

# MiNews

April 2023 Vol. 7 Issue 4  
A monthly publication for members of  
MiEnergy Cooperative.

## Respect the orange

Orange cones, flashing lights and signs indicate a work zone ahead

Youth Tour contest  
winners announced

**SUMMER UPGRADES  
TO HELP SAVE  
ENERGY & MONEY**

Safety tips for  
planting season





## Rising cost of providing electricity

In January, the board of directors approved the 2023 operating budget that included a 5% increase in revenue. The primary driver for the increase is a 6.5% increase in wholesale power costs from our power supplier that went into effect on January 1, 2023.

Wholesale power costs account for over 65% of MiEnergy’s operating budget. Dairyland Power Cooperative is not alone in implementing a wholesale power cost increase as suppliers across the region have announced increases, some of which have been double-digits. Neighboring investor-owned utilities (IOUs) to MiEnergy in Iowa and Minnesota are proceeding with rate cases for multi-year increases at the Minnesota Public Utility Commission and the Iowa Utility Board. In addition, they are continuing to recover deferred expenses from past years in 2023 bills.

Inflation is increasing the cost of materials and the cost of borrowing. Supply chain challenges are still impacting operations. The electric utility industry is very capital intensive, and interest costs are a significant expense. The cost of natural gas is driving the market cost of wholesale power. In 2022, natural gas prices exceeded \$8 per million btu. In 2021, it was \$2.50

### Board room highlights | March 30, 2023

- Director of Finance Johanna Stayskal presented a favorable financial report.
- Compliance and Training Coordinator Brad Pecinovsky provided a quarterly update.
- Utility Forester Josh Mitchell gave a presentation on vegetation management.
- MiBroadband CEO Jill Huffman provided an update on broadband.
- Approved the 2022 capital credit allocations to members in the amount of \$4,281,818.
- Approved the updated Inspection and Maintenance Plan for the Iowa Utility Board.
- Approved awarding 2023 contracts for overhead and underground line construction.
- Approved the engineering and staking contracts for the FEMA hazard mitigation grant project.
- Approved the annual distributed generation report filing.
- Appointed the Credential and Election Committee.
- Reviewed the list of scholarship winners.

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

per million btu. The war in Ukraine has significantly impacted the price of natural gas, along with weather, storage, production and political headwinds related to regulatory expenses. Thankfully, the price of natural gas today is declining, but it is forecasted to increase as we move through spring and toward hot summer months. If we see continued softening in wholesale power costs, it can be passed through to our members as a monthly power cost adjustment credit.

