

November 2022 Vol. 6 Issue 11
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.

MiNews

Coins for commUNITY

\$6,000 in grants given for community projects

**2023 BOARD
DIRECTOR
ELECTION
INFORMATION**

**Gift basket winners
announced**

**Energy efficiency for
the holidays**

**ADVISORY
COMMITTEE &
TRUST BOARD
OPENINGS**



Ella and Clara Keller, of Chester, have been raising money to build a basketball court/ice rink. The girls applied for an Operation Round Up grant on behalf of the City of Chester. The grant will create a place for activities year-round for local kids and those from surrounding areas.

Preparing for the 2023 legislative season

On November 8, we exercised our American right to vote for our choice of candidates. Did your candidates win their election?

Your electric cooperative does not pick one political side of the aisle over the other; we embrace both political parties. Our focus is greater Minnesota and rural Iowa and the operation of our electric cooperative. We work hard to meet with all state and federal candidates prior to the election to give them a better understanding of our electric cooperative, along with the cooperative perspective on issues and challenges. The result is that whoever wins the election is educated about MiEnergy Cooperative and our issues. They also know who we represent (you, the members) and who to contact on a host of issues relating to the operation of the cooperative.

A retired state senator once told me to be sure to talk to the candidates prior to the election because they are eager to learn. He also said that after they get elected, it's harder to talk to them because they think they already know everything. Regardless of the senator's opinion, candidates running for office have always been very open to meeting with us, and our strategy has worked well for decades. We'll talk to anybody at anytime.

In addition, MiEnergy also hosts fall legislative meetings with our current elected officials at our Cresco and Rushford offices. These meetings give us the opportunity to discuss what we believe will be our early 2023 legislative issues and challenges.

On October 20, we met with Senator Mike Klimesh and Representative Michael Bergan at our Cresco office. Both have been strong cooperative supporters in the past, and

we shared our preliminary 2023 Iowa legislative issues that include concerns on the following:

- Large electricity users (think energy-intensive big tech company data centers) pushing to circumvent energy territory laws, which are bad for rural Iowans and electric cooperatives that average less than four members per mile of line and have very few large users.
- Limiting solar installations based on crop ground production scores because it is a fundamental infringement of our members' property rights by taking away landowner choice about how to best use their ground.
- Vigilance regarding "solar cooperative" legislation that, in our opinion, is anything but a co-op. They can call themselves a cooperative, but a cooperative that does not allow open membership and does not follow the cooperative principles is disrespectful to the business model and our traditions.

On October 25, we met with Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller and Representative Gene Pelowski at our Rushford office. Senator Miller and representatives Greg Davids and Pelowski have been great cooperative supporters and we shared our 2023 preliminary Minnesota legislative issues that included:

- The Minnesota Department of Revenue (MNDOR) is reinterpreting a 1939 Minnesota law exempting attachments for electric cooperatives/municipals such as meters and streetlights to electric distribution systems. The MNDOR increased MiEnergy's property valuations from \$13 million to \$17 million. Because of this interpretation, we estimate our annual property taxes to increase by approximately \$50,000.
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now charging us a timber fee when we trim our rights-of-way on state property and state parks as part of our vegetation management program, or even to repair power lines during a storm. MiEnergy has over 100 miles of line on state property.
- We are also supporting legislation to exempt load control receivers from State of MN electrical inspection and permit fees. MiEnergy has over 11,000 load control receivers on electric water heaters, and the state wants to subject them to an electrical inspection fee when we replace them. There is no new wiring or changes to the electrical circuitry, only replacing the receiver. The new fees would be nearly a half-million dollars.

These were just some of the issues we discussed with legislators, and we greatly appreciated their time and their continued support for MiEnergy and the region's electric cooperatives.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving holiday and I hope you can share the holiday with your friends and family.

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



Board room highlights | Oct. 27, 2022

- CFO Shelly Hove gave a favorable financial report.
- Cooperative Finance Corporation (MiEnergy's supplemental lender) presented the historical data for MiEnergy's 2021 Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA).
- Approved Resolution 22-15 for a ReConnect broadband application.
- Approved starting construction on three substation shacks now that are 2023 workplan projects.
- CEO Krambeer provided an update on subsidiary organizations.
- Reviewed the results of the CEO evaluation and board evaluation.
- Approved a donation to the Florida Electric Cooperative Association to support electric cooperative employees affected by Hurricane Ian.

