Farm-to-table series: MN dairy farm hosts unique dinner event

MiEnergy gives back $2 million to members during Co-op Month

Heating assistance application information
Co-op welcomes municipal member

This month we are pleased to welcome another wholesale municipal member to the MiEnergy Cooperative family. The St. Charles City Council approved a wholesale power contract to receive electric service from us beginning September 1, 2018.

St. Charles joins our 10 other wholesale municipalities that include: Caledonia, Eltzen, Harmony, Lanesboro, Lawler, Mabel, Peterson, Rushford, Spring Grove and Whalan. These local communities have their own municipal electric systems. MiEnergy works in partnership to assist with the operation of their systems and provides wholesale power. We serve many more small communities in Southeast Minnesota and Northeast Iowa on a retail level, with the individual residents being direct members of our electric cooperative.

These local community connections are truly another aspect of what makes MiEnergy great. We have direct involvement in working with our local communities. In addition to providing electric service, we’re involved in economic development planning, local event sponsorships, volunteer services, local school support and an overall concern for community. It’s always a welcomed opportunity to meet with local leaders and staff to address their needs and goals to make their communities vibrant and prosperous.

STATISTICS FOR 2018 SO FAR:
• Provided over $600,000 in economic development loans for community infrastructure expansions and business growth through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program.
• Donated over $20,000 to local events, fire departments, community service programs, memberships and youth events in our service territory.
• Unclaimed capital credits provided $20,000 in scholarships to high school seniors.
• Members, through the Operation Round Up program,

CO-OP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

have contributed over $10,000 to local organizations and projects within our service territory.

Our 80 employees are also engaged in our local communities. They are volunteers for fire departments, hold seats on city/county/church/school councils, serve on a variety of committees and are a part of local event planning efforts. They are actively involved in the local communities where they live and work.

Equally gratifying is the support we receive from our membership. On September 12, we held our Fall Advisory Committee meeting. The committee members’ discussion and input on our broadband initiative of forming MiBroadband with our partners Spring Grove Communications and Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company were exciting and very gratifying. Broadband has become another critical infrastructure pillar that is needed for the sustainability of our rural communities and members.

MiBroadband’s fixed wireless broadband service will be available soon in rural Rushford and Cresco. Members interested in service are encouraged to contact MiBroadband at 877-462-0612 or email MiBroadband@MiEnergy.coop.

Thanks for your support of MiEnergy Cooperative. It’s my pleasure to be a part of such a progressive and community-focused electric cooperative, driven to meet the needs of its members.

Enjoy the fall season. As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.

Dramatic changes are transforming all aspects of the energy industry. Interest in renewable energy is at an all-time high, and ultimately consumers want greater control over their energy use and payment methods. The prevalence of smart-phone apps and “smart” technology for the home is increasing, and consumers and businesses are showing greater interest in electric vehicles. There’s no denying it: electric utilities will have to make changes to the way they provide energy to accommodate these trends. Fortunately, MiEnergy is uniquely positioned to meet these changing energy needs because we are a cooperative.

CO-OP MONTH

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique. Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

Brian Krambeer, CEO of MiEnergy, explains that, “Electric cooperatives belong to the communities they serve. This heightened community focus allows us to quickly adapt to evolving consumer expectations. Our closeness to the community ensures a better response to these needs because we are led by the people that we serve.”

CO-OPS ARE A CATALYST FOR GOOD.

Co-ops engage their members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 80 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible. Today, it means your co-op engages with local community projects and events such as: youth programs and scholarships, Operation Round Up, GreenTouch, Relay for Life and electrical safety demonstrations.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their membership.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op. MiEnergy is committed to help create and retain jobs enhancing the quality of life for our members and the general public.

The co-op business model is unique. It is pragmatic, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned this trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members’ best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve—now and in the future.