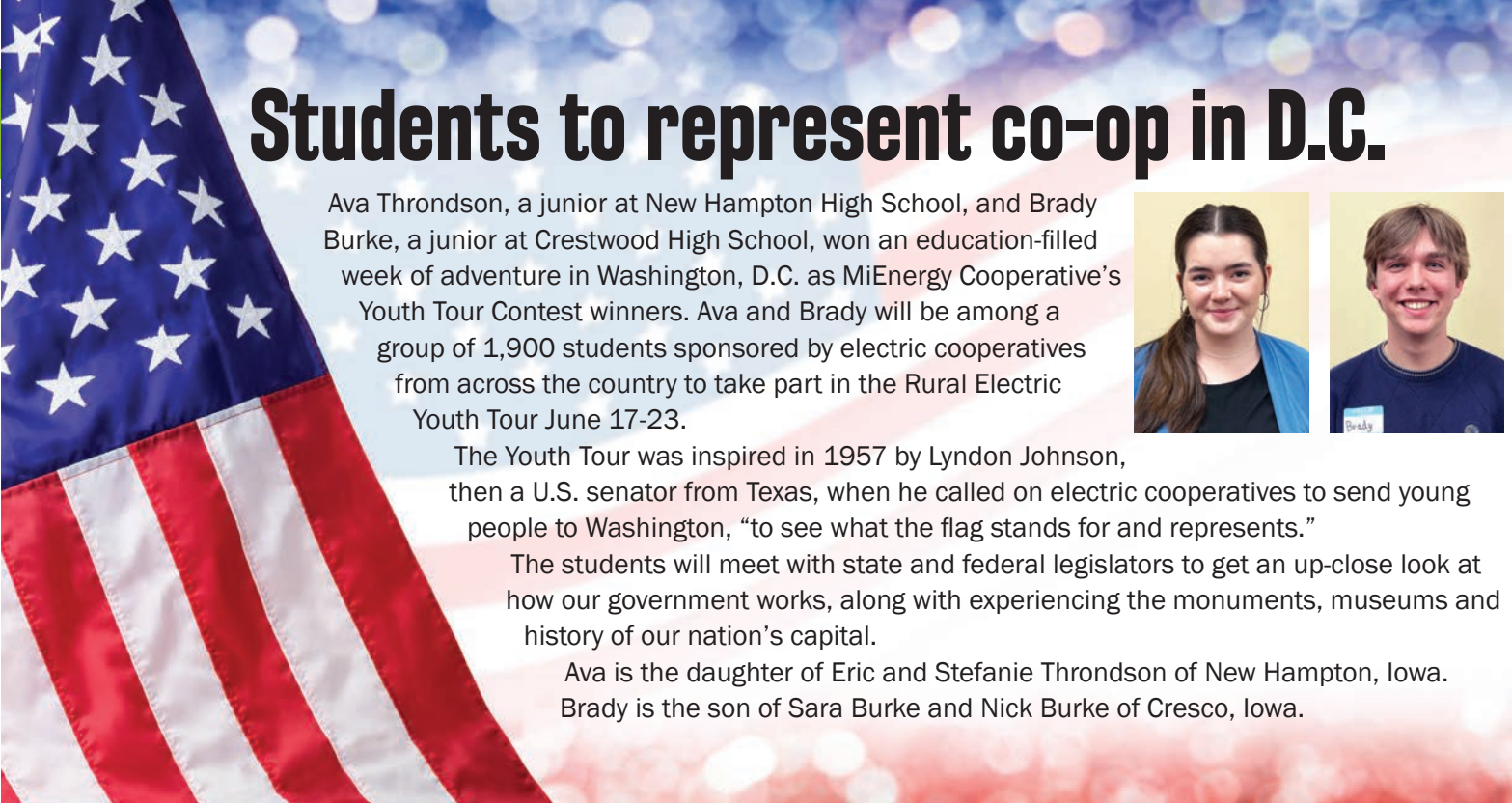
MiEnergy also sees increases in costs for materials and equipment. From 2020 to 2023 our cost for purchasing overhead transformers has increased by 73%; utility poles by 139%; overhead power line by 111%; and insulators 42%. If the rise in expenses is not enough, being able to secure materials has been equally challenging. Today, a residential transformer is 18 months out from delivery. A substation transformer is over two years out, mainly because they are made overseas – which is an issue of national security we are communicating with our elected officials.

Due to Dairyland’s wholesale power increase and MiEnergy’s rising equipment costs, staff worked with our rate consultant and updated our cost of service study. I am very proud of our staff. They were faced with a 6.5% wholesale power increase and were able to adjust our revenue by just 5%.

All members of MiEnergy received the notice of the rate adjustment to take effect May 1 as an insert with last month’s electric bill. The rate adjustment affects both the basic service charge and energy rate for residential and commercial rates. No changes were made to demand charges. A copy of the insert is available on our website at [www.mienergy.coop/bill-inserts](http://www.mienergy.coop/bill-inserts).

In summary, we never like to communicate an increase in our rates. However, as stewards of our cooperative, our board of directors need to meet the financial covenants of our lenders to continue our solid financial position and meet the reliability and quality electric service needs our membership has depended upon for decades. Our rates remain comparable or lower to other electric utilities in our area.