The next board meeting will be held at the Rushford office on November 30 at 9 a.m.

Rounding up electric bills has great impact to local groups



MiEnergy members who sign up for Operation Round Up (ORU) to have their bills rounded up each month raised \$6,000 to be given to local organizations for projects. The Operation Round Up Trust Board met on September 22 and elected to donate that spare change to the following local organizations:

- **\$1,000, City of Chester, Iowa**, to assist with building a basketball court and ice rink.
- **\$1,000, Fort Atkinson Fire Association, Fort Atkinson, Iowa**, to help purchase an upgraded tanker for hauling water to rural fires.
- **\$1,000, Foundation for Rushford-Peterson Schools, Rushford, Minn.**, to help with the cost of building custom bike racks for the Bluff Land Triathlon.
- **\$1,000, Protivin Firefighters Inc., Protivin, Iowa**, to help purchase lockers for storage of firefighter turnout gear.
- **\$1,000, Ridgeway Fire and Rescue, Houston, Minn.**, to help purchase emergency medical equipment.
- **\$1,000, Rushford Area Historical Society, Rushford, Minn.**, to assist with reroofing the Southern Minnesota Depot.



MiEnergy has 2,015 members who participate with the average donation being \$6 per year. The ORU program is based on the idea that small change adds up. Currently, the program gives away approximately \$12,000 each year to local organizations.

The ORU Trust Board chooses where the funds get donated and the amount of the donation based on an application process. The trust board members include Neil Broadwater, of Winona; Beth George, of Houston; Roy Kryzer, of Lewiston; Janelle Mahr, of Lime Springs; Teresa Ross, of Hokah; Shannon Schmelzer, of Cresco; Perry-O Sliwa of Decorah; Tom Tibor, of Minnesota City; and Mike Tuohy, of Chatfield.

Donations to ORU are tax deductible. Organizations receive grants through an application process. The next application deadline is February 15. To learn more about Operation Round Up or to round up your electric bill, visit www.MiEnergy.coop or call 1-800-432-2285.

TRUST BOARD POSITION VACANCIES

The board terms for Janelle Mahr and Shannon Schmelzer have expired this year. The ORU Trust Board would like to thank both Janelle and Shannon for their years of service and dedication to this board. MiEnergy Cooperative is looking for two members in the Iowa service territory to fill their positions. The board meets twice each year, in March and September. If interested, please contact Heather Larson at hl Larson@MiEnergy.coop or call 800-432-2285.

Look for an ORU signup form with your November statement or visit www.MiEnergy.coop to complete the online form to start contributing today!

If your bill is \$80.72, MiEnergy rounds it up to \$81 with 28¢ going into the trust fund



BOARD ELECTIONS 2023

Members from district 1 needed

Are you interested in serving as a board member for MiEnergy?

Preparations for director elections for district 1 begin now and will conclude with the results being announced at the annual meeting on April 12, 2023.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

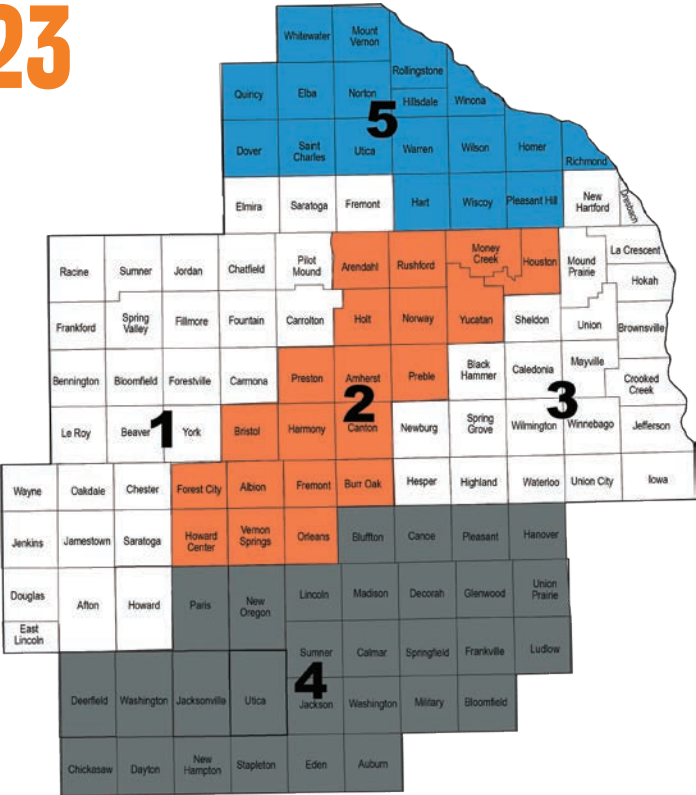
MiEnergy must appoint three members from district 1 to serve on the nominating committee. The committee meets in late January to review submitted director applications and to nominate individuals for placement on the election ballot. Members of the committee are given a \$50 bill credit and mileage for the meeting. If you are interested in serving on the nominating committee, contact Heather Larson by December 16 at 800-432-2285 or hlarson@MiEnergy.coop.

