

September 2026 Vol. 10 Issue 9
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.

MiNNews

A
JOURNEY
DOWN
MiRoads
WITH MEAGAN MOELLERS

Trust that spans generations

The new millennium, Y2K and Mother Nature

Plug-in solar is not plug-and-play appliance

Safe kids, strong farms



CELEBRATING NINETY YEARS
1936 **90** 2026
MIENERGY COOPERATIVE

MariBell: questions and respectful dialogue

The proposed MariBell transmission line project has been a frequent topic of conversation in communities across our area this summer. The project is a proposed 139-mile, 765-kilovolt transmission line extending from Marion Township, east of Rochester, Minnesota, to Bell Center, Wisconsin. The proposed route would pass through portions of MiEnergy Cooperative's service territory, generally following the corridor of an existing Dairyland Power Cooperative 161-kilovolt line.

MariBell is one of 24 regional transmission projects approved for development by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, or MISO, as part of a broader effort to strengthen grid reliability across the Upper Midwest.

Large infrastructure projects often generate understandable questions and concerns from landowners, families, businesses and local communities. Dairyland Power Cooperative recognizes that this project will affect people in the communities it serves and expects that members will have questions about the proposed route, land impacts, timelines and the regulatory process.

MiEnergy respects the right of every individual to express concerns or oppose the project. Productive discussion and public participation are essential parts of the process. At the same time, threats toward cooperative employees or calls to damage cooperative property are unacceptable. Everyone involved, including employees, contractors, landowners and members of the public, deserves to participate in this process safely and respectfully.

It is important to note that MiEnergy did not propose the MariBell project. MISO identified the need for the project through regional transmission reliability studies and proposed it in 2024. Dairyland Power Cooperative also did

not originate the project. Dairyland submitted a competitive bid to develop and construct this segment of MISO's regional transmission portfolio and was ultimately selected.

Dairyland is MiEnergy Cooperative's generation and transmission provider and has longstanding ties to the communities we serve. That relationship means impacted members are working with an organization familiar with our region and committed to long-term service in our area.

MISO estimates that the 24 regional transmission projects represent an investment of approximately \$21.8 billion across the Upper Midwest. According to MISO's studies, these projects are intended to improve regional power flows, reduce transmission congestion and allow generation resources to be dispatched more efficiently. Those improvements are intended to support reliable electric service and help manage long-term wholesale power costs.

The MariBell project remains in the early stages of development. Construction is currently anticipated to begin no earlier than 2030. Before the project can move forward, it must complete a detailed regulatory review process. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will play a key role in determining whether the project receives required approvals.

MiEnergy encourages members and communities to stay engaged, ask questions and participate in the public process. But let's all do it respectfully and safely.

Dairyland Power has committed to continued community engagement throughout the project's development, and respectful communication will help ensure that local voices are heard.

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



Do The

SUMMER SHIFT

THANK YOU

MiEnergy would like to thank members who voluntarily participated in the Summer Shift campaign during June, July and August. Creating new habits such as delaying the dishwasher, turning up the thermostat and shifting the start of laundry help change tomorrow's lifestyles for the next generation. Thanks for helping keep electric rates affordable for everyone.



Beware of scams

MiEnergy would like to reminder members about utility scams. If someone calls threatening to shut off power and asks for payment through gift cards, this is not your utility. Scammers may also call claiming you overpaid your bill and they need your person back account information or credit card number to facilitate a refund. The best defense against a utility scammer is an educated member. When in doubt, hang up the phone and call us at 800-432-2285 to ask about your account.

Board room highlights | August 27, 2026

- CFO Shelly Hove presented the financials for July, tracking closely to the budget.
- Approved the following Resolutions:
 - 26-05 load forecast summary from Dairyland Power
 - 26-06 application for USDA loan funds (Perry Novak Electric)
 - 26-07 incumbency certificate and execution of loan documents from the Cooperative Finance Corporation
- Reviewed and approved the CoBank loan documents.
- COO Jill Huffman provided an update on the MiBroadband partnership.
- CEO Krambeer provided an update on cooperative subsidiaries.
- CEO Search Committee Chair Jenny Scharmer provided an update on the succession plan.

The next board meeting is September 30 at 8 a.m. at the Rushford office.