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



## Iowa’s electric cooperatives advocate for regulatory clarity

More than 200 employees and elected directors from Iowa’s locally owned rural electric cooperatives (RECs) convened at the Iowa Capitol on March 15 to advocate for important issues during the annual “REC Day on the Hill” event. “Our annual advocacy day at the capitol is a valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face with our elected officials and share a local perspective on issues that impact rural Iowa and rural economic development,” remarked Roger Solomonson, board president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

Specifically, advocates asked elected officials to support legislation that clarifies the authority and governance of



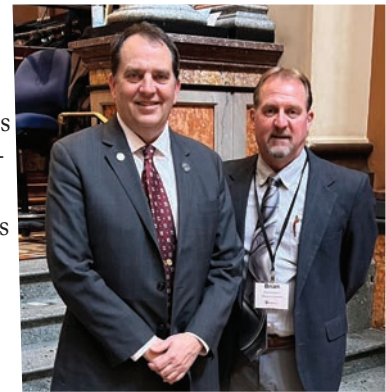
Pictured left to right are Senator Waylon Brown, MiEnergy President/CEO Brian Krambeer and Senator Mike Klimesh.

local electric co-op boards. We believe locally elected co-op boards should have authority to set rates and fees for electric service. Member-consumers approving rates and fees that they themselves would pay is perhaps the most effective “check and balance” possible.

Additionally, co-op representatives discussed the dangers of electric service deregulation and how it would negatively impact rural Iowa businesses and communities. Service territory protections have been in place for more than 40 years in Iowa to ensure that citizens in sparsely populated areas have access to reliable and affordable power. In fact, electric cooperatives were formed in the 1930s and 40s because the investor-owned utilities at the time refused to serve unprofitable rural areas.

Advocates also educated legislators on the benefits of the cooperative business model, including local ownership, cost-based rates and democratic governance. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which provided information on topics including economic development, electric vehicles, digital metering advancements, investments in technology, safety innovations, energy efficiency efforts and vegetation management work.

Learn more about the legislative priorities of Iowa’s electric cooperatives and Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).



Representative Michael Bergan (left) and MiEnergy President/CEO Brian Krambeer (right).



Ava Thordson, a junior at New Hampton High School, and Brady Burke, a junior at Crestwood High School, won an education-filled week of adventure in Washington, D.C. as MiEnergy Cooperative’s Youth Tour Contest winners. Ava and Brady will be among a group of 1,900 students sponsored by electric cooperatives from across the country to take part in the Rural Electric Youth Tour June 17-23.

The Youth Tour was inspired in 1957 by Lyndon Johnson, then a U.S. senator from Texas, when he called on electric cooperatives to send young people to Washington, “to see what the flag stands for and represents.”

The students will meet with state and federal legislators to get an up-close look at how our government works, along with experiencing the monuments, museums and history of our nation’s capital.

Ava is the daughter of Eric and Stefanie Thordson of New Hampton, Iowa. Brady is the son of Sara Burke and Nick Burke of Cresco, Iowa.





Spring and summer are opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Here are a few projects that can help you save energy and money—and increase the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an ENERGY STAR®-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs, about \$50 per year. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home.

Speaking of smart, additional devices like smart LED bulbs also offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can set a schedule for when and how your lights should be turned on or off. And the next time you head out to run errands and realize you left the lights on, all you have to do is turn them off through your phone. Smart lights come in a variety of shapes, colors and brightness levels—and you can purchase bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night and when you're out of town for better security.

While it's not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your

home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.

If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter) even after you've sealed with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact on reducing energy use and costs. The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors like materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, like replacing old appliances with ENERGY-STAR® models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you're wanting to make your home more energy efficient but you're not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct an energy audit of your home. An energy audit can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.



### Year-round use. Versatile. Energy efficient. Rebate eligible.

Do your research now to purchase an energy efficient air-source heat pump (ASHP) unit to help save money on your energy bills.