BOARD DIRECTORS

Co-op board directors must commit to attend monthly board meetings, special meetings and educational seminars designed to keep directors informed on the various aspects of MiEnergy and the electric utility industry. Terms are for three years. Their decisions are made in the best interest of the cooperative, and they represent the entire membership. Directors are compensated for their time commitment. For a director application packet contact Heather Larson at 800-432-2285 or hlarson@MiEnergy.coop. The director application deadline is January 13, 2023.

Current District 1 Directors
Dennis Ptacek | Elma, Iowa
Jeff Redalen | Fountain, Minn.

Annual Meeting
April 12, 2023 @ 7 p.m.
Mabel Community Center



The board approved redistricting earlier this year. Some districts changed slightly. Please review this updated map to know what district you reside in.

Efficiency tips for a festive holiday season

The holidays are a magical time when we come together with our loved ones to share food, gifts and quality time. It's also the most expensive time of year for many of us. Along with the expense of gifts, meals and travel comes colder weather and darker nights that lead to more electricity use and higher bills. One way to reduce the financial burden of the most wonderful time of year is by implementing efficiency tips to use less energy at home and lower your monthly bills.



- If you are hosting guests, your household will consume more electricity than normal. Have your thermostat programmed at 68 degrees when you are home and dialed back 8 to 10 degrees when you leave the house or go to sleep. Lower the thermostat when guests are over or cooking food.
- Whether you are making holiday treats or a feast, use the oven light to check food. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by up to 25 degrees, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).
- Let hot food cool to room temperature before placing it inside the refrigerator. This ensures you don't increase the temperature inside your fridge and cause it to use more energy to cool down.
- This year, make the switch to LEDs for all your holiday lighting. LED holiday lights consume 70% less energy than conventional incandescent light strands. For example, it costs 27 cents to light a 6-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days with LEDs compared to \$10 for incandescent lights.
- Pick up a few light timers so you don't have to remember to unplug your lights every evening. You can also choose to upgrade to smart holiday lights that offer a wide range of app-controlled options, including time, colors, music and modes.

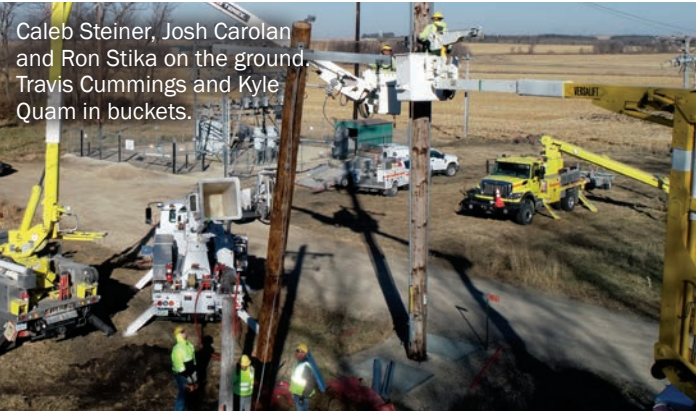


A bird's-eye view of the project.

