

MiNews

Co-ops grow for the communities they serve

Going beyond the wires for Co-op Month



Don't forget to sign up
to win this basket!

RSVP online
today for
the annual
Fall Event at
Pinter's on
Oct. 20



A dashboard on sustainability

In 2021, a United States Department of Energy study indicated utilities could likely attain 42% renewable energy generation by 2050. In the last Minnesota legislative session, a new law was passed that the state's utilities should be 100% carbon free by 2040. Our timelines for the clean energy transition are getting tighter.

MiEnergy recently released its 2022 sustainability dashboard. It is online at www.MiEnergy.coop/sustainability-dashboard. It shows that 46% of the generating capacity for MiEnergy's members' electricity is from renewable sources, which is a tremendous accomplishment. The 46% is driven by our 98 kW of community solar, power purchase agreements of 9 megawatts (MW) with Fillinona Solar and 664 kW with Reicks View Solar, and 16 MW of member-owned distributed generation from over 900 systems all across our service territory.

Our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, has a generation mix that includes 25% renewable energy, and it keeps growing. It is primarily wind energy, but also includes solar, landfill gas and hydro.

MiEnergy supports the addition and expansion of renewable energy resources, and we recently made an application for a 5 MW utility-scale solar project in our service territory under the United States Department of Agriculture PACE (Powering Affordable Clean Energy) program. Our renewable energy projects have provided significant value to our electric cooperative and provided wholesale rate savings through on-peak energy contributions and seasonal transmission peak avoidance.



However, despite the progress in adding renewable energy resources to our electric grid, a recent North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) report said the No. 1 risk to electric reliability in the United States is "bad energy policy."

The Environmental Protection Agency recently proposed new power plant rules that ignore reliability and affordability, while mandating severe cuts in emissions on unreasonable timetables using unproven technologies like carbon capture and storage and hydrogen fuel.

MiEnergy supports continued investments in renewable energy generation resources. We continue embracing new technologies, energy management and efficiency efforts on both sides of the electric meter, which are being incorporated into MiEnergy's 2024 work plan.

For example, we are researching the Department of Energy grant on the possibility of installing a substation battery to work with the previously mentioned 5 MW utility-scale solar project under the PACE program. We plan to implement a new system-wide energy management system to replace our current system. This month, the board approved a subscription rate tariff for electric vehicles encouraging off-peak charging. Our initiatives are a piece of the puzzle to move MiEnergy forward in a successful energy transition. Yet, to preserve electric system reliability during this critical transition period, we need to stop shutting down generation.

On August 23, 2023, Dairyland Power Cooperative set a new all-time system peak from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. MiEnergy also set a new all-time system peak that same day. MiEnergy's system peak occurred at 8 p.m. With generation converting to intermittent renewable generation, more electrification in the residential and commercial sectors and growing use of electric vehicles in the transportation sector, we anticipate and are planning for more electricity demand. The good news is that we are moving in a positive direction, and I am confident we will make this electric transformation successful, but we need a national energy policy focusing on **reliability, affordability and sustainability**. Our current policy does not focus on all three. This is the message electric cooperatives across the United States are sending to Congress and government officials.

Have a safe and enjoyable fall season.

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

Board room highlights | Sept. 28, 2023

- CFO Shelly Hove reviewed a positive financial report.
- Safety and Compliance Coordinator Brad Pecinovsky provided a quarterly update.
- Approved Resolution 23-11 allocating capital credits in the amount of \$1,919,396.41
- Approved a pilot rate tariff for an electric vehicle charging subscription rate.
- Reviewed and approved the vehicle replacement plan.
- Approved an amendment to the construction work plan.
- CEO Brian Krambeer provided updates on subsidiary organizations.
- Conducted the annual CEO evaluation.

The next board meeting will be held at the Cresco office on October 31 at 9 a.m.

SPOOKY ENERGY SAVINGS

This spooky season, we're sharing a few energy-saving tricks so you can treat yourself to lower energy bills. Here are four simple ways to summon the spirit of energy efficiency.