If you're in the market for equipment that both heats and cools your home, consider a heat pump. An ASHP can cool a home like a central air conditioner unit. As a bonus, it provides heat too.

Mini split systems work great in homes with no central venting systems, such as older homes or new additions.

**Both ASHPs and mini splits can be used for heating in the winter and cooling in the summer.**

Visit [www.EnergyStar.gov](http://www.EnergyStar.gov) for more information on approved units and find MiEnergy's \$300/ton rebate at [www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates).



### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION WITH US

Having up-to-date contact information helps us send messages about planned power outages or power emergencies. It also makes reporting outages more efficient.

#### 4 WAYS TO UPDATE

- 1 Call our office at 1-800-432-2285.
- 2 Make changes on the remittance portion of your bill.
- 3 Log in to your SmartHub account and update My Profile.
- 4 Fill out the information below and mail it to our office: P.O. Box 626, Rushford, MN, 55971

Your Name:

Account Number:

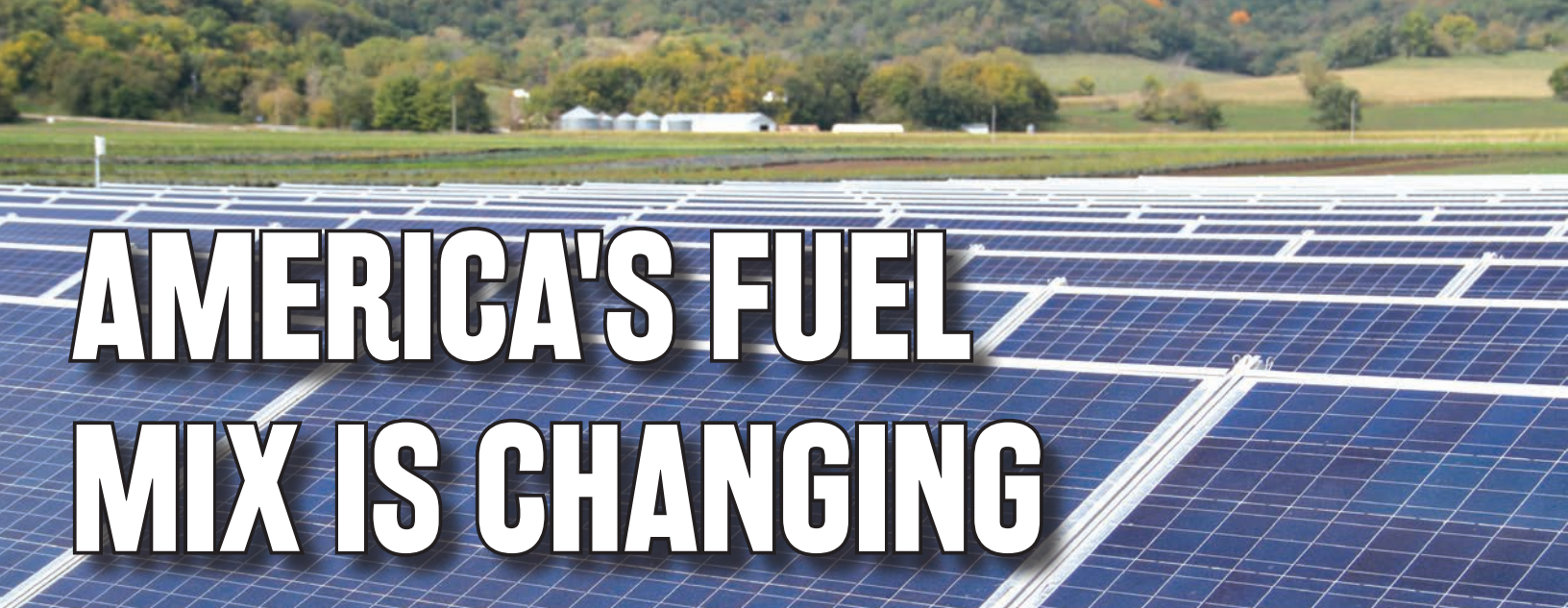
Please list any NEW information in the spaces below. Your current contact information can be found on your monthly bill.

