

MiNews

January 2022 Vol. 6 Issue 1
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.

**Unseasonable
storm causes
7,500 outages**

**Safety tips for winter
storm outages**

**2022 rebates
announced**

**CO-OP TO GIVE AWAY
\$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS**

MiEnergy crews worked around the clock to restore power following the December 15 storm. This crew was working north of Spring Valley.

Mid-December wind storm hammers electric distribution system

Several days leading up to the December 15 wind storm, meteorologists were sounding the alarm for the potential of tornadoes and hurricane strength winds across the Midwest.

At 6 p.m. on Dec. 15, 80 mile per hour winds entered the southwestern edge of our service territory. The storm had arrived; the weather predictions were right. We knew it was going to be a challenging outcome. The storm traveled diagonally across the heart of our service territory. Our outage management system was lit like a Christmas tree; not what you want to see on a mid-December evening. Over 7,500 services were without power at 8:30 p.m. The outages were widespread, from New Hampton, Iowa, to La Crescent, Minn., to St. Charles, Minn., to Decorah, Iowa, and everywhere in-between and in every county we serve. We got hammered by the storm.



Pictured is Cole Kingsley

As the first outages showed up, crews were already at the office and laying out the gameplan. Our electric distribution system had been hit hard, and we expected broken poles and trees in the lines. Extensive transmission line damage had also occurred and left over a dozen substations deenergized, complicating the restoration process by not knowing what member locations and lines were damaged in

relation to the substation outage. Crews were first dispatched to locations where substations were energized, and the restoration process began.



Thankfully, Dairyland Power Cooperative owns and operates the majority of the transmission lines in our service territory. ITC Midwest provides the transmission service for a small portion of our area. ITC owns and operates transmission assets across Minnesota (which was formerly owned by Alliant Energy), Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri.

They were not immediately responsive to our substation outages, which can be attributed to their multi-state footprint and the degree of damages their system incurred. Dairyland and MiEnergy crews took the initiative to backfeed our ITC-connected substations with Dairyland-connected substations. By 4 a.m. Thursday morning, our outage numbers had dropped to about 4,500 with all 43 substations energized. It was progress, but we had a long way to go.

Our third-party after-hours outage response center was overwhelmed with calls due to the widespread damage from the storm and the dozens of electric cooperatives impacted. We knew that many of our members could not get through to report their outages. Thankfully, our outage management system provided the critical information necessary for our dispatchers.

Crews worked throughout the night on Wednesday and all-day Thursday battling downed trees, downed power lines, broken poles and debris wrapped around what was left of our distribution system in places. Thursday morning was the first opportunity to see the extensive damage in daylight. Huge trees were uprooted, other trees were broken off at their base and 65 distribution poles



were broken. Dairyland Power Cooperative reported upward of 70 transmission poles broken across their system.

Thursday afternoon we had under 1,000 outages. Crews continued to restore power and with more assessments of damages being received, we knew we could not wrap up by the end of the day. By 7 p.m., we had under 500 remaining. The last outages, in most cases, can be the most difficult and involve repairing a single service at a time. There was still lots of work to do. We made the decision to bring the crews in at 7 p.m. to allow them to get some much-needed rest and a good meal before beginning again at 5 a.m. Friday, with the hope of restoring all power by day's end.

Fortunately, two independent contractors were working on our system prior to the storm, and in our early storm preparations we secured their assistance to help restore power to our members. They played a critical role in our recovery efforts by replacing broken poles in some of the areas with the greatest damage.

At 5 a.m. Friday, I met with our lineworkers who were ready to finish the job. Operations managers Steve Oian and Mike Walton reminded the teams to follow their safety protocol to open, test and ground the lines, be cautious of generators and watch for unsuspected live wires. It was another hard day, but at 6:38 p.m. on Friday, December 17 all services that could be restored were energized.

Thank you to the membership for your support and understanding during this storm restoration effort. We know several hundred members went without electric power for extended periods of time. Yet, the appreciation and support that was expressed to our crews and office staff working behind the scenes was amazing and very gratifying.