Follow #CoopMonth on Facebook and Twitter to see how co-ops across the country are celebrating National Co-op Month.
On a recent September evening, Margaret Johnson stood before a small audience at her farmstead and said with a genuine smile, “It’s that moment when we watch the milk truck leave our farm each day that we rejoice. We have worked so hard to accomplish just that. Margaret and Michael Johnson, along with his father Jon and wife Sharon, are proud to partner with Foremost Farms, who has a contract with Kwik Trip stores with the Nature’s Touch label. This highly motivated farm family strives to educate their family, friends and community on a wide spectrum of the Ag industry and they recently hosted an event at their farm hoping to accomplish just that. Margaret and Michael Johnson, along with his father Jon and wife Sharon, creatively arranged details for the “Honor the Harvest” Dinner. Holding it on a crisp autumn night seemed appropriate, even if it meant they had to stop their fall harvest work for a brief time to get ready for the festivities. This commitment to helping spread knowledge of the farming world remains ever so strong and depicts a true dedication to the land and the animals under their care.

CONNECTING FARM TO TABLE

Imagine being served a four-course farm inspired meal, catered by Estelle’s Eatery in Harmony, under a white tent, illuminated by a string of lights and the glow of a harvest moon. Enjoy locally produced beverages while engaging in great conversations with local community leaders and professionals in several ag related sectors. Learn about the spent grains are given to a local farmer to feed his cattle. Local sourced Nature’s Touch milk was served at dinner and fresh local cream was included in the dessert, a chocolate mousse pudding with fresh raspberries and walnuts.

This is full-circle farming at its finest. And this was just a small glance at one night with local residents. Think of the endless possibilities of how farming touches the lives of so many people. These events and farming trends are happening in our own rural communities throughout MiEnergy’s service territory in Iowa and Minnesota.

Catch the Farm Crawl?

Know your farmer. Know your food. Did you know that eight of the 29 farm stops on the 2018 Northeast Iowa Farm Crawl are members of MiEnergy Cooperative? The annual Farm Crawl is held in September to bring awareness of local farmers and their specialties. We are proud to supply safe and dependable electricity to these local businesses and entrepreneurs so that they can achieve greatness in our local communities. Go to www.visitloda.com for more information and mark your calendars for next year’s 2019 Farm Crawl.

With milk from the Johnson’s farm and craft beer brewed fresh from Karst Brewing in Fountain, wine assortments by Four Daughters Winery in Spring Valley, and Winneshiek Wildberry Winery in Decorah, we have a lot of local beverages. And I am excited to announce a Farm-to-Tap/Farm to Bottle Series in 2019 to cover these local breweries and wineries, plus others in our electric service territory who are busy perfecting their own specialty brews, wines, spirits or hop crops. Prost!

founders of Civil Sass Hops in Chatfield.

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HONOR THE HARVEST” DINNER EVENT

Farm family brings awareness of ag industry by hosting unique farm-to-table event

Trip. The Johnson’s milk is delivered directly to Kwik Trip’s processing facilities in La Crosse, Wisc., and then available for purchase at Kwik Trip stores with the Nature’s Touch label. This highly motivated farm family strives to educate their family, friends and community on a wide spectrum of the Ag industry and they recently hosted an event at their farm hoping to accomplish just that. Margaret and Michael Johnson, along with his father Jon and wife Sharon, creatively arranged details for the “Honor the Harvest Dinner.” Holding it on a crisp autumn night seemed appropriate, even if it meant they had to stop their fall harvest work for a brief time to get ready for the festivities. This commitment to helping spread knowledge of the farming world remains ever so strong and depicts a true dedication to the land and the animals under their care.

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GODEY APPLE CAKE | VERNA KNEIFL, LA CRESCENT
8 T. butter (divided)
1½ c. sugar
4 T. flour
1 c. baking soda
1 c. lemon juice
1 c. sugar (divided)
2 large apples (cored and chopped)
1 egg
1 T. cinnamon
1 t. flour

Frost heat oven to 350°. Coat a 9-inch square pan with cooking spray. Cream 5 T. butter and 1 c. sugar. Add egg and beat well. Stir in flour, soda, cinnamon, salt, apples and walnuts. Spoon into prepared pan and smooth top. Bake for about 35 minutes. Combine remaining 3 T. butter, ½ c. sugar, cream of tartar and evaporated milk in a saucepan; cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice and vanilla. Pour over hot cake. Serve warm. Serves 8

CHOCOLATE CHERRY CAKE | NORMA LAQUA, LEWISTON
2 layer German Chocolate Bake Mix
Tegg (beaten)
1 c. buttermilk
1 can ready-to-use coconut-cream frosting
1 can cherry pie filling
1 lb. (pkg.) miniature chocolate chips

Fold together cake mix, frosting, pie filling, egg and butter until all is moist and well mixed. Pour into greased pans. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the cake comes out clean. Cool completely before cutting.