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email:





# AMERICA'S FUEL MIX IS CHANGING

Renewable energy is big news. A road trip through the Midwest will likely take you through acres and acres of wind turbines and solar panels.

In 2021, a record amount of utility-scale solar was installed in the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that wind turbine service technician will be the second-fastest growing job for the rest of this decade. The proportion of solar and wind that fuels your electricity quadrupled in the past 10 years.

So, why is less than 10% of electricity generated from wind? And less than 3% from solar power? The answer will teach you a little something about mathematics—and a lot about how you get your electricity.

Electricity is generated by a variety of fuel sources—natural gas, coal, nuclear, hydroelectricity, wind and solar. And this diverse mix of fuels is going through a major change.

What it teaches you about math is that a large increase in a small number still leaves you with a small number. If you've got a dollar and it triples, you are left with just \$3. In the same way, wind and solar energy have grown from nearly nothing about 10 years ago.

It's certainly big news that in the last decade wind power has more than tripled, from generating about 100 billion kilowatt-hours of our electricity to 378 billion kwh. And that solar energy has climbed from nearly zero to 115 billion kwh.

But those impressive increases still leave renewable energy's share of

electricity generation far behind natural gas, at 1,579 billion kwh. Or coal, at nearly 900 billion kwh. Or nuclear, at nearly 800 billion kwh.

The story those numbers tell is that fossil fuels like coal and natural gas still generate most of our electricity—61%. But another part of that story is that our electricity fuel mix is being reshaped in two profound ways.

Coal is no longer king. In the 1990s, coal generated more than half the electricity in the United States. Then a new natural gas drilling technique called “fracking” was so successful that by 2012, natural gas supplies soared to all-time highs, driving prices to 10-year lows. In addition to that cost competition from

natural gas, environmental concerns put even more pressure on coal. While both coal and natural gas generation produces greenhouse gases, natural gas produces less. Utilities began running their efficient combined cycle natural gas plants more and building new ones, even as many coal plants were run less or retired completely. Today, natural gas produces 38% of our electricity compared with coal's 22%—less than half of what it was 30 years ago.

Renewables are not just new, they're different. The rise of solar and wind power means more than just two more significant sources in the electricity fuel mix. Today, 80% of our electricity is generated by heating water that turns

a turbine. Coal and natural gas are burned, and even nuclear power, which provides 19% of our electricity, works by heating water. Those heat-based sources are dispatchable, meaning they can run 24/7 and adjust their output as electricity demand fluctuates. Solar and wind, on the other hand, work only when the sun is shining and the wind is blowing. As those intermittent sources become a bigger share of how we get our electricity, electric utilities are developing new ways to coordinate the flow of energy sources that have different characteristics.

A more diverse fuel mix calls for new approaches to the most basic function of electric utilities, which is keeping the lights on. One way utilities are managing these new power sources is through high-tech information analysis—utilities are increasingly hiring for a new job title, data scientist, a job the Bureau of Labor Statistics says will grow much faster than the average job for the rest of this decade.

There are likely to be more such changes as renewable energy is predicted to be the fastest growing electricity fuel for the next 25 years.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

## Maintenance-free renewable energy possibilities



Did you know that nationally, 75 percent of people who want to power their home with solar are unable due to poor solar resources and/or shade, inadequate structural support, no room, zoning restrictions, because they are renters or condo owners, or because of their financial position?

MiEnergy is proud to offer local renewable energy options at its offices for members to participate since 2014. The co-op worked with other entities to create the model for non-profit utilities to own community solar and it was rolled out across the country. It was the first of its kind in the states of Iowa and Minnesota.