MEMBER SURVEY

We want your feedback

MiEnergy will be conducting a member satisfaction survey starting the week of Monday, September 21. The online survey will randomly select co-op members. MiEnergy hired a third-party independent research group, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Market Research Services, to conduct a confidential survey with co-op members. If you are contacted, we strongly encourage you to take the short survey. The survey's initiatives will focus on questions to measure the value of our cooperative to the membership, electric service quality and a number of other specific areas of interest. We've been using this type of survey for decades. We appreciate your time and input because your feedback helps us discover ways to better serve you.



2000 TEC creates SELECTUS Energy; Minnowa adds PowerPlus Engineering, LLC; Thomas Miller becomes 6th manager of HREC

2001 TEC launches Operation Round Up; Brian Krambeer becomes 6th manager

2002 HREC implements HTC Corporation, LLC; Janelle Mahr is first female director

2003 TEC's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score of 89, is highest score of any gas or electric utility in the nation

2004 HREC adds Websters Development in Cresco

2005 HREC begins AMR (automated meter reading) project (2006 TEC)

2006 TEC begins serving Rushford as a wholesale city

2007 HREC historic ice storm in February; Homeland Energy Ethanol plant comes online in Lawler; TEC historic flood in August wipes out co-op office, warehouse and fleet

2008 Co-ops become owners of Heartland Security; TEC new headquarters completed

2009 Brian Krambeer becomes shared manager of TEC and HREC

CELEBRATING NINETY YEARS

90

ON THE

SHINING LIGHT 2000s

TEC historic flood August 2007

HREC historic ice storm February 2007

Homeland Energy 2008

TEC's Gordy Johnson AMR rollout 2007

D line construction 2007

TEC headquarters groundbreaking 2007

HREC's Mike Walton outage map 2007

HREC's track unit 2007



Co-op employees from TEC (left) and HREC (right) continued to provide power and light to members following two major storms in the 2000s that changed the cooperatives' stories and paved the way for what it looks like today.

A JOURNEY DOWN MiRoads

WITH MEAGAN MOELLERS

PREVAILING WITH PERSEVERANCE

Join us for the start of our 4-part series celebrating our 90th anniversary year shining light on the tagline "trust that spans generations." We'll highlight local, long-time employees who strive to create the best experience for our members. We're proud to have had generations of employees that showcase this model of greatness since the early days in the 1930s and our future promises the same path for success as well. After all, that's the co-op way of doing things.

It's the decade that started with the Y2K bug that was predicted to crash computer systems worldwide. It led to several automated computer advancements and your electric cooperative was no different in their forward thinking and planning ahead to make life better for our membership.