The MiEnergy team did an amazing job from the lineworkers performing the restoration, the stakers bird-dogging the damage ahead of the crews, the administrative staff dispatching outages and devising the restoration plans to our communications team providing media updates. It was also very gratifying that no injuries were reported from any of our crews or contractors.

Cleanup from the storm continues and will take several weeks. The National Weather Service in LaCrosse has now confirmed 12 tornadoes in counties of MiEnergy's service territory. MiEnergy staff are updating damage estimates and reporting to county emergency management staff for potential declaration of state and federal disaster recovery. We are also working with our after-hours response center to eliminate call volume issues in the future.

We have a great team at MiEnergy and a great membership to support our local electric cooperative.

Happy New Year!



TAKE AN ADVENTURE TO WASHINGTON D.C.

CO-OP OFFERS FREE TRIP JUNE 18-24, 2022

Two area high school students will be selected by MiEnergy to represent the cooperative as delegates on the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour. They will join hundreds of other students from across the country -all expenses paid- for one incredible week at our nation's capital. The Youth Tour group will explore D.C., spend a day on Capitol Hill, meet their congressional leaders and see our government in action. The students will learn first-hand about our government and its history, their responsibilities as citizens and how they work together. The tour is a fast-paced leadership opportunity to see what makes America tick!

To be eligible, the student must currently be a high school sophomore or junior and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must be members of MiEnergy. The co-op will be selecting two students, one from Minnesota and one from Iowa. Past Youth Tour recipients are not eligible to apply.

To be considered for this honor, you must complete the online exam by February 28, 2022. The answers can be found on MiEnergy's website www.MiEnergy.coop and the National Youth Tour website at www.youthtour.coop.

MINNESOTA MEMBERS:

Students with the top five scores will be interviewed by a panel of judges on March 9, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Rushford office. It is mandatory that the student attend this event and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend as well.

IOWA MEMBERS:

Students with the top five scores will be interviewed by a panel of judges on March 16, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Cresco office. It is mandatory that the student attend this event and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend as well.



Board room highlights | December 23, 2021

- CFO Shelly Hove presented a favorable operating report.
- Executed the \$40 million Rural Utilities Service loan agreements as part of the co-op's work plan.
- Appointed the nominating committee for 2022 elections.
- Appointed a trustee to the Operation Round Up Trust Board.
- Received a quarterly update from Safety and Compliance Coordinator Brad Pecinovsky.
- Received updates on the December wind storm from VPs of System Operations Mike Walton (IA) and Steve Oian (MN).
- Selected annual meeting voting delegates for the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The next board meeting will be held at the Rushford office on January 24 at 9 a.m.



High school seniors apply today for a chance to win \$1,000

MiEnergy is pleased to offer community service scholarships to the sons and daughters of cooperative members. As a cooperative, MiEnergy has a strong commitment to youth and community. The program recognizes high school seniors who demonstrate cooperative spirit through service to others.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application is posted on the cooperative's website www.MiEnergy.coop. Submit your application, cover letter and transcripts by 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 2, 2022. Seventy \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded this year.

SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

1. The student must be a high school senior graduating in 2022.
2. The student must continue their education after high school at an accredited technical school, college or university.
3. The student must be the son, daughter or legal dependent of a MiEnergy member with an active electric account. (Children of MiEnergy Cooperative employees and directors are not eligible).
4. The student must demonstrate community service, according to scholarship instructions.
5. The student must have at least a "B" grade point average.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding the scholarship program please contact Annie Hoiland, ahoiland@MiEnergy.coop or call 800-432-2285. Scholarships are funded with unclaimed capital credit funds that would otherwise be forfeited to the state.



Personnel change at the co-op

Steve Culhane retired from MiEnergy on December 23 as utility worker. He worked for the cooperative since March 1981.

Thanks to Steve for his 40 years of service and dedication to MiEnergy.



Get your newsletter in your inbox

Did you know that you can sign up to receive your copy of MiNews electronically each month? It's easy. Visit our website www.MiEnergy.coop > Education > News & Education > MiNews to find the link to sign up. You'll need to provide your name, address, email address and your MiEnergy account number. By signing up, you will no longer receive MiNews by regular mail.



