

MiNNews

August 2026 Vol. 10 Issue 8
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.

From new homes to replacements

MiEnergy has water heater options

E-bike and e-scooter battery safety tips



MiEnergy Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative recently partnered through the Cooperative Contributions Program to present a \$2,000 donation to the Wilson Fire Department. The funds will support the purchase of specialized fire blankets designed to help first responders safely contain electric vehicle fires in rural areas. Pictured L to R: Kent Whitcomb, MiEnergy vice president of member services; Wilson Fire Department representatives Finnegan Murphy, Josh Murphy, Jo Priem, Andrew Twite; Beth Olson, MiEnergy board director, Ellie Rundahl, Dairyland Power Cooperative communications and public relations manager; and Jenny Scharmer, MiEnergy board director.



Ratepayer protection pledge

For nearly two decades, the electric utility industry experienced very little growth in electricity sales. During that time, utilities moved from major generation buildouts in the 1990s to a stronger focus on energy efficiency, conservation and then the transition to more renewable energy resources.

MiEnergy Cooperative has seen that trend locally. Over the past 10 years, our energy sales have averaged less than one-half of 1% growth. Our largest growth came through the opportunity to serve former Alliant Energy customers as part of the Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative acquisition.

As I have stated before, electric load growth matters because it helps spread the fixed costs of operating our electric system across more energy sales. This was also the benefit of merging Tri-County Electric and Hawkeye REC to form MiEnergy in 2017. Electric load growth can benefit all members when growth is managed responsibly. Our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, has available generation to help support MiEnergy's future electric load growth through strategic resource planning.

Today, electricity demand is increasing more quickly. Much of the national conversation has focused on data centers, but MiEnergy is also seeing growth across other rate classes.

A couple months ago, I shared the possibility of a small data center going in near one of our wholesale cities. We held a public information meeting last October and have continued to have discussions with our communities and with county and state officials. These conversations create parameters for possible projects and help us find a suitable fit for a location. They have also helped to alleviate fears from poorly planned projects in regards to water use, electricity use, noise and non-disclosure agreements.

MiEnergy, along with the National Rural Electric

Cooperative Association and Dairyland Power Cooperative, recently signed the Ratepayer Protection Pledge. The pledge is based on a simple but important principle: data center developers should pay the full cost of the electric infrastructure needed to serve them. That includes generation, transmission and distribution costs.

MiEnergy members should not be asked to subsidize private development. Any new large electric load must be handled in a way that protects the members already at the end of the line: the families, farms and businesses we serve every day.

The pledge asks data center companies to:

- Build, bring or buy the new power supply needed to serve their facilities.
- Pay for new power delivery infrastructure and grid upgrades.
- Pay for the power and infrastructure committed to them, whether they use the electricity or not.
- Invest in local job creation and workforce development.
- Support electric reliability and community resilience, including coordination with grid operators during times of scarcity.

While the pledge was developed largely in response to hyperscale size data centers, MiEnergy believes the same expectations should apply to any data center opportunity in our service territory, regardless of size.

MiEnergy's mission statement emphasizes affordability, reliability and sustainability and doing what is right for our members. The Ratepayer Protection Pledge reinforces that commitment.

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



Board room highlights | July 30, 2026

- Director of Finance Johanna Stayskal presented the financials for June.
- Approved Resolution 26-03 Heartland Security Services Additional Ownership.
- Approved Resolution 26-04 Secretary's Certificate approving the execution of the Rural Utilities Service loan documents.
- CEO Krambeer provided an update on cooperative subsidiaries.
- Discussed CEO succession plan.

The next board meeting is August 27 at 9 a.m. at the Cresco office.



Efficiency matters for comfort

Everybody wants a comfortable home. Did you know energy efficiency upgrades not only help you save energy, but can make your home more comfortable, too? If you find yourself continually returning to the thermostat on cold winter days or unable to find relief from heat on summer days, these are signs your home needs an efficiency upgrade.

No matter the home, energy efficiency upgrades often start with the same basic principle: Keep outside air from coming inside and keep conditioned inside air from leaking out. Insulation, air sealing, duct sealing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades can dramatically improve the comfort of your home.

A fully insulated home, including attic, walls and floor, is more comfortable. It's like a blanket for your home. Air sealing is a lesser-known efficiency upgrade that keeps air from entering and exiting the home through cracks and gaps. Some air sealing can be done from inside the home, such as using expanding foam around plumbing pipes and drains under sinks, adding gaskets to outlets on exterior walls, caulking around windows or weatherstripping around doors.