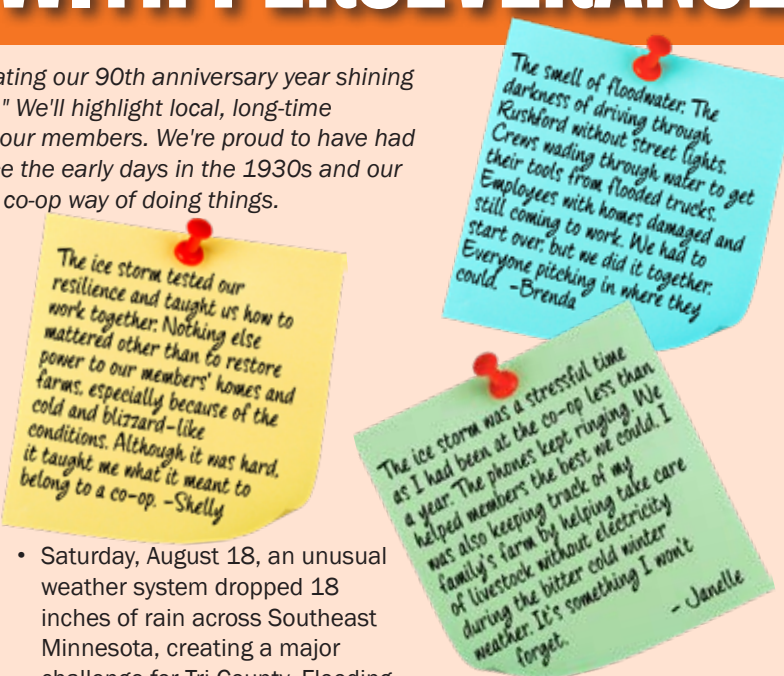
SHINING LIGHT ON THE 2000S

MiRoads sure looked different 25-plus years ago. It was a time when our outage map was converted from yellow sticky notes hung up on a huge system map covering an entire wall in the operations department to electronic mapping systems. Paper maps found in crew trucks didn't necessarily even have all county road names printed on them. Fast forward to today's technology with GPS coordinates of electric equipment such as meters and poles that are precise down to the millimeter. It has forever changed the way outage restoration efforts happen, not only during major storm events but even isolated power interruptions. Thanks to the employees who have researched and discovered new innovations over the years. It has made dispatching, member communication, billing processes and everything in-between more streamlined and efficient.

MOTHER NATURE'S WRATH IN 2007

Nineteen years ago, two historic natural disasters caused by extreme weather events, shaped the next chapter in the co-op's story. There are many employees that exemplified remarkable dedication during this period of time who continue to share that love for MiRoads and its members at the co-op today. They recount their memories, but first here are the facts:

- February 23-24, a severe ice storm at Hawkeye REC left thousands without power. A total of 54 linemen from 11 cooperatives in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin assisted crews to restore power. The buildup of ice on power lines destroyed 330 miles of line (281 miles of single-phase and 49 miles of three-phase) and broke 400 poles. Over 4,400 members were without power. While the majority of members got their service back on after the first couple of days, there were a few who were without power for 11 days. Following that storm, employees and contracted crews spent the next three years rebuilding the system from its temporary condition to the Rural Utilities Service's line specifications.



- Saturday, August 18, an unusual weather system dropped 18 inches of rain across Southeast Minnesota, creating a major challenge for Tri-County. Flooding affected 58 businesses and caused \$6 million in damage to TEC's office, warehouse, inventory and a 25-vehicle fleet, including bucket trucks. Washed-out distribution lines caused an additional \$1 million in damage. Employees worked for 30 days from a 1,200-square-foot trailer at the Rushford Airport. The next year, they operated from a four-plex construction trailer and used leased bucket trucks while the new headquarters was built and ordered equipment was delivered.

To say that things changed drastically after these two major natural disasters is an understatement. MiEnergy's management team bulked up their emergency preparedness plans and embraced technology even more. Most importantly, we accomplished our mission by working together, enhancing the motto: trust that spans generations. **Trust** of the cooperative business model. Power lines **spanning** to link members together through electricity. And **generations** of employees offering quality service and satisfaction to the membership for 90 years.

It's that every day mentality by employees from sun up to sun down, rain or shine. We take care of members by safely providing reliable, affordable and sustainable services. It's made MiRoads the best place to live since 1936.

The new millennium taught us to endure whatever obstacles may happen and to embrace them with strength and perseverance to keep providing light and power to those that live in Southeast Minnesota and Northeast Iowa.



Electric vehicle trends

Electric vehicles have undergone a notable shift over the past year. New policies, changing consumer demand and decisions by automakers are shaping the current EV market—and what may come next.

One major turning point came with the \$7,500 federal EV tax credit expiring in September 2025. The effect on new sales was immediate. Sales figures show two clear trends.

In late 2025, many people rushed to purchase EVs before the tax credit ended. This resulted in a 44% spike in sales. Afterwards, EV sales quickly declined. In early 2026, Americans purchased 212,600 EVs, which was a 28% drop compared to early 2025. The EV market share also fell to 5.8%, down from a high of 7.5%. But that decline might be slowing.

With more leased vehicles being returned and resold, the used EV market is growing with a reported sales increase of 12% in early 2026. New EV price tags have also dropped more than 12% since demand slowed.

Another trend is automakers are adjusting their focus. Ford is shifting part of its EV battery production to manufacture batteries for other uses, like electric utility equipment. In May 2026, the "Ford Energy" group was created to focus on these efforts.

General Motors is also making changes, with a sharper focus on self-driving vehicle technologies. While these shifts are a result of slower EV sales, both companies continue to manufacture EVs.

Even with slower sales, new, lower-cost EV models are becoming available.

