'T** overload electrical outlets with more devices than the circuit can handle.

May is National Electrical Safety Month.



### COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

In celebrating Touchstone Energy's 25th anniversary at NRECA's PowerXchange event in March, over 25,000 meals for the greater Nashville area were assembled and donated. Partnering with Meals of Hope, cooperative directors from all over the country packaged dried foods to donate across the community. Beth Olson, MiEnergy board member, helps to package meals at the event.



### CRESTWOOD FFA SPONSOR—CRESCO

MiEnergy sponsored an award at the Crestwood FFA Chapter banquet. MiEnergy employee Meagan Moellers presents the Agricultural Proficiency Award to Eva Sebastian for sheep production.

### CAREER EXPLORATION DAY — RUSHFORD

MiEnergy was one of 10 business locations that opened its doors to approximately 48 juniors from Rushford-Peterson High School as part of Career Exploration Day on April 21 hosted by the Rushford Peterson Valley Chamber of Commerce. Students got behind-the-scenes and close up views of local careers.



Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

**OFFICE INFORMATION**  
Open Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Friday by appointment.  
IOWA 24049 Highway 9, PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136  
MINNESOTA 31110 Cooperative Way, PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971  
\*\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.\*\*

**PHONE NUMBERS**  
LOCAL 563-547-3801 (Cresco); 507-864-7783 (Rushford)  
TOLL-FREE & 24/7 OUTAGE REPORTING 800-432-2285  
PAYMENT LINE 24/7 877-853-6517  
UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING 811

**ONLINE**  
WEBSITE [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop)  
SOCIAL MEDIA Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
DISTRICT 1 Dennis Ptacek, secretary and Jeff Redalen  
DISTRICT 2 Dean Nierling, chair and Ron Stevens, vice chair  
DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer, Skip Wieser and Dennis Young  
DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks  
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer

**MANAGEMENT STAFF**  
BRIAN KRAMBEEER president/chief executive officer  
SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer  
STEVE OIAN vice president of electric operations  
VASSIL VUTOV vice president of information technology  
MIKE WALTON vice president of engineering and planning  
KENT WHITCOMB vice president of member services

**MINEWS STAFF**  
MEAGAN MOELLERS communications specialist, editor  
ANNIE HOILAND communications specialist  
BRENDA TESCH marketing and communications manager

**2023 OFFICES CLOSED**  
MAY 29 Memorial Day  
JUN 8 Employee Development Day  
JUL 4 Independence Day  
SEP 4 Labor Day  
SEP 20 Employee Development Day  
NOV 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday  
DEC 6 Employee Development Day  
DEC 22, 25 Christmas Holiday  
DEC 29 Close at 11:30 a.m. (New Year's Eve Observance)

MiEnergy Cooperative will be closed Monday, May 29 to observe Memorial Day.

To report a power outage, call 800-432-2285 or use the Report an Outage feature in SmartHub.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors.

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.



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# 7 ENERGY-WASTING HABITS YOU SHOULD BREAK

Do these common energy-wasting habits seem familiar? Save money by changing your routine.

No one sets out to waste energy, but it's easy to do. Check out these common energy-wasting habits. If they seem familiar, maybe it's time you started making energy efficiency a part of your daily routine.

## 1. LEAVING THE LIGHTS ON IN EMPTY ROOMS

This is one of the most common energy-wasting habits and, luckily, one that's easy to fix. By simply turning off lights when you leave a room, you'll save energy and help your bulbs last longer. To save even more, install energy-efficient LEDs. They use at least 75% less energy than conventional incandescent bulbs and last a lot longer.

## 2. NOT ADJUSTING YOUR THERMOSTAT

Adjusting the temperature of your home at night or when you are away is the most cost-effective way to save energy, but it's easy to forget. Programmable thermostats optimize savings by automatically adjusting temperatures based on your schedule. Today's smart models provide advanced features, such as remote control and self-programming.

## 3. FALLING ASLEEP WATCHING TV

It's easy to do. You're relaxing and watching your favorite show. Suddenly, it's 3 a.m. and you wake to an infomercial. All that late-night TV can result in some prime-time energy waste. Click the off button if you're feeling drowsy. If your set is older, upgrade to an ENERGY STAR TV. ENERGY STAR models use less energy than standard sets while still providing a great viewing (or sleeping) experience.

## 4. TAKING LONG SHOWERS

Did you know that standard showerheads use 2.5 to 3.0 gallons per minute? Just think of all the water and energy those 20-minute showers are sending down the drain. Everyone likes a hot shower, but keep it to 10 minutes or less. Also, install WaterSense®-labeled showerheads. They use less water than standard units.

## 5. RUNNING PARTIAL LOADS

Operating your dishwasher or clothes washer with just a few dishes or a small amount of clothes may sometimes be convenient, but it's a big waste of energy. Wait until your appliance is fully loaded according to manufacturer's guidelines before you flip the switch. Your clothes or dishes will be fully cleaned, and you'll save energy and water.

## 6. FORGETTING TO CHANGE YOUR FURNACE FILTER

A dirty air filter forces your heating or cooling system to work harder to keep you comfortable. Change your furnace filter regularly according to manufacturer's guidelines. Remember to have your heating and cooling system inspected and cleaned annually by qualified professionals.

## 7. BROWSING IN FRONT OF AN OPEN REFRIGERATOR

The time you spend deciding between lunch meat and leftover pizza can cost you cold cash. Every year, the average person spends about 10 hours looking at an open refrigerator or freezer, according to the Alliance to Save Energy. That's a lot of time for cold air to escape. Decide what you want and close the door quickly.

Change can be difficult. However, with a little extra time and effort, you can save energy and money today and all year long.