Working on MiLines

DAY | NIGHT | RAIN | SHINE

Pictured are MiEnergy crews working at the Alta Vista Substation in Chickasaw County to increase safety clearance inside the substation. The crews removed overhead power lines and will be replacing with underground electric feeder. The safety of the crews working during storms, everyday maintenance as well as MiBroadband employees inside the substation is our top priority to create a safe work environment.



Kraig Johnson and Zach Steinmetz in buckets. Shawn Omar and Kevin Reicks on ground.

Advisory Committee openings

MiEnergy is looking for members to serve on its Advisory Committee. The committee meets two to three times a year. It is a three-year commitment, and members are paid a \$50 per diem and mileage to attend the meetings. It is an opportunity for members to learn more about the cooperative and electric industry related topics and for the cooperative to learn more about the members it serves. Members who are interested in serving on the committee or with questions about the committee should contact Heather Larson by November 28 by calling 800-432-2285 or emailing hlarson@MiEnergy.coop. The MiEnergy board will appoint committee members at its December board meeting.

Heartland Security's newest medical alarm technician is ready to serve you

Heartland Security is pleased to announce that Niki Hill recently accepted the medical alarm installation technician position headquartered in the Cresco area. Niki will be installing and servicing Heartland Security customer's medical alert equipment throughout Northeast Iowa. Her favorite thing about working at Heartland Security is meeting new people and helping them stay independent.



Niki Hill, medical alarm technician

WHAT IS A MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM?

The Belle mobile medical alert pendant has everything you need to be able to live at home independently, safely and securely. The pendant can assist 24/7 whether at home, at the store, or traveling. WiFi technology can help locate you or your loved one in case of an emergency. Call Heartland Security at 888-264-6380 or visit their website www.heartlandss.com for more information.

Co-op talks issues with local legislators in October

Local co-ops met with U.S. Senator Tina Smith to discuss how the Farm Bill 2023 can expand both broadband access and infrastructure to support Greater Minnesota. The meeting was held at People's Energy Cooperative in Oronoco, Minn. on October 17.

Local representatives and senators recently attended our annual legislative forums held at both the Rushford

Seated L-R: Representative Gene Pelowski and Senator Jeremy Miller; MiEnergy employees and directors.

and Cresco offices. This is a great opportunity for legislators to talk with co-op employees and directors about issues affecting the cooperative and our local communities.



Front row middle L-R: Jennifer Schilling, Government Relations Manager at Dairyland Power Cooperative, Senator Mike Klimesh and Representative Michael Bergan; MiEnergy employees.



L to R: People's Energy Cooperative President/CEO Mike Henke, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative President/CEO Jim Krueger, U.S. Senator Tina Smith, Minnesota Rural Electric Association General Manager Darrick Moe and MiEnergy Cooperative President/CEO Brian Krambeer.



4-H FARM SAFETY DAY CAMP — CRESCO

MiEnergy gave an electric safety demo to 115 fifth grade students from Howard-Winn, Trinity, Notre Dame and Riceville schools. ISU Extension and Outreach Howard County hosted the event at the Howard County Fairgrounds as part of the annual 4-H Farm Safety Day Camp. MiEnergy employees Kraig Johnson and Clint Lickteig gave the kids some great tips about the dangers of electricity. The youth rotated through stations presented by local farmers, businesses and FFA members.



TRUNK-OR-TREAT — CRESCO

MiEnergy's Kim Larson (left) handed out snacks to more than 600 kids on October 31 during Cresco's Community Trunk-or-Treat event at the Cresco Fitness Center.



TRUNK-OR-TREAT — RIDGEWAY

MiEnergy's Jeff Henderson (top right) handed out snacks to more than 200 kids on October 30 during Ridgeway's Community Trunk-or-Treat event at the Ridgeway Community Center.



BUSINESS TRICK-OR-TREAT — RUSHFORD

MiEnergy's Heather Larson and Brenda Tesch (above right) handed out popcorn to nearly 400 trick-or-treaters during the Rushford/Peterson Valley Business Trick-or-Treat event on October 31.

MEMBERS FALL EVENT — DECORAH

MiEnergy hosted a members-only fall event at Pinter's Gardens & Pumpkins in rural Decorah on October 21. There were over 800 attendees that enjoyed hours of agritainment with numerous activities offered at the local pumpkin patch and corn maze.