Attics and crawl spaces offer additional opportunities to reduce air leakage and increase comfort. In the attic, sealing gaps around top plates, open soffit areas, cove ceilings and balloon framing can help keep conditioned air where it belongs. In the basement or crawl space, seal around plumbing pipes and drains, vents and electrical wires. If you need help, contact a local contractor.

Insulating and air sealing can create comfort instantly. The temperature swings from the furnace cycling on and off may dramatically be reduced. The home will feel warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

Another benefit from insulation is the reduction in noise from outside. When the windows and doors are closed, you may no longer

hear things like traffic noise.

Duct sealing can also improve the comfort of your home. Your ductwork delivers heated or cooled air in a forced-air HVAC system. If there are disconnections or leaks in the ducts, the air you paid to heat or cool may not end up where you want it. Disconnects and leaks can cause hot or cold spots in the home. An HVAC professional can inspect or test your ducts to make sure they are connected and sealed properly.

Air sealing and duct sealing can also improve the air quality in your home. Air leakage between the conditioned area of the home and the attic or crawl space can introduce dust, pollen, mold or other allergens you don't want to breathe. Reducing air leakage can reduce the chance of these things circulating throughout your home.

Upgrading to a heat pump can also boost comfort and efficiency. Heat pump technology is often about three times as efficient as electric resistance heat because it uses refrigerant to move heat instead of creating it. If you're upgrading from electric or gas heat, a heat pump can efficiently heat and cool your home, making it comfortable year-round.

If you already have a heat pump or any forced-air HVAC system, annual maintenance and regularly changing your filter maximizes system operation and comfort.

Consider improving your home's comfort by completing these energy efficiency upgrades. Your family and energy bills will thank you.



1992 HREC & TEC are founders of Cooperative Response Center for after-hours calls
1992 Mainstreet Messenger launched; Steven Kettler becomes 5th manager of HREC
1994 HREC's biggest construction year since the 1940s; built or rebuilt 50 miles of line, rebuilt over 100 individual services and replaced over 600 poles
1996 Automatic bank drafting of electric bills available at TEC
1996 TEC launches scholarship program (HREC 2003)
1996 HREC's first municipal member is Lawler
1997 HREC appliance store opened
1997 Co-ops offer Evergreen through Dairyland Power Cooperative
1998 Co-ops become partners in Touchstone Energy; TEC launches website (HREC 1999)
1999 Minnowa Alliance and PowerPlus Engineering are created; HREC opens Radio Shack



Make your mark on safety at the Iowa State Fair

We're keeping things colorful at the Iowa State Fair as the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are pleased to once again sponsor the 4-H Exhibits Building. MiEnergy Cooperative is proud to be a Touchstone

Energy member, which means we're part of a nationwide network of locally owned co-ops that provides resources and leverages partnerships to help member-consumers use energy wisely.

If you're planning a visit to the Iowa State Fair from August 13-23, make sure to stop by and see us in the air-conditioned 4-H Exhibits Building on the southwest corner of the fairgrounds. It's a great place to take a break from the heat or rain during your adventure.

Electric co-op staff from across the state will hand out crayons and coloring pages while supplies last. Kids can color the pages at our booth or at home and learn about electrical safety. Adults can mark their home location on our statewide service territory map and see which cooperative powers their community.

4 GRAND KIDS 2 YEARS FROM RETIREMENT 35 FEET IN THE AIR

BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S YOU I'M WORRIED ABOUT.

HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH.

When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.

MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN

Don't forget about our rebates!

Appliances

Energy Assessments

EV Charging Stations

Heating/Cooling Systems

Lighting

Water Heaters

MiEnergy has a variety of rebates available to members that purchase energy-efficient products and appliances that meet or exceed specific criteria. Those rebates are only available until funds are depleted, or December 31, whichever comes first.

Rebate forms and information about the Inflation Reduction Act are available online at www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates or by calling 1-800-432-2285. View details of the rebate before making purchases to ensure your items qualify.

Where's my rebate check?

MiEnergy does not mail rebate checks. The rebate amount will appear as a line item on your bill with the word "rebate," and the amount will be listed as a credit.

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Don't let an aging water heater leave you cold

Most people don't think much about water heaters. It's easy to take for granted hot showers, clean dinner dishes and freshly laundered linens. The lonely water heater, tucked away in the basement or a utility closet, is out of sight and out of mind. But it's also equally important to be confident that your water heater will keep the water hot until you need it. How old is your water heater? Is it time to start thinking about replacing the unit before equipment failure occurs?