2022 RESIDENTIAL REBATES SUMMARY*

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES

CLOTHES DRYER (ELECTRIC), CLOTHES WASHER, DEHUMIDIFIER, DISHWASHER, FREEZER, INDUCTION RANGE**, REFRIGERATOR	\$25
CLOTHES DRYER (HEAT PUMP)**	\$50

RECYCLING

FREEZER, REFRIGERATOR, ROOM AIR CONDITIONER	\$25
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ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION	\$400
SMART ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGER W/INTEGRATED METERING (MUST BE PURCHASED FROM CO-OP)	\$800

LIGHTING

LED LAMP/BULB	50¢
LED EXIT SIGN	\$5
OCCUPANCY SENSOR	\$5

HVAC

AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP & MINI-SPLIT SEER 14+, HSPF 8.2 + OR EER 11+	\$300/TON
GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMP	\$500/TON
NEW FURNACE WITH ECM MOTOR	\$35

WATER HEATERS

ELECTRIC WATER HEATER (REBATES IF YOU PURCHASE ONE FROM THE CO-OP)	VARIES
HEAT PUMP WATER HEATER	\$300
SOLAR STORAGE WATER HEATER W/ELECTRIC AUXILIARY TANK	
75-99 GALLONS	\$150
100+ GALLONS	\$300

AUDITS/ASSESSMENTS

AUDIT RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS	UP TO \$500
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TOUCHSTONE ENERGY HOME PROGRAM

NEW HOME MUST MEET SPECIFIC PROGRAM/CODE REQUIREMENTS.....	\$500
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VISIT WWW.MIENERGY.COOP OR CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION ON REBATE REQUIREMENTS.

*THIS IS A RESIDENTIAL REBATE SUMMARY ONLY. ADDITIONAL REBATE CRITERIA AND FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE OR BY CALLING THE CO-OP. **ALL HEAT PUMP AND INDUCTIVE RANGES QUALIFY.

CHECK OUT AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL REBATES ONLINE.

CAPITAL CREDITS NOTICE

In October 2021, MiEnergy distributed just over \$2 million in patronage capital credit retirements to current and former members of the cooperative. Current members received an electric bill credit and former members received their refunds as a check. MiEnergy Cooperative's office located at 24049 Highway 9, Cresco, IA 52136 is holding unclaimed patronage dividend checks for the person(s) listed as follows. The owner may claim this property by contacting us at the address listed above, calling 800-432-2285 or emailing klarson@MiEnergy.coop. Members A-N were published last month.

*Denotes commercial business. **Denotes residential member omitted in last month's publication.

*AAT Communications Corporation, Saint Louis, MO
*Bank of Oklahoma Mortgage Corp., Tulsa, OK
*Chippewa Vly Maint Bldg, Eau Claire, WI
**Delvalle, Joseph, Rushford, MN
**Draper, Cory\Kantorowicz, Alicia, Blaine, MN
**Evenson, Jacob, Cresco, IA
**Felix, Emmanuel & Cynthia, Rochester, MN
**Geerts, Francis, Charles City, IA
*Hokah Cong of Jehovah Witness, LaCrescent, MN
**Kalstabakken, Mark & Susan, Falcon, CO
**Knutson, Jessica R, Decorah, IA
**Koudelka, Vickie, Charles City, IA
**Ludwig, William Estate\Rita Ludwig, Elma, IA
**Noyer, Dustin A, Lewiston, MN
O'Connor, Lisa, Preston, MN
O'Dell, Glen Estate/Canant, Chris, Decorah, IA
O'Hanlon, Patrick, Saint Charles, MN
Oland, Timothy & Beverly, Hill City, MN
Olds, John & Denise, Clive, IA
Oliver, Erica, LaCrescent, MN
Oliver, William Jr. & Marge, Rochester, MN
Olson, Dale, Phoenix, AZ
Olson, Donald, Fountain, MN
Olson, Leslie, Stewartville, MN
Olson, Mark, LaCrescent, MN
Olson, Michael, Altura, MN
Olson, Paul, Billings, MT
Olstad, Shane & Emilee, Onalaska, WI
Onsgard, Bernice, Houston, MN
Onsgard, Daniel, LaCrosse, WI
Orvella, Willard, Decorah, IA
Panos, Gail, New Hampton, IA
Papenfus, Elmer/Schroeder, Nancy, Dorchester, IA
Parks, Rhonda, New Hampton, IA
Patterson, Earl, LaCrosse, WI
Paulson, Gordon & Denise, Rushford, MN
Pecinovsky, Samantha & Thomas Sr., Decorah IA
Peter, James, Green Valley, AZ
Peterson, Lois, Preston, MN
Peterson, Tobie, Winona, MN
Pfeiffer, Daniel, LaCrosse, WI
Phillips, Donald, Chatfield, MN
Pickett, Kenneth, Preston, MN
Pigorsch, Jeff, LaCrosse, WI
*Pinnacle Towers Inc, Sarasota, FL
Pitts, Jeff, Saint James, MO
Ploessl, Luke, Cassville, WI
Polashek, Annette, Cresco, IA
Quist, John & Cheryl, Minneapolis, MN
Ramaker, Duane Estate/Ramaker, Craig, Rochester, MN
Rask, Emily/Schuldt, Jordan, Brownsville, MN
Rasmussen, Richard, Winona, MN
Rasmussen, Terry, Rumney, NH
Redalen, Vera/House, Lyle, Chatfield, MN
Reed, Ethan, Winona, MN
Reed, Jesse, LaCrescent, MN
Reicks, Francis, New Hampton, IA
Remick, Steven, Spring Grove, MN
Riehle, Mason, Fort Atkinson, IA
Riggott, Susan, Fountain, MN
Roberts, Marsha/Zakostelecky, David, Cresco, IA
Roble, Vernon, Spring Grove, MN