Congratulations to our members who won a prize in the drawing: Jessica Heberlein, of Caledonia, chair; Gina Meinertz, of Spring Grove, blanket; Emily Gade, of Ossian, chair; Rita Dykstra, of Decorah, blanket; Melissa Otteson, of Decorah, battery-powered blower; and Arden Auna, of Dorchester, battery-powered trimmer.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

OFFICE INFORMATION

Open Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
IOWA 24049 Highway 9, PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136
MINNESOTA 31110 Cooperative Way, PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

PHONE NUMBERS

LOCAL 563-547-3801 (Cresco); 507-864-7783 (Rushford)
TOLL-FREE & 24/7 OUTAGE REPORTING 800-432-2285
PAYMENT LINE 24/7 877-853-6517
UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING 811

ONLINE

WEBSITE www.MiEnergy.coop
SOCIAL MEDIA Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1 Dennis Ptacek, secretary and Jeff Redalen
DISTRICT 2 Dean Nierling, chair and Ron Stevens, vice chair
DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer, Skip Wieser and Dennis Young
DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer

MANAGEMENT STAFF

BRIAN KRAMBEER president/chief executive officer
SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer
STEVE OIAN vice president of operations - Minnesota
VASSIL VUTOV vice president of information technology
MIKE WALTON vice president of operations - Iowa
KENT WHITCOMB vice president of member services

MINES STAFF

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

2022/2023 OFFICES CLOSED

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)
JAN 2 New Year's Day observance

Seasonal reminders

SNOWBIRDS AND VACATIONERS

If you are planning to leave your home for an extended period of time this winter, remember to make billing arrangements while you are away. MiEnergy has a number of options to offer:

- Automatic checking/savings withdrawals or credit/debit card payments.
- Online payments, readings, account management and daily/monthly power usage available through SmartHub at www.MiEnergy.coop or download the SmartHub App for Android and iOS users.



SEND IN YOUR 2022 REBATE FORMS

MiEnergy has a variety of rebates available to members that purchase energy efficient products and appliances that meet or exceed specific criteria. Rebates are only available until funds are depleted, or December 31, whichever comes first. Rebate forms are available online at www.MiEnergy.coop or by calling 800-432-2285.



MINNESOTA MEMBERS NOTICES

MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE LAW

When a household member has been ordered into active duty for deployment or for a change of duty station, some members may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota Law protects military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their bill when certain conditions are met. For more information, visit www.MiEnergy.coop or call MiEnergy.

ELECTRIC HEAT SALES TAX EXEMPTION

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 sources 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.

Preventing Home Electrical Fires

Fire departments respond to an average of **46,700** home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):
Over a recent 4-year period...

30% happened in cold weather months (Nov. - Feb.)

Fires caused an estimated average of: **390 Deaths** and **1,070 Injuries**

1 Wiring and related equipment were involved in the **greatest number of home electrical fires.**

Lighting, a lamp or a bulb was involved in the **second largest number of fires.**

WARNING SIGNS of electrical issues:

- Damaged cords and flickering lights
- Discolored outlets and switch plates
- Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses

Hire a licensed contractor to ensure that your home's wiring is **installed to code** and functioning properly. Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days.

If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean regularly to boost efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



I ♥ MiCo-op gift baskets

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 50 WINNERS

Bruce Anderson, Decorah
 Leo Berg, Decorah
 Royce & Dorothy Bergsgaard, Houston
 Susanne Blaess, Mabel
 Mitch Bonow, Lewiston
 Terry Buege, Winona
 Dianne Burke, Decorah
 Jayden Burns, Lime Springs
 Wesley Bussell, Eyota
 Jean Carlson, Houston
 Victor Chapel, Spring Valley
 Chad Curtis, Cresco
 Marietta Dennstedt, Harmony
 John Dollar, Lanesboro
 Jacqueline Eastwold, Spring Valley
 Dale Ellickson, Decorah
 Gene Elsbernd, Fort Atkinson
 Dale Eppen, Fountain
 Shari & Waylon Erdmann, Dakota
 Judith Erickson, Winona
 Jeffery Essig, Lewiston
 Paul Ferrie, Cresco
 Scott Franzose, Brownsville
 Raymond & Mildred Grabau, Wykoff
 Karen Guttebo, Decorah
 Jill Haag, Lewiston