The co-op has been selling efficient, electric water heaters for decades. Members can get discounts on 85 and 105-gallon electric Marathon water heaters purchased at the cooperative.

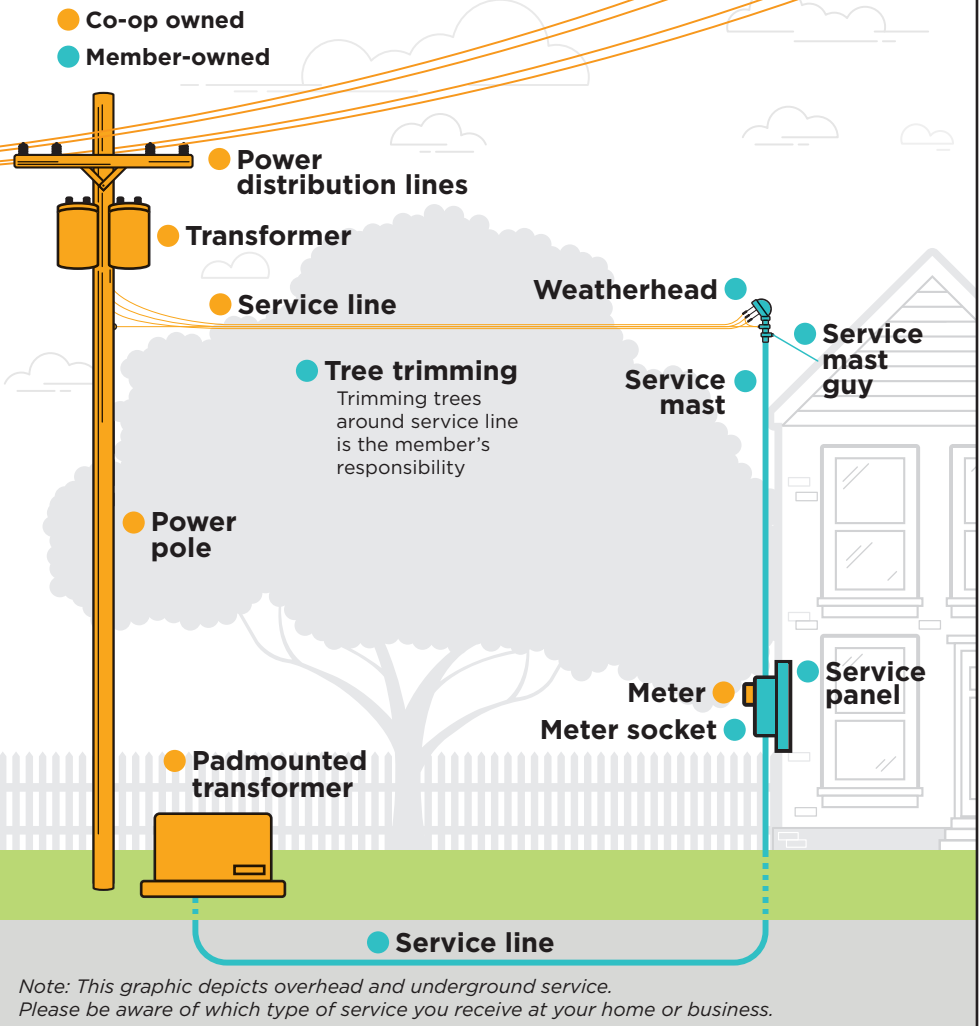
MiEnergy provides free service, parts and labor during normal business hours. A service charge applies if after regular business hours. To qualify for this discount, the water heater must be on the MiEnergy energy management program. MiEnergy will provide a FREE Marathon water heater to members building a new house or for those switching from a gas to an electric model.

Call the energy experts at MiEnergy today or visit our website at www.MiEnergy.coop for details on the co-op's water heaters and energy management programs.

Who Owns What?

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



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Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the October 2026 newsletter. Deadline is September 15. 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.

WILD PLUM JELLY

HANNA SCHMITT, FORT ATKINSON

Collect fruit until you have about a 3:1 ratio of plums to grapes. Plums can be foraged from wild trees or locally grown. Grapes can be foraged from wild vines or grown locally. They can be unripe.

Wash and boil fruit until mushy, roughly 30 minutes. Mash and strain fruit through cheesecloth and save juice.

Add ¾ c. sugar for every 1 c. juice. Note that no pectin is needed. The grapes help it gel.

Bring back to a boil. Boil hard until the mixture reaches the gelling point, about 218° F.

Pour into glass jars and refrigerate. Enjoy on bread or crackers.