Roemen, Joseph, Eden Prairie, MN
Rogich, Robert & Lorna, Onalaska, WI
Rogich, Steven, Waunakee, WI
Rognholt, Levi & Holly, Sparta, WI
Rolfs, Rhonda, Decorah, IA
Rollins, Mark, Caledonia, MN
Romine, Wesley, Chatfield, MN
Rosenbaum, Don, Lawler, IA
Rotenberger, Gary, Calmar, IA
Roth, Pearl, Hokah, MN
Rouse, Mark, Port Orchard, WA
Rudlong, Lawrence, Wanamingo, MN
Ruiz, Martha, Racine, MN
Ryner, Jayson, Decorah, IA
Sand, Teresa, Decorah, IA
Sanders, Patricia, Genoa, WI
Sargeant, William, Cedar Falls, IA
Sass, Glen, Buffalo Center, IA
Sawyer, Kevin, New Hampton, IA
Scheidel, Marcie, Decorah, IA
Schiebstad, Hjalmer/Schiebstad, L, Houston, MN
Schleich, Alan & Lisa, Mabel, MN
Schmitz, Fredric & P M, Duluth, MN
Schoenfeldt, Dan, Charles, City, IA
Schulte, Pat & Kim, Cresco, IA
Schulze, Gene, Caledonia, MN
Schulze, Jared, LaCrescent, MN
Schwickerath, Larry, New Hampton, IA
Schwinefus, Wayne, Decorah, IA
Sears, Arland & Michelle, Calmar, IA
Senn, Marsha, LaCrosse, WI
Shaw, Marcy, Mansfield, MO
Shileny, Norbert, New Hampton, IA
Shileny, Sylvia, New Hampton, IA
Shimon, James & Debra, Hermosa, SD
Sholl, Jesse, Pekin, IL
Simon, Lucille, Brownsville, MN
Sims, Christine & Robert II, Decorah, IA
Skoda, Kelly & Jason, Decorah, IA
Slaback, Lois, LaCrescent, MN
Smith, Craig & Joleen, Stone Lake, WI
Smith, Don, Decorah, IA
Smith, Sara, Lanesboro, MN
Smith, Shirley, Greene, IA
Smith, Vieta, Elma, IA
Sommerville, Michael & Patricia, Ocala, FL
Sorem, Eldon, Winona, MN
Sorenson, David & Joleen, Decorah, IA
Sorlie, Dakota/Stevens, Madeline, Winona, MN
Spaulding, Alan/Steil, Tim, Mounds View, MN
*Spex Feeds Inc, Fountain, MN
Spry, Dana & Chris, Decorah, IA
St Mary, Jason, Onalaska, WI
Stark, John & LeAnn, Wichita Falls, TX
Steele, William Estate, Eitzen, MN
Steffen, Mark & Wanda, Calmar, IA
Stevens, Jesse, Winona, MN
Stevens, Mark & Debra, Decorah, IA
Stevenson, Brian, Charles City, MN
Stiever, Robert Estate/Stiever, L G, Saint Paul, MN
Storm, Alan, Dover, MN
Stortz, Robert Estate/Stortz, Hazel, Decorah, IA