Members can purchase the output of a unit for a one-time cost that will allow for a one-for-one credit from the output of the community solar project to the member's monthly electric bill now through 2034. The unit output cost includes insurance, operations, maintenance and all other costs associated with operation.

For more information on participation, please contact Kent Whitcomb at 800-432-2285 or email [kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop).



Would you like to support renewable energy? Thanks to Evergreen, it only takes 65¢ per month to contribute. Evergreen is a green power program available to all co-op members that supports electric generation by wind, solar, landfill gas-to-energy and animal waste-to-energy. Members can purchase 100 kilowatt-hour blocks at \$1 per month, which is added to your monthly MiEnergy statement.

Renewable energy makes up 25 percent of Dairyland Power Cooperative's generation portfolio and the number continues to grow with member support of Evergreen.

For more information or to sign up for this green power program, call the co-op at 800-432-2285 or visit [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop) > Renewables>Evergreen.

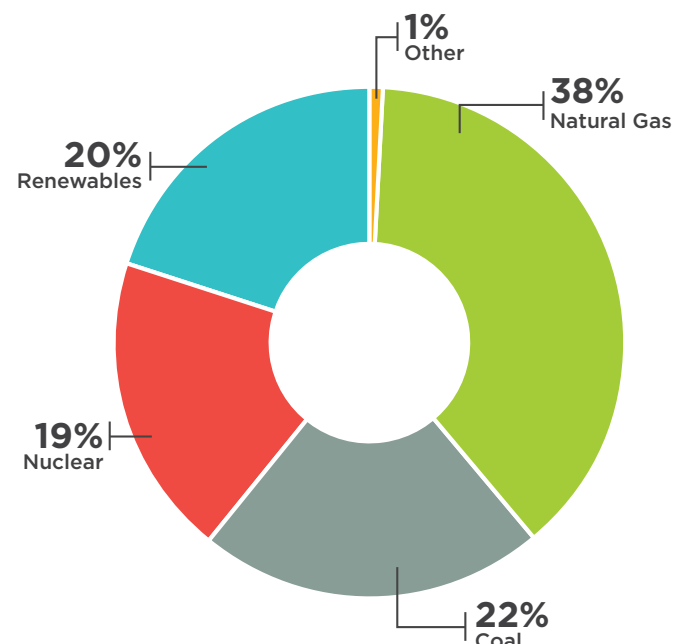


### U.S. Energy Sources

Nationally, electric utilities use a variety of fuels to power homes and businesses.

This diverse fuel mix supplies consumers with the safe, reliable and affordable power they depend on.

Source: Energy Information Administration (as of Nov. 2022)



## ELECTRIC VEHICLES | ENERGY EFFICIENCY | RENEWABLE ENERGY

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# Safety tips for work zones

## MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN

For many people, there aren't enough hours in the day. Because of that, many people use drive time to be productive. They might call their boss, text their best friend, or apply mascara. Multitasking can be an effective use of time, but not while driving.

While the graphic to the right reflects incidents that took place in road construction zones, know that accidents, injuries and deaths can happen in any roadside work zone, including utility work zones.

That is why we ask you to help keep our crews safe by slowing down and following any other instructions — including moving over to give them space — anytime you see orange warning signs and cones that lead up to a work zone.

Cars or trucks that speed through a work zone not only endanger workers on the ground, driving too fast or not moving over can also put an elevated lineworker in danger by causing the bucket he or she is in to move or sway.

Lineworkers already have enough to contend with by working high up on power lines while out in the elements. Their profession consistently places on the Bureau of Labor Statistics most dangerous jobs. Do your part; please don't add noncompliant drivers to the mix.

Orange cones, flashing lights, and warning signs all indicate a work zone on the road ahead. Within these zones are men and women doing work like road construction, working on power lines, or trimming trees. Unfortunately, hundreds of these workers are injured every year from work and road hazards. Safe Electricity urges motorists to slow down and pay attention in work zones while driving.