Store in fridge for 3 weeks or freeze for later use.

CHOCOLATE CAKE MIX COOKIES

JESSICA HEBERLEIN, CALEDONIA

1 box of chocolate cake mix
1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ c. quick oatmeal
½ c. olive oil
2 eggs

Mix cake mix, chocolate chips, quick oats, and oil together. Whip eggs, separately in a different bowl. Combine all ingredients until thoroughly mixed. Roll into balls and place on cookie sheet. Bake 350° for 8 to 10 minutes.



E-bikes and e-scooters are powered by lithium-ion batteries — the same type used in laptops and smartphones. A few smart habits can help prevent battery fires and keep riders safe.

CHARGE SMART

- Improper charging is one of the leading causes of lithium-ion battery fires. Help reduce the risk by using these tips:
- Use only the charger that came with the device or one approved by the manufacturer.
 - Charge the battery on a flat, dry surface away from anything that can catch fire.
 - Plug a charger directly into a wall outlet. Avoid extension cords and power strips.
 - Do not charge batteries near doors, in hallways or anywhere they could block an exit or create a tripping hazard.
 - Charge one high-powered device per outlet to reduce the risk of overheating.
 - Unplug the battery when it's fully charged or set a timer to remind you.

STORE BATTERIES SAFELY

Keep batteries at room temperature when possible. Avoid charging or storing batteries in extreme temperatures, below 32° F or above 105° F. You should also never leave batteries in direct sunlight or inside a hot car. Store e-bikes, scooters and batteries away from exits and flammable materials.

RECYCLE RESPONSIBLY

Never put lithium-ion batteries in the trash. They can spark and start a fire. Used or damaged batteries should be taken to a certified battery recycling location. Contact your local waste department or visit batterynetwork.org to find a recycling site near you.

STOP USING YOUR BATTERY IF YOU NOTICE

- Unusual odors.
- Changes in color or shape.
- Smoking or leaking.
- Strange noise.
- It no longer holds a charge.
- It feels unusually hot.

Damaged or defective batteries can overheat, catch fire or explode. If a lithium-ion battery starts to smoke or catch fire, move away and call 911. If it is safe to do so, use water to cool the battery and the surrounding area.

Stay safe this school year by practicing smart battery habits and help prevent fires before they start.

Source: National Fire Protection Association



HOWARD COUNTY FAIR — CRESCO

MiEnergy sponsored three contests at the Howard County Fair: homemade salsa, strawberry dessert and light bulb decorating.

Winners of the salsa contest were: Brooklyn Stevenson, 1st; Jacob & Hazel Schmitt, 2nd; and Anne Wemark, 3rd. Judges were Felicia Pecinovsky, Karen Pecinovsky and Riah Schrage the 2025 Iowa State Fair Queen from Grundy County.

Winners of the strawberry dessert contest were: Anne Wemark, 1st; Phyllis Stevenson, 2nd; and Korey Hrdlicka, 3rd. Judges were Kennedy Linkenmeyer the 2025 Howard County Fair Queen, Kenzie Moellers the 2025 Howard County Fair Princess, and Riah Schrage, the 2025 Iowa State Fair Queen from Grundy County.

There were 22 entries in the light bulb decorating contest taking old, used light bulbs and turning them into creative masterpieces. Winners of the light bulb decorating contest were:

Olivia Mahr (Ribbon Auction), 1st; Ruby Jackson (The Pigeon Will Ride The Roller Coaster), 2nd; and Gabbie Gardner (Hot Air Balloon), 3rd. Judges were 2026 Howard County Fair Queen Mally Linkenmeyer and 2026 Fair Princess Toni Thiele.



WINNESHIEK COUNTY FAIR — DECORAH



MiEnergy sponsored two contests at the Winneshiek County Fair: chocolate chip cookies and homemade apple pie.

Winners of the chocolate chip cookie contest were: Julie Scheidel, 1st; Luigi Rausch, 2nd; and Kiele Eberling, 3rd. Judges were Ryan Dahl from MiEnergy, and Morgan Fechner and Alicia Meyer from Decorah Bank and Trust.

Winners of the apple pie contest were: Sue Teslow, 1st; Julie Scheidel, 2nd; and Marian Rovang-Rude, 3rd. Judges were Johanna Stayskal from MiEnergy, and Rhonda Schnitzler and Leslie Cook from Viking State Bank & Trust.