CONJURE INSTANT SAVINGS WITH A SMART THERMOSTAT. One of the easiest ways to save energy is through thermostat control, since home heating and cooling account for a large portion of monthly energy use. Smart thermostats can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly. You can control a smart thermostat from anywhere (through your smartphone), preventing unnecessary energy consumption while you're away. Sorcery!

GET RID OF GOOSEBUMPS BY ELIMINATING GHOSTLY DRAFTS. The winter chill is just around the corner, so now is the time to seal air leaks around your home. Apply caulk and weatherstripping around drafty windows and doors to make your home more comfortable and lower energy use.

ILLUMINATE YOUR HAUNT WITH ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING. LED bulbs use 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Make the switch to reduce energy used for lighting. Remember to use LEDs when it's time to decorate for the upcoming holiday season. LED light strings offer an average of 88% energy savings compared to traditional incandescent light strings.

STIR UP SAVINGS WITH COUNTERTOP CAULDRONS. Cooler weather summons our favorite soup recipes. Small countertop appliances like slow cookers use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop. Grab your book of spells (or recipes) and stir up savings in the kitchen.

When we look around our homes, many opportunities exist to save energy. So, this spooky season, investigate your space and unlock a different kind of magic that brings real energy savings.

Personnel changes

NEW EMPLOYEES

Jill Huffman accepted a role with MiEnergy as a chief operating officer of broadband operations and started June 30. With MiEnergy's ReConnect award to expand broadband in Fillmore County, Jill will oversee project deployment with MiEnergy staff, including additional future broadband initiatives as we move to advance our electric distribution communication platforms. As a shared employee, Jill continues to work as the CEO of MiBroadband and Spring Grove Communications. Welcome Jill!



Jill Huffman



Matt Ackman

Matt Ackman accepted the mechanic position. He comes to MiEnergy from previous employment at Farmers-Win Cooperative in Houston. He brings many years of experience and will oversee the fleet of vehicles the cooperative owns at its two office locations and two outposts. Matt started on September 1. Welcome Matt!

Save time. Avoid service interruptions. Eliminate late fees.

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THE CO-OP WAY OF DOING THINGS

Shining brightly for our members

BEYOND THE WIRES

cooperative business model during the month where co-ops shine the most. After all, that's the co-op way of doing things.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on how "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

CO-OPS GROW COMMUNITIES: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles and being community-focused is essential to everything we do.

CO-OPS GROW TOGETHER: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

CO-OPS GROW TOMORROW'S LEADERS: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground



for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, career fairs, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

CO-OPS GROW FOR YOU: At MiEnergy, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, as your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!

CO-OPS GROW COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month. As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.



October is National Co-op Month, and MiEnergy is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for co-op members.

Electric co-ops, including MiEnergy, exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs. Thank you to the employees and directors who exemplify the



Koren Family Farm
Whalan, MN

Euphrosyne Corner Farm
Peterson, MN

Lieb Family Farm
Chatfield, MN



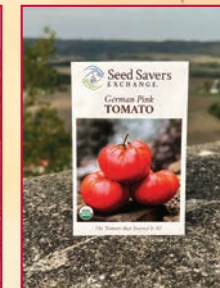
A'LaRae Designs
Lime Springs, IA



Heart Rock Coffee
Spring Grove, MN



Rainbow Rose Art
Caledonia, MN



Seed Savers Exchange
Decorah, IA



Reicks View Farms
Lawler, IA



Norsland Lefse
Rushford, MN



Van Lin Orchards
La Crescent, MN

I ♥ MiCo-op gift basket drawing

ENTER TODAY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A BASKET FULL OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED GOODS TO BE GIVEN AWAY!

To show our appreciation for our members, MiEnergy is pleased to announce a gift drawing contest 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. The basket includes freeze-dried fruit, a wool dryer ball, double extracted mushroom cocoa mix, a gnome magnet, ground coffee, a Minnesota or Iowa greeting card, German pink heirloom tomato seeds, pork snack sticks, cinnamon and sugar lefse chips and an apple crisp kit. 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:

Visit www.MiEnergy.coop/co-op-basket-giveaway to complete the form, or call 800-432-2285. Members must provide their name, phone number, account number and service address to enter. The contest closes on October 25, 2023. Winning members will be notified by phone on October 26. The baskets will be delivered October 30-November 1.