Stoskopf, Lillian Estate/Iverson, Darlyene, Decorah, IA
Strand, David, Wauke, IA
Stuckey, Robert, Lanesboro, MN
Swanson, Debbie, Mantorville, MN
Swarbrick, Kyle & Sarah, Onalaska, WI
Swartzentruber, Pete, Decorah, IA
Swatek-Briggs, Jennifer, Waterloo, IA
Swatek, Raymond & Debbie, Cresco, IA
Sweningson, Jeff, Winona, MN
Swenson, Lee, St Louis Park, MN
Swenson, Thelma Estate, Mabel, MN
Tate, Walter/Flattum, Debbie, LaCrosse, WI
Taylor, Samantha, Charles City, IA
Tenge, Reynold Estate\Irma Tenge, New Hampton, IA
Tesar, Colleen, Canadian, TX
Thies, Mark & Debbie, West Union, IA
Thomann, Larry, Saint Charles, MN
Thomas, Dale, Plainview, MN
Thompson, Mike & Annette, College Sta, TX
Thompson, Phyllis, Decorah, IA
Thomson, Marie Estate/Thomson, James, Punta Gorda, FL
Thorson, Alan, Harmony, MN
Tieskoetter, Leon, Postville, IA
Tjostem, Dave Estate/Dobney, Kathryn, Jefferson, IA
Torgerson, Julie, Mabel, MN
Torgerson, Stanley, Mabel, MN
Trocinski, Vern, Rochester, MN
Trudeau, Amy & Brent, Red Lake Falls, MN
Utley, Ronald, Sioux Falls, SD
Vale, Helen, Rochester, MN
Van Loon, Norman, Houston, MN
Vaubel, Eugene Estate/Vaubel, Kent, Chicago, IL
Vehrenkamp, Scott & Juanita, Conrath, WI
Verthein, John, LaCrescent, MN
Vetsch, Miranda, Brownsville, MN
Vincek, Jean, Elgin, MN
Virock, Lee, Houston, MN
Vix, Timothy, Onalaska, WI
Volkman, Gary, Aitkin, MN
Von Arx, Jerry, Dallas, TX
Von Arx, Rosemarie, Dallas, TX
Von Arx, Theodora, Caledonia, MN
Vorbeck, Joni, Winona, MN
Voth, Wayne, Red Wing, MN
Walters, Lindy & Aaron, Winona, MN
Walz, Jack, Norfolk, VA
Waner, Greg, Calmar, IA
Wangen, Justyn, Winona, MN
Ward, Marleene, Mabel, MN
Ward, Walter Sr., Harmony, MN
Watts, Linda & Gerald, Windsor, MO
Weber, Jeremy, Elma, IA
Welscher, Aimee, Caledonia, MN
Whitmore, Betty, Winona, MN
Williams, LeeAnn, Mabel, MN
Wilson, Elizabeth, Cresco, IA
Winslow, Glenn, Wykoff, MN
Withey, Percy/Hunt, Larry, Fountain, MN
Wolter, Linda, Galesville, WI
Wolterstorff, Lon, Hayfield, MN
Woodard, Michael & Jennifer, Lanesboro, MN
Zahnow, James & Tracy, Canby, MN
Zaugg, Sandra, Lewiston, MN
Zbornik, Stephen, Fort Atkinson, Iowa
Ziegler, Gabe\Gramlich, Jocelyn, Farmersburg, IA
Zimmerman, Corey, Ontario, WI

MAKING DOLLARS & SENSE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The term “energy efficiency” can cause confusion. Some see it as a way to a cleaner environment. Others see extra expense and inconvenience.