A DAY WITH YOUR G&T — LA CROSSE

MiEnergy employees Janelle Sunnes, Meagan Moellers, Jamie Breaser, Tyler Eide, Vassil Vutov and Annie Hoiland attended the A Day with Your G&T tour on July 8 hosted by our wholesale power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative in La Crosse, Wis. Participants received an overview and history of Dairyland, question and answer session with the executive team; toured the service center, powered printing building, system operations center and the JP Madgett Plant in Alma.



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
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DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer and Skip Wieser
DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer, vice chair

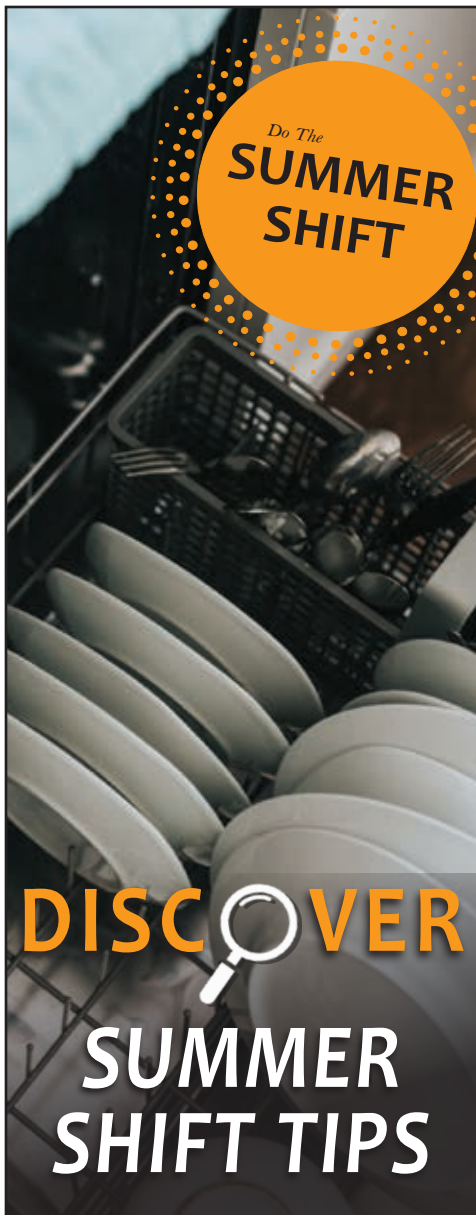
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2026 OFFICES CLOSED
SEP 7 Labor Day
SEP 10 Employee Development Day
NOV 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday
DEC 15 Employee Development Day
DEC 24-25 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
DEC 31 New Year's Eve, close at 11 a.m.
JAN 1 New Year's Day

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

August heat can put your air conditioner to the test, making it a great time to check your system's air filter. A dirty, clogged filter restricts airflow, forcing your cooling system to work harder than necessary to keep your home comfortable. That extra strain can reduce efficiency, increase energy use and contribute to unnecessary wear and tear on equipment. Inspect your filter monthly during periods of heavy air conditioner use and replace it if it appears dirty. A clean filter supports efficient operation and can even enhance indoor air quality—helping you stay cool and comfortable during the hottest days of summer.



Doing The Summer Shift helps keep electric rates affordable for all members. Anyone can participate by shifting or reducing energy use between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. on summer weekdays.

Run the dishwasher after 7 p.m. and open the door to let the dishes air dry overnight.



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AMERICA SHINES

The Heart of America captured on MiRoads

A
JOURNEY
DOWN
MiRoads
WITH MEGAN MOELLERS

Throughout July, MiEnergy Cooperative members shared their American journeys through our MiRoads photo collaboration on Facebook. From scenes across our service territory to snapshots from Minnesota, Iowa and destinations around the country, members helped celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Each submitted photo earned an entry into the drawing for an America 250 gift basket.

Congrats to Kellie Moore of Eitzen, she was randomly drawn as the winner. She received a gift basket full of MiEnergy swag and other goodies that make America shine! Visit www.facebook.com/MiEnergyCoop/ to see all of the pictures submitted. Thank you to the members who participated! We truly live in a beautiful country.

Thanks for being members of MiEnergy Cooperative, your electric cooperative. Where 'trust that spans generations' isn't just a slogan we use, it's our way of life. We have been a trusted name in southeast Minnesota and northeast Iowa for nine decades. We care about our members while carrying on traditions that signify the enduring strength of providing electricity and community purpose for future generations and inspiring others to join in the cooperative spirit. After all, that's the co-op way of doing things. We are proud to electrify the yards, homes, acreages and businesses in our region so our members can celebrate the milestone anniversary of the heart of America while proudly flying the red, white and blue.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!
1776-2026