The 2026 Chevy Equinox EV starts at under \$35,000 and can travel up to 319 miles on a single charge. Pricing for some newer models, like the Nissan LEAF and the Chevy Bolt, is expected to start under \$30,000. These lower prices might help more drivers consider EV options.

Outside the U.S., EV sales continue to grow. Around the world, one out of every four new vehicles sold in 2025 was an electric model, and experts expect that number to keep rising.

One area where EV growth remains

strong is commercial and delivery fleets. Companies like Amazon, UPS and FedEx are adding electric vans and trucks to their daily operations. Amazon is rolling out thousands of electric delivery vehicles manufactured by Rivian, which are now a common sight in many communities. Fleet vehicles are a good fit for electrification because they follow set routes, return to a central location each day and can charge overnight. This makes costs more predictable and easier to manage. Companies are expected to continue investing in EV fleets to reduce fuel costs and meet long-term goals.

Even with slowed sales, EVs represent a meaningful and growing source of electricity demand. The U.S. Department of Energy projects that in rural areas, home-based Level 1 and Level 2 charging could meet approximately 82% of EV electricity demand by 2030.

While the pace of EV adoption in the U.S. remains uncertain, electric co-ops are well positioned to adapt. By planning ahead and staying flexible, co-ops will continue to provide reliable, affordable power while supporting members as their energy needs evolve.

Jennah Denney writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Save green on electric vehicle charging

Affordable rates & rebates available

800.432.2285 www.MiEnergy.coop

Off-peak home charging rate programs for electric vehicles

Whether it is a flat fee of \$35 per month or a per kWh rate, MiEnergy has great rate programs for charging electric vehicles at home during off-peak hours. Off-peak charging keeps the grid reliable and helps save members money on charging their vehicle. If you drive at least 1,000 miles per month, you could save almost \$300 a year by charging off-peak on MiEnergy's programs.

Contact MiEnergy for more information on:

- MiEnergy rebates on home chargers and installation for members on an electric vehicle charging program.
- Visit www.MiEnergy.coop/EVcharging for details on rates.



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From light switches to lifelong habits

Do you have energy-saving helpers at home? Teaching your children to build good energy habits saves money on your electric bill today and sets them up for a lifetime of smart energy use. Here's how to get your family started on a household energy-saving adventure.

SAFETY FIRST

When it comes to electricity, start with safety basics. Secure cords so appliances, lamps or other plugged-in items can't be pulled down. Use outlet covers and safety plugs to keep little hands from getting injured.

As they get older, teach children not

to stick things in outlets. When they are old enough to use outlets, let them know they should never unplug by pulling the cord. When playing outside, educate them to stay away from downed power lines, keep a safe distance from all electrical equipment and avoid the dangers of electricity near water.

TEACHING ENERGY HABITS

Keeping safety in mind, you can teach age-appropriate energy habits.

Turning off fans and lights when you leave rooms is always a good habit to instill. Fully powering down TVs, computers and gaming systems reduces

energy waste. Keeping the refrigerator door open is a common energy waster for kiddos—and some adults. Show them they can take a quick look inside and scan their options. If they need time to decide what they want, they can close the fridge while making up their minds.

Closing your home's doors is another tip to keep heated or air-conditioned air inside the home.

Hot water is another saver to consider. In addition to reducing wasted water, using less hot water helps you save on your energy bill. Heating water is typically the second-highest energy use in a home, behind heating and air conditioning. Reduce energy use by turning off the water while hand-washing dishes, taking short showers and not overfilling the bathtub.

CHECK OUT THE BILL

Review the electric bill with older children. Be sure to focus on energy use, which is shown in kilowatt-hours on your bill.

It's also a good opportunity to teach budgeting and household finances. If you save money on the electric bill, you may be able to do something fun with that money instead. Consider a trip to mini golf, getting ice cream or choosing a longer-term goal to fund a weekend family trip.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

TAKE CONTROL OF ENERGY COSTS

With MiEnergy's optional time-of-use rate, using electricity during off-peak times may lower your monthly bill.

On-Peak	2 p.m. - 7 p.m.	23.5¢/kWh
Nighttime	9 p.m. - 5 a.m.	4.6¢/kWh
Off-Peak	all other times	10¢/kWh

For more details, visit www.MiEnergy.coop/time-of-use-rate or call 800-432-2285.