CONTEST RULES:

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

FIND THE FORM FAST BY SCANNING THIS QR CODE



Members only FALL EVENT

OCTOBER 20 FROM 2-6 P.M.



Hours of entertainment with FREE access to Pinter's Pumpkin Patch activities! Rain or shine.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Wagon rides | Hook and ring | Pumpkin bowling |
| Jumping pillow | Sand tire hill & tire maze | Ball zone |
| Corn maze | Life-size chess | Grain cart rides |
| Big slides | Skee-Ball | Connect 4 Golf |
| Pedal go karts | Roller Bowler | No Right Turn Mazes |
| Junior pedal go karts | Duck races | Photo ops |
| Black light mini golf | Corn box | And more! |
| | Farm animals/goat walk | |
| | Tetherball | |

RSVP online at www.MiEnergy.coop or call 800-432-2285 by 4 p.m. Oct. 19!

Have your MiEnergy account number handy. It is required for reserving tickets.

Didn't RSVP in time? Complete this info & bring it to the event for first-come, first-serve on remaining tickets. Your MiEnergy account number is required.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ # Tickets: _____ Ages 3 and under
 Account #: _____ Ages 4-64
 _____ Ages 65+



Capital Credit Refunds

Have Arrived!

IT PAYS TO BE A CO-OP MEMBER

Capital credits are your share of the cooperative's "profits." Per MiEnergy's bylaws, the board of directors determines the amount of retirement each year based on the financial condition of the cooperative.

The board recently approved retiring over \$1.9 million in capital credits. If you purchased electricity from the co-op during 1996-1998 and/or 2000-2022, your credit is listed as a "Capital Credit Refund" on this month's statement. The 1996-1998 credits are a retirement from Dairyland Power Cooperative that we are passing on to members.

Capital credits at not-for-profit companies are similar to dividends paid by for-profit companies. The difference is the cooperative's "shareholders" are the people it serves and the dividends (capital credits) are paid only to those members. For more information about capital credits, visit our website, www.MiEnergy.coop.

Working on MiLines

DAY | NIGHT | RAIN | SHINE

1. All feeders going into the Henrytown Substation were converted from overhead to underground: Tony Rislove and Noah Manning cut down old wire going into the substation, while Christian Anderson rolls up the wire. **2.** Lucas Gravos assisting the City of Lanesboro with connecting new secondaries to a business. **3.** Cole Kingsley is fixing an insulator in the rain. **4.** Mark Dornink is crimping a jumper back together on an energized line.



1



2



3



4

Be on the Hunt for Safety

Wearing a bright orange vest, keeping your finger off the trigger until you're ready to shoot, and only pointing at your target. These are some of the safety measures associated with hunting, and electrical safety should be added to the list.

Never shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, transformers or substations. A stray bullet could not only damage equipment, potentially interrupting electric service, but could be deadly to the shooter. Damage to the conductor could drop the line to the ground, causing a possibility of electrocution to those nearby.

MiEnergy and Safe Electricity urge hunters to follow these safety tips while hunting:

- o Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- o Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- o Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- o Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them.
- o Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole, except for utility equipment is an obstruction and poses a serious hazard to utility workers.

Don't make lineworkers hunt for problems caused in a hunting area. Sometimes damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months, or unless an outage occurs. Keep yourself and your utility safe this hunting season. For more electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.



out & about in your COMMUNITY

FARM SAFETY DAY – CRESCO

MiEnergy presented electric safety tips to 114 fifth-grade students from Howard-Winn, Notre Dame and Riceville schools. ISU Extension and Outreach Howard County hosted the event at the Howard County Fairgrounds as part of the annual Farm Safety Day. At right, Travis Cummings (l) and Caleb Steiner (r) gave the kids information about the dangers of electricity.