Sorting out those views gets even more complicated as technology gives us a dizzying array of choices for using electricity, from smart thermostats to varieties of light bulbs.

The basic idea of energy efficiency is simple—use less energy to do the same amount of work, which can save you money on your electric bills.

Here's where it starts getting confusing. Sometimes you have to pay more for something that's considered energy efficient. It costs more upfront, but saves money in the long run. Pay a little now, save a lot later.

From computers to major appliances, manufacturers are increasing the energy efficiency of their products. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances can save you 10% to 50% of the energy required for standard models that don't receive the ENERGY STAR® sticker. Considering most major appliances last 10 years, those savings can stack up over time.

There's even more savings in store by replacing older appliances that weren't built with today's efficiency standards in mind. Improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. So, if your fridge is more than 20 years old, replacing it with a new high-efficiency model could save you \$300 in operating costs over the next five years.

“Smart power strips” also show how spending now on efficiency can make money in the future. Keeping your phone charger and other electronic devices plugged in can consume electricity even after they're fully charged or not in use. A smart power strip cuts off the electricity once charging is complete. A smart strip costs about \$40, and depending on your electric rates and how much charging you do, it could save as much as \$40 a year on your electric bills, recovering your initial investment almost right away.

Another example of returns on energy efficiency investments comes from the world of real estate. Realtors will be the first to tell you that energy efficiency sells houses. If you're in the market to sell, spending a little extra on insulation and efficient appliances increases resale value.

Light bulbs offer the most dramatic story of efficiency technology improvements. By spending \$5 to \$10 on an LED bulb (compared to about \$1 for an old incandescent), you get a product that uses 75% less electricity and, incidentally, can last 20 years compared to about a year for an incandescent bulb. The Department of Energy estimates the average home could save more than \$200 a year by replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs.

Maybe the best news of all is that as efficient products improve and gain popularity, they're not always more expensive. Many cheaper appliance models have similar annual operating costs compared with the pricier versions.

Two key tips for turning energy efficiency into dollars are to know what you want from your energy use and to do your homework. Products come with a wide range of features that cost extra and may actually be less efficient—do you want a refrigerator that offers the best efficiency, or do you want to pay more for a less-efficient model that has an ice dispenser in the door?

Your local electric co-op has energy experts who can tell you how to make the best use of electricity. To compare efficiency among appliances, look for the yellow Energy Guide label, which shows information like estimated annual operating costs. Explore the energy.gov website for online calculators and additional resources that can help you turn efficiency data into real savings on your energy bills.

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.



Staying safe and warm during a winter storm

Winter storms can cause prolonged power outages by weighing power lines down with ice, causing trees to fall into lines, or creating hazardous road conditions resulting in vehicle accidents with power poles. To safely weather a winter outage, you need to prepare and know what to do when a storm strikes.

When the lights go out, you should first contact your utility company to inform them of the outage. Once they are aware of an outage, they will immediately begin the assessment and restoration process. How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the affected areas. Until the power comes back on, do all you can to keep your family comfortable.

A storm preparedness kit can help you do this. The kit will need to be assembled ahead of time and should include such items as: bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, and toiletries.

Monitor the temperature in your home. Infants and elderly people are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you cannot keep your home warm.

There are many ways to stay warm during a winter power outage. First, dress warm and cover up in layers of blankets. Next, remember to close off unneeded rooms and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold air entering the house. Cover the windows at night to keep the cold air out. Finally, avoid going outside. Opening doors will let cold



air in and going outside will make you more vulnerable to the cold.

If you are using an alternative heating source, be sure to know how to use it safely and that you have all supplies gathered for it. Follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.

Use caution when using a portable generator. These should never be operated indoors because they omit deadly carbon monoxide. Additionally, never plug it into a wall outlet. This is an important precaution in preventing potentially deadly backfeed, which occurs when electricity travels from the generator back through the power lines.

Take steps to protect your circuits and appliances before power is restored by switching off lights and unplugging everything. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that the power is restored.

For more information on weathering a winter storm, visit SafeElectricity.org.

TODAY | 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

PEAK ALERT!

Due to high demand on the regional grid, please shift flexible electricity use until after 8 p.m.