"Keeping a safe distance between your car and the construction workers and equipment, driving the posted work zone speed limit, and using your four-way flashers when stopping or traveling slowly can help reduce accidents in work zones," says Wayne Hageman, MiEnergy's director of operations.

There can be hefty fines or even jail time for violating traffic laws in work zones.

"Power poles and electrical equipment line our streets and highways, and narrow roadways often require crews to place their equipment in traffic lanes," Hageman says. "Their work activities are often taken for granted but benefit us all, and like everyone, they deserve a safe workplace. Be alert to utility crews and other work zone workers for their safety as well as yours."

Don't make the jobs of road workers, electric utility lineworkers, and tree trimmers more dangerous. Drive safely. For more safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).



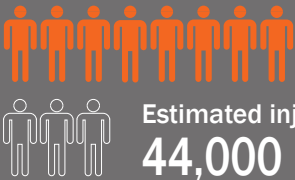
### It's not a suggestion. It's the law.

Life is fast paced, but speeding or multitasking in a work zone is not worth losing your life or taking someone else's.

To help save lives and reduce injuries, follow orange sign directives every time you approach a work zone.

### 2020 Work Zone Statistics\*

#### Crashes and Injuries



Estimated total crashes  
**102,000**

Estimated injuries  
**44,000**

#### Fatalities



**857**  
Total fatalities



**244** Fatalities involving  
commercial motor vehicles

#### Pedestrian Fatalities in Work Zones



**105** Pedestrians  
(non-workers)

**51** Pedestrian workers

Do your part to help everyone return home safely. The orange sign is not meant for everyone else; it is meant for everyone.

\*most recent data available

Sources: National Work Zone Awareness Week ([nwzaw.org](https://www.nwzaw.org)), National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, American Traffic Safety Services Association

**Safe Electricity.org®**



### ALTERNATE ENERGY PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT NOTICE

**MINNESOTA MEMBERS** | In compliance with Minnesota state laws, MiEnergy Cooperative adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production. MiEnergy is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. MiEnergy Cooperative is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by MiEnergy Cooperative. Interested members should contact Kent Whitcomb at MiEnergy Cooperative, P.O. Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971, [kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop) or call 800-432-2285.

**IOWA MEMBERS** | Owners of alternative energy production equipment, no matter how small, even solar-powered heat pumps, are required to provide written notification to their utility of the intent to construct or install such facilities/equipment at least 30 days prior to construction. Alternate energy production facilities are defined as solar, wind turbine, waste management, resource recovery, refuse-derived fuel, agricultural crops or residues, or wood burning facilities used to generate electricity. This Iowa State Law went into effect on January 1, 2013.

MiEnergy has a form to complete as well as other information regarding interconnection that can be found on our website at [www.MiEnergy.coop](https://www.MiEnergy.coop). Interested members should contact Kent Whitcomb at MiEnergy Cooperative, P.O. Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971, [kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:kwhitcomb@MiEnergy.coop) or call 800-432-2285.

## Contractors working

Spring is the onset of MiEnergy's construction and contractor season.

Cooperative crews handle the day-to-day operations, but on an annual basis, MiEnergy hires contractors to assist with other projects that make sure our electric system is safe and reliable for our members. Through the cooperative's bidding process, the following contractors have been awarded bids for the year 2023:

**Vegetation management:** Asplundh Tree Expert Co. LLC, New Age Tree Service, Zielie's Tree Service, Carr's Tree Service and Clear Line LLC; **Overhead:** Tjader and Highstom; **Underground:** A-1 Power; **Pole Testing:** Mi-Tech; **Staking and underground inspections:** Star Energy; and **Staking:** Acculine.

Please be aware that you may see these companies working throughout our service territory in Minnesota and Iowa. If you have questions about whether a contractor is working on our behalf, you can call 800-432-2285 at any time, including after normal business hours.





# SOW SEEDS OF SAFETY THIS PLANTING SEASON

Whether you've been through 30 planting seasons or three, be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. You and anyone working or doing business on your farm should know and follow electrical safety precautions to avoid potential hazards.