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This rate is for residential members only. Members already enrolled in an optional rate program (dual fuel, electric vehicle, solar) are ineligible.

Need help with paying your heating bill? Home energy assistance program available

****If you are having financial difficulties and cannot pay your electric bill, communicating with MiEnergy is essential. Don't ignore disconnection notices. Contact us at 1-800-432-2285 to discuss winter disconnection protection and the steps required to avoid being disconnected. Even if you don't qualify for either of these programs, the cooperative can help set up a payment plan to help members through tough times to avoid disconnection at any time of the year. ****

IOWA MEMBERS:

The 2026-2027 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season.

The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply, Dial 2-1-1, or visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/liheap> to locate and contact your local community action agency, or write to: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Health & Human Services, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319

2026-2027 INCOME MAXIMUMS	
Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$31,920
2	\$43,280
3	\$54,640
4	\$66,000
5	\$77,360
6	\$88,720
7	\$100,080
8	\$111,440
For households with more than eight members, add \$11,360 for each additional member.	

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled: October 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027
- All other households: November 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027

WHAT TO TAKE:

- Proof of income (for all household members age 18 and over). Depending on your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- Proof of social security numbers for ALL household members (documentation required).
- Most recent heat bill.
- Most recent electric bill.

WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application or a copy of your federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

Additional countable income and/or income verification not listed above may be required for eligibility determination.

IOWA ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

CHICKASAW COUNTY: 641-394-2007
HOWARD COUNTY: 563-547-4413
WINNESHIEK COUNTY: 563-382-8436
NE IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION: 563-382-9608

MINNESOTA MEMBERS:

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service for Minnesota members cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median income. Income may be verified on forms provided by MiEnergy or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from MiEnergy.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects. Before disconnecting electric service to Minnesota residential members between October 1 and April 30, MiEnergy must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection.
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities.
- A list of local energy assistance providers.
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection.
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

MINNESOTA ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

FILLMORE COUNTY: 507-765-2175
HOUSTON COUNTY: 507-725-5811
MOWER COUNTY: 507-437-9701
SEMCA, INC: 800-944-3281
WINONA COUNTY: 507-457-6200



RECare is a consumer contribution fund in which members like you assist other members who need help in paying electric bills. Consider a one-time contribution or enroll to provide monthly contributions. Donation forms are also online at www.MiEnergy.coop.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDS

Minnesota members call the MiEnergy office at 800-432-2285. Iowa members call Northeast Iowa Community Action offices in Chickasaw, Howard or Winneshiek counties.



What members should know about plug-in solar systems

It seems easy enough. You set up a solar panel or two and its small generator-type device outside, plug it into a wall socket in your house and electricity is flowing and lowering your power bill.

These portable, DIY solar energy systems can generate several hundred watts and are marketed like appliances that only require a regular outlet. But as plug-in solar becomes more popular, consumers should be aware that these products require important safety considerations. The safety issues are a reason why they are illegal to use in Iowa and Minnesota without notifying your utility. Any member purchasing one must go through MiEnergy's interconnection process like a member with generation.

So, what should you know about behind-the-meter, plug-in solar kits?

The systems have the potential to put lives and property at risk. Electric utility leaders note that almost all of these devices lack U.S. safety requirements, such as certifying under UL codes or standards. UL has only recently developed a safety certification for plug-in solar systems.

Unlike rooftop solar and electric

vehicle charger installations, these plug-and-play packages skip the traditional interconnection process, oversight and hardwiring.

If a home's wiring is not up to code to support plug-in solar, the member wouldn't know because they didn't call a licensed electrician to install the equipment nor an inspector who could spot that hazard.

This can be dangerous on multiple fronts, leading to overheated wires in a residence, property damage, fire and even worse, serious or deadly electrical shock.

Most insurance companies only insure permanently installed solar systems that meet established safety and code requirements. Plugging non-UL-listed solar panels directly into a home's electrical wiring can create significant safety and liability concerns for homeowners.

"Plug-in solar introduces real safety risks at the consumer-member level," said Jeffrey Groenewold, NRECA senior energy solutions manager. "Existing residential wiring standards were not designed for generation through standard outlets so plug-in solar increases the potential for fire and

shock hazards."