WINTER PEAK ALERTS

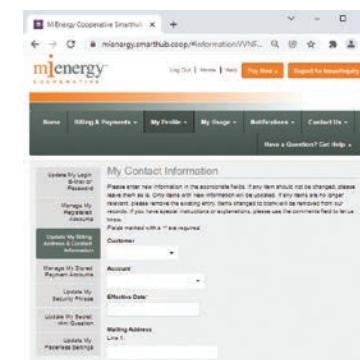
During the winter months, you may hear messages on the radio from MiEnergy or see posts on our social media pages regarding a Peak Alert. We encourage our members to take note of the messages and conserve electricity.

SAMPLE PEAK ALERT MESSAGE:

A Peak Alert has been issued due to high demand for electricity on the regional grid. MiEnergy Cooperative is calling for electricity conservation from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. today. Elevated peak demand leads to higher power costs. Help keep your electricity rates stable and affordable by shifting electricity use to 8 p.m. or later.

Make sure your account is up-to-date

When was the last time you updated your phone numbers with MiEnergy? Having up-to-date phone numbers helps the co-op send messages about planned power outages or power emergencies. It also makes reporting outages more efficient.



THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO UPDATE YOUR INFO:

- Call 1-800-432-2285.
- Make the change on the remittance portion of your bill.
- Log in to your SmartHub account online and select My Profile.

POWER OUTAGES TEXT NOTIFICATIONS

MiEnergy offers power outage text notifications. Sign up online at www.MiEnergy.coop/outages. Select Power Outage Notification Sign Up and be prepared to have your electric account number handy. 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.

Wed, Dec 15, 8:57 PM

MiEnergy: Your service location is currently involved in a power outage. Service Address: 12345 POWER LINE RD

MiEnergy: This number is opted in to receive power outage notifications from MiEnergy Cooperative. Reply STOP to cancel.

Wed, Dec 15, 10:06 PM

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

Normal power line | Lines weighed down by ice | Top line melted after bottom line

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

MiRecipes | Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the April 2022 newsletter. Deadline is March 10. Send to Meagan at PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136 or email: mmoellers@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.

CHOCOLATE LASAGNA | ANGIE LALLEMONT, WINONA

- 1 pkg. regular Oreo cookies (about 40 cookies, not Double Stuff)
- 6 T. butter (melted)
- 1 (8 oz. pkg.) cream cheese (softened)
- ¼ c. granulated sugar
- 2 T. cold milk
- 1 (12 oz carton) Cool Whip (divided)
- 2 (3.9 oz. each pkgs.) instant chocolate pudding
- ¾ c. cold milk

1½ c. mini chocolate chips, heath bits, or mini M & Ms
 *Note: Experimenting with Oreo flavors creates an entirely different dessert. I've tried birthday cake Oreos, mint Oreos, double chocolate Oreos, and peanut butter Oreos.

Begin by crushing the Oreo cookies. I use a large ziploc bag and crush them with a rolling pin or meat tenderizer. You could also use a food processor. When the Oreos turn into fine crumbs, you are done.

Transfer the Oreo crumbs to a large bowl. Stir in the melted butter and use a fork to incorporate the butter into the cookie crumbs. When the butter is distributed, transfer the mixture to a 9x13" baking dish. Press the crumbs into the bottom of the pan. Place the pan in the refrigerator while you work on the additional layers.

Mix the softened cream cheese with a mixer until it is light and fluffy. Add in 2 T. milk and sugar. Mix well. Gently stir in ¼ c. Cool

Whip. Spread this mixture over the crust.

In a bowl, combine the chocolate instant pudding with ¾ c. cold milk. Whisk for several minutes until the pudding starts to thicken. Use a spatula to spread the mixture over the previous cream cheese layer. Allow the dessert to rest for about 5 minutes so that the pudding can firm up further.