## When near power lines, poles and other utility equipment:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance in all directions.
- Realize that electricity can arc/"jump" when equipment is too close.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting.
- Designate preplanned routes that avoid potential hazards.
- When approaching or in the field, use a spotter and deploy flags.
- Before exiting the cab, look up to ensure proper clearance of all equipment.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting before moving loads.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Contact your electric utility if you think a pole or line may have been damaged.

If your equipment does come in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not exit the cab. Instead, call 9-1-1 and wait until utility workers say it is safe to exit.

If you are in imminent danger (e.g., equipment is on fire) and need to exit the cab, make a solid, clean jump out of the cab and hop with both feet together as far away as you can.



## 10TH ANNUAL REC ARCHERY SHOOT — WEST UNION, IOWA

Proceeds from this year's 10th Annual REC Archery Shoot went to the Luke Hackman family of rural Decorah. Luke was an employee at Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative (ACEC) and a member of MiEnergy who passed away from an automobile accident in December. The annual event raises money for a family in need who are members of MiEnergy or ACEC. Pictured L-R: Josh Abbott (ACEC), Brandi Hackman and Dave Wilkes (MiEnergy).



## MINNESOTA CAPITOL — ST. PAUL, MINN.

MiEnergy Cooperative President/CEO Brian Krambeer was in St. Paul twice in March. On March 7, he testified in support of investments in Minnesota's successful Border-to-Border broadband grant program (H.F. 2313). MiEnergy and other cooperatives are leading the charge in connecting all Minnesotans to reliable and affordable internet. On March 21, he testified to the House Tax Committee on a bill (H.F. 1171) that clarifies an existing law to help save co-op members money.



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 KRAMBEER president/chief executive officer  
SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer  
STEVE OIAN vice president of operations - Minnesota  
VASSIL VUTOV vice president of information technology  
MIKE WALTON vice president of operations - Iowa  
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)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



# Annual Meeting April 12

As a reminder, the MiEnergy Cooperative Annual Meeting is at the Mabel Community Center on Wednesday, April 12 at 7 p.m. The annual meeting will also be livestreamed via YouTube. A link and additional information about the annual meeting can be found by visiting:

[www.MiEnergy.coop/annual-meeting](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/annual-meeting)

Members online can submit questions during the meeting by email: [AnnualMeeting@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:AnnualMeeting@MiEnergy.coop)

**VIRTUAL MEETING OPTION  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 AT 7PM**



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MINNESOTA PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971

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Wait for utilities  
to be marked.

You could  
cause damage.

Call at least 2-3  
business days  
prior to digging.

**811**

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Digging without locating underground utilities could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages, or cause severe electrical shock. This is true regardless of how much area your project will cover or whether you consider the job to be large or small. To help stay safe, make use of the national underground utility locating service for free by calling 8-1-1.

The 8-1-1 "Call Before You Dig" number will route you to your local utility locating service. Make sure to tell the operator where and when you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint.

There are different colors of paint and flags that mark the underground utilities, and each color is universal to what utility is buried.

#### Color Codes of Marking Underground Utilities

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | Electric                               |
|  | Communications, telephone/CATV         |
|  | Potable water                          |
|  | Sewer/drainage                         |
|  | Gas/petroleum                          |
|  | Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry |
|  | Premark site of intended excavation    |
|  | Temporary survey markings              |

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 8-1-1, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utilities can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are before ever putting a shovel in the ground.

It is important to understand that 8-1-1 locators do not locate privately installed facilities. If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator. Some examples of private utilities include: underground sprinkler system, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems or gas piping to a garage.

Once all of your underground utilities have been located, it is time to start digging, but be sure to wear all of the proper protective gear before putting the shovel into the earth.

For more information about 8-1-1 and digging safety, visit [Call811.com](http://Call811.com) and [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).