A charged solar system can back feed or send electricity back to the grid and re-energize power lines unbeknownst to your electric cooperative. This could be fatal for lineworkers.

"The evolving plug-in solar industry must work to ensure these systems are properly managed and controlled to prevent unintended back feed," said Groenewold. "This is critical to protecting cooperative lineworkers and keeping them safe when they are out working to restore power."

Unplugging the system does not diminish its risk. Contact with the power cord energized by the solar panels can cause devastating injury.

Will Morris, a consultant to NRECA Business and Technology Strategies, underscored that these systems are not harmless appliances and should not be treated as such, especially around children.

"When we were growing up, our parents taught us, if you would just unplug a blender or an iron or something like that, you're putting that device in a safe state. With this, it is the complete opposite," he said.

"If somebody has this on their patio

plugged into an exterior outlet and they unplug it and drop it in a puddle you can get 800 watts going to you. That can be a real bad day."

Then there's the affordability factor. Is plug-in solar really a good deal?

The apparatus for this behind-the-meter energy resource can cost a few hundred dollars to more than \$1,000 but their output—even in areas with plenty of sunshine—will shave only an estimated 40 to 80 cents per day off your power bill, according to industry experts.

"I would be very surprised if in our markets plug-in solar makes much financial sense because the average cooperative consumer rates are pretty low," said Morris. "It would take a long time to recover that investment,"

European apartment dwellers who face very high electricity rates have been eagerly buying "balcony solar" for a while and expect to pay off their investment in a couple years, he said.

In Germany, where rates are particularly high, the plug-and-play packages are designed within the country's safety mandates and must be registered with the grid operator.

"So, the German utility knows when that device is being utilized and that they have potential for energy to flow back into the grid," he said.

But here, states are at various stages of potentially regulating plug-in solar to ensure their safety.

"We're at the wild, wild west phase of it right now," Morris said. "You can buy this and you just plug it in. It's like buying a hairdryer, except the hairdryer got UL certified."

Members are encouraged to contact their electric co-op for knowledgeable advice on plug-in solar and to inform the co-op if they are operating such a device.

"The bottom line is if you're looking to lower your electric bill with some behind-the-meter device, please let your electric co-ops know," said Groenewold. "Co-ops have a variety of programs to partner with you to save money and to do it safely."

Cathy Cash writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900.

Student webinar series offers scholarship opportunities

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, MiEnergy has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've also been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, leadership and electric cooperatives with a two-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area (including those from Minnesota). They can register at IowaYouthTour.com.

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Sunday, October 4, 7 p.m.
Why Cooperatives Matter and How to Effectively Advocate
- Sunday, October 18, 7 p.m.
Being a Leader

At the end of each live session, one attendee will be selected at random to win a \$500 scholarship; students who attend both sessions will be entered into a bonus drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online at IowaYouthTour.com receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a dynamic speaker.



CHOOSE AN EFFICIENT, GREENER OPTION!

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 for information on approved units.

Check out www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates for how to get a \$200/ton rebate.



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800-432-2285

FARM SMART:

5 Safety Tips for Kids

Farms and ranches are full of valuable lessons — but also serious risks, especially for kids. **More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined**, often due to taking on tasks beyond their abilities.

Five ways to keep kids safe around equipment, animals and chores:

1 Keep kids off tractors.

Tractors cause more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate tractors if they meet age, size and maturity guidelines.

2 Supervise and restrict access.

Never leave young children alone near work zones. Lock or fence off danger zones like grain bins, pens and machinery.

3 Assign age-appropriate chores.

Match tasks to age and maturity. Teens may take risks, so set clear rules and supervise closely.

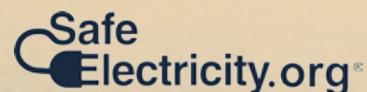
4 Create a safe environment.

Eliminate slip hazards, lock up keys, limit heavy lifting and provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.

5 Model safe behavior.

Teach tasks step-by-step and demonstrate safe habits — kids learn by watching adults.

Make safety a family priority so future generations can enjoy the rewards of farm life with less risk.



Minnesota electric cooperatives to honor local heroes

Is there someone in your community who consistently goes above and beyond to make a difference? Perhaps they've poured their time and energy into helping a local nonprofit thrive, assisted those in need or spearheaded a community project that has made life better for everyone. If someone comes to mind, now is your chance to recognize their remarkable service and help support their cause or organization.