Spread the remaining Cool Whip over the top. Sprinkle mini chocolate chips, Heath bits, or mini M & Ms evenly over the top. Refrigerate 4 hours before serving.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES | JANET RIHA, OSSIAN

- 1½ c. brown sugar
- 1½ c. white sugar
- 1½ c. margarine
- 4 eggs
- 5 c. flour
- 2 t. soda dissolved in a little hot water
- 2 t. vanilla
- 2 t. salt
- 12 oz pkg. chocolate chips
- Nuts

Cream sugars, margarine and eggs. Add remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoon onto ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes. Makes 7 dozen.

out & about in your COMMUNITY



HOLIDAY GIFTS—HOWARD COUNTY

MiEnergy employees purchased gifts for a family through the local CARE (Communities About Reaching Everyone) program, helping to make their holiday a little brighter. Pictured L-R: Janelle Sunnes, Shelly Hove, Kyle Quam, Ruth Riha, Kim Larson and Caleb Steiner.



HOLIDAY GIFTS—FILLMORE COUNTY

Employees donated money to the annual Christmas in Fillmore County program. This year, \$295 was collected and given to help local families during the holidays. Pictured front row L-R: June Vitse, Brenda Tesch, Lori Clobes and Audra Skalet. Back row L-R: Adrienne Lofgren, Tammy Brown, Rhonda Bauer, Kari Steele and Annie Hoiland.

HOLIDAY PARADES

MiEnergy employees and their families participated in several local parades this holiday season.



Decorah Holiday Parade
 Pictured L-R: Ryan and Renae Dahl, Meagan Moellers and Nick and Johanna Stayskal.



Caledonia Winter Wonderland Parade
 Pictured L-R: Rhonda Bauer, Audra Skalet, Heather Larson and Randall Ashbacher.



Houston Holiday Parade
 Pictured L-R: Shelby Tesch, Annie Hoiland, Cole and Sara Kingsley, Brynn Dvorak (friend of Clara), Heather Larson and Clara Hoiland.



Rushford Parade of Lights
 Pictured L-R: Brian, Rhonda and Caitlin Bauer, Annie Hoiland, Alannah and Audra Skalet, Brittany, Bentley and Huxley Benson. On truck, Shelby Tesch.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

OFFICE INFORMATION

Open Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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 MINNESOTA 31110 Cooperative Way, PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971

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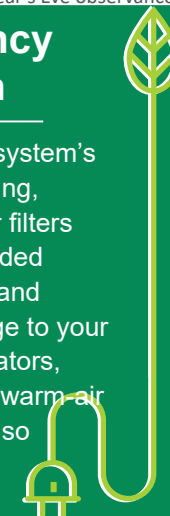
2022 OFFICES CLOSED

MAR 23 Employee Development Day
 APR 15 Good Friday
 MAY 30 Memorial Day
 JUN 9 Employee Development Day
 JUL 4 Independence Day
 SEP 5 Labor Day
 SEP 8 Employee Development Day
 NOV 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday
 DEC 8 Employee Development Day
 DEC 23, 26 Christmas Holiday
 DEC 30 Close at 11:30 a.m. (New Year's Eve observance)

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system. Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

Source: Dept. of Energy



WAYS TO PAY DAY OR NIGHT

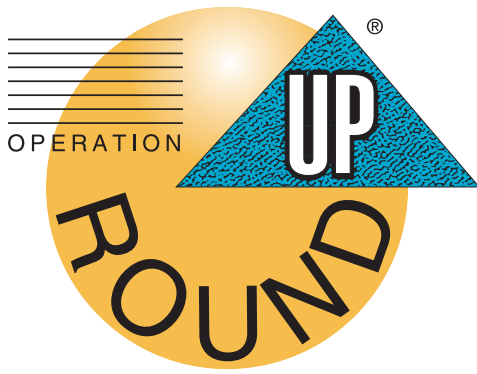


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If you are having difficulty paying your bill on time, please call the cooperative to work out a payment plan and see if utility assistance may be available.



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Application deadline Feb. 15

Twice a year the Operation Round Up (ORU) Trust Board meets to review applications and grant funds for local, worthy causes. A list of program guidelines and an application is available online at www.MiEnergy.coop.

ORU is a voluntary community support program that helps local organizations and worthy causes via spare change. All members of MiEnergy have the opportunity to join the program. Visit www.MiEnergy.coop to sign up.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Electric co-ops maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other electric utilities. Even though we power fewer consumers on our lines compared to other utilities, we'll always go the extra mile for you, the consumer-members we proudly serve.