CONSERVATION DAY– FORESTVILLE STATE PARK
Approximately 140 students learned about conservation and safety at Conservation Day at Forestville State Park. Local 6th graders from Fillmore Central, Kingsland and Rushford-Peterson attended the annual event. MiEnergy’s Justin Sebooda (top left) and Mike Ebner (top right) conducted seven 25-minute electric safety demonstrations.

STORM RESTORATION
MiEnergy lineworkers Lucas Gravos, Noah Manning, Andy Prinsen and Tony Rislove spent a few days in Wisconsin assisting Oakdale Electric Cooperative, of Tomah, and Vernon Electric Cooperative, of Westby, in restoring power following storms that rolled through August 27. Oakdale had a lot of wind damage with trees taking down power lines. Roads were in rough shape on the way back to Fillmore County. Vernon had over 50 poles wiped out.

Four employees were also part of an effort to restore power for members of Goodhue County Cooperative Electric Association, in Zumbrota, following high winds and tornadic activity September 20. Steve Bronner, Cole Kinglings, Tony Rislove and Noah Manning out in a long work day September 23 to help their counterparts who were working to restore power outages across all Goodhue County. Everywhere crews went they saw downed wire and trees. They also saw multiple sheds with roofs ripped off.

FARM SAFETY DAY CAMP – CRESCO
Approximately 125 students in fourth grade that attend schools in Howard County participated in different farm safety sessions at the annual Farm Safety Day Camp at the Howard County Fairgrounds. One of those sessions was led by Tom Hart and Kraig Johnson from the Iowa office of the National Farm Safety Co-op. Approximately 25 local 4th grade students attended the Farm Safety Day Camp.

Door-to-door scam alert—local
Asks to see electric bill

MiEnergy was alerted of a possible scam circulating in September. Twice during the month, members called to report that a person had been to their residence claiming to be from an electric utility. The person asked members for a copy of their electric bill. The reason stated was to determine eligibility of a credit or rebate of 11 percent. In both instances, members did not hand over a copy of their bill.

The cooperative contacted the county sheriff departments in both instances. It is important to know you can contact the cooperative at 1-800-432-2285 at any time—day, night, weekend or holiday to verify the identity of a MiEnergy employee.

Remember to look up
When working near power lines

Our top priority is providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. It requires political engagement. That may seem far removed from our core mission, but it’s absolutely essential to serving you. That’s why we’re participating in a national program of America’s electric cooperatives called Co-ops Vote.

Co-ops have another advantage. Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the electric cooperatives have put into political engagement. When we all get involved, we can make things happen politically and locally.

Our participation in Co-ops Vote helps to ensure that rural issues remain part of the national discussion—and are supported by our elected officials. But Co-ops have another unique advantage: As co-ops, the direct voice of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community—one of the seven cooperative principles—through participation in our democracy.

You can participate by registering to vote and committing to cast your ballot on November 6. If you’re interested in getting more involved, just give us a call or visit our website to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate.

Join us at the poles November 6

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Electricity sold for residential use is not taxable for the billing months of November through April when sold to metered customers in Minnesota who use it as their primary source of residential heat according to Minnesota law. If more than one type of heat is used, electricity is not taxable if it is the primary source of heat. Primary source of residential heat is the source that supplies more heat than any other source for the largest period of time during the heating season.

If your property has both residential and commercial operations and only one meter for the entire building for electricity, square footage is used to determine if the residential exemption applies and is determined if more than 50 percent of the square footage of the building is residential.

If you have filed an exemption card with us in the past, you do not need to file again. If your electric heat is used in conjunction with wood or another fossil fuel, please re-evaluate your heat status.

Members who receive a tax exemption when electric heat is NOT the primary source of heating are in violation of the Minnesota law. Please contact us if your heating has changed and you should be taken off the tax exemption as it is your responsibility to notify us of any changes when you are no longer eligible.