MiEnergy is proud to partner with Minnesota's Touchstone Energy cooperatives in launching the Cooperative Heroes Award. Minnesota is served by 44 distribution cooperatives, covering 85% of Minnesota and reaching every county. This award provides an opportunity for anyone served by an electric cooperative to nominate an individual who has made a meaningful, positive impact in their community.

The Cooperative Heroes Award celebrates our cooperative values — integrity, innovation, reliability, accountability and commitment to community. Judges will carefully evaluate nominees for these qualities as they select three outstanding winners.

Each winner will receive funding to support a local nonprofit or cause of their choice: First place \$1,000; second and third place: \$500 each. Nominations are open from October 1 through November 15, with a short application process available at <https://www.mrea.org/programs/touchstone-energy>.



CORRECTION

We apologize for two errors in the August issue of MiNews. The wild plum jelly recipe in MiRecipes was submitted by Hanna Meyer and lineworker Dennis LeFebvre name was spelled incorrectly in Shining the Light.



SAFETY AND SERVICE NIGHT — SPRING GROVE

MiEnergy's Annie Hoiland and Wendy Jacobson represented the cooperative at the Safety and Service Night in Spring Grove. While the event ended early due to weather, it offered a variety of booths related to safety.



RUSHFORD DAYS PARADE — RUSHFORD

MiEnergy employees Malachi Bunke, Lucas Gravos and his son Hayes, Audra Skalet and Dani Gordor represented the cooperative in the Rushford Days Parade on July 18.

Pictured: Malachi and Lucas' son Hayes in the truck cab.



HEAVY TRUCK NIGHT — PROTIVIN

MiEnergy's Caleb Steiner participated in Protivin's Heavy Duty Truck Night on July 21, an opportunity for kids to see, touch and interact with numerous vehicles and equipment found in the community.

HARVEST FEST PARADE — CRESCO

L-R MiEnergy employees Heather Larson, Travis Cummings, Shawn Omar, Kim Larson and Janelle Sunnes represented the cooperative in the Norman Borlaug Harvest Fest parade in Cresco on August 22.



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 24/7 855-941-3631

UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING 811

ONLINE

WEBSITE www.MiEnergy.coop

SOCIAL MEDIA Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1 Kim Nelson and Dennis Ptacek, secretary

DISTRICT 2 Dean Nierling, chair and Ron Stevens

DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer and Skip Wieser

DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks

DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer, vice chair

MANAGEMENT STAFF

BRIAN KRAMBEER president/chief executive officer

SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer

JILL HUFFMAN broadband chief operating 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

2026 OFFICES CLOSED

SEP 10 Employee Development Day

NOV 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday

DEC 15 Employee Development Day

DEC 24-25 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

DEC 31 New Year's Eve, close at 11 a.m.

JAN 1 New Year's Day

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

September kicks off the fall shoulder season when cooler mornings and milder evenings can give your heating/cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC MONTH

Sept. 11 - Oct. 12, 2026

Considering the purchase of an electric vehicle? Learn about our EV charging station rebate and charging rates at www.MiEnergy.coop/evcharging.



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MINNESOTA PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971

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GIFT BASKETS

I ♥ Mi-Coop gift basket drawing *2026*

To show our appreciation for our members, MiEnergy is pleased to announce a gift basket drawing in honor of National Cooperative Month in October. MiEnergy will draw names to give away 50 gift baskets filled with local items to members who enter the contest. And better yet, the co-op will come to you! A representative from MiEnergy will deliver the baskets to each winning residence.

How to enter:

Register now by visiting www.MiEnergy.coop/giftbaskets, scanning the QR code or calling 800-432-2285. Members must provide their name, phone number, account number and service address to enter.



The contest closes on October 21. Winning members will be notified by phone on October 22. Baskets will be delivered October 26-30.

One entry per membership. Employees and directors are not eligible to enter the contest.

Members only
**FALL
EVENT**

10.16.26



REGISTRATION
OPENS OCTOBER 1!
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.
[WWW.MIENERGY.COOP/
FALLEVENT](http://WWW.MIENERGY.COOP/FALLEVENT)

Watch for more details in the October MiNews!