CAREER DAY – CALEDONIA

MiEnergy participated in the Bluff Country Collaborative's Career and Technical Education event hosted at Caledonia Schools. Approximately 500 students in grades 9 through 12 attended from Caledonia, Houston, Lewiston-Altura, Mabel-Canton, Rushford-Peterson and Spring Grove schools. It served as a great way to help educate students on what MiEnergy does and to highlight the career opportunities as a lineworker and other career options. At upper left, Greg Becker (l) and Chris Horn (r) look on as two student attempt a routine task using rubberized safety gloves.



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY – RUSHFORD

Employees recently walked the ditches of Highway 16 near the Rushford office to pick up trash as part of the Adopt-A-Highway program. Back row L-R: Andy Prinsen, Lori Clobes, Audra Skalet, Brittany Benson, Kent Whitcomb. Front row L-R: Charlie Mueller, Travis Link, Kari Steele and Brenda Tesch.

CONSERVATION TOUR – PRESTON

The Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the annual Sixth Grade Conservation Tour at Forestville State Park on September 21. Approximately 120 students from Fillmore Central, Kingsland and Rushford-Peterson schools saw electric safety demonstrations by Andy Prinsen (l) and Cole Kingsley (r). Students also saw presentations by the MN DNR Parks, MN DNR Fisheries, MN DNR Forestry and the University of Minnesota Extension related to conservation.



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COOPERATIVE

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

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DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer

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MIKE WALTON vice president of engineering and planning
KENT WHITCOMB vice president of member services

MINES STAFF

MEAGAN MOELLERS communications specialist, editor
ANNIE HOILAND communications specialist
BRENDA TESCH marketing and communications manager

2023 OFFICES CLOSED

NOV 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday
DEC 6 Employee Development Day
DEC 22, 25 Christmas Holiday

RECHARGE MINNESOTA EVENT – WINONA

MiEnergy's Kent Whitcomb (below on right) answered questions at the EV Test Drive & Expo organized by ReCharge Minnesota at Winona State University. Expo attendees could test drive electric cars, e-bikes and scooters. MiEnergy provided information on its electric vehicle charging program and member-owned solar.



Interruptible heat test 7 a.m. on Nov. 15

If you participate in MiEnergy's interruptible heating (also known as dual fuel or energy management), your system will be tested on Wednesday, Nov. 15 beginning at 7 a.m.

At that time, the electricity powering your electric heating system will be interrupted and cause your backup heating system to operate. All power will be restored by 12 p.m.

This annual test is conducted to ensure that your backup heating system starts automatically and adequately keeps your home at a comfortable temperature during control periods this winter. The test also ensures the control equipment is functioning properly.

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Finalists announced in contest highlighting volunteers

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa sponsored their third annual Shine the Light contest to highlight commitment to community. MiEnergy members and employees were invited to nominate Iowa volunteers in their communities who are working to improve their quality of life.

This year, 126 nominations were submitted across Iowa, highlighting the work of many incredible Iowans. Three winners were selected:

Heather Weers of Center Junction was selected for her work with the Jones County chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP). Weers started the local chapter of SHP in 2019 and is committed to their mission of making sure no child in the community sleeps on the floor.

Betty Thronson of New Hampton was selected for her work with Project Flo, named in memory of her mother, Florence "Flo" Thronson. Thronson and her 14 siblings established Project Flo in 2011 as a way to honor their mother's spirit of volunteerism.

Erica Lindaman of Clarion was selected for her work with Gift of Giving. As a fourth-grade teacher, Lindaman is well aware of the community's need for clothes, food, furniture and other vital resources.

All three winners were awarded a \$2,500 donation to their charity. Learn more at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.

Teens and power line accidents

National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October, which is a good time to talk to the teens about safety on the open road, including the hazards of downed power lines.



Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.
- If you walk or run from one voltage "ripple" to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).
- If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).
- Your body becomes electricity's path to the ground when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

If you are in a car accident involving power lines, stay inside your vehicle, call 9-1-1 and keep bystanders at least 50 feet away. Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

If there is imminent danger, you should jump from the vehicle with your feet landing together and not touching any part of the vehicle. Then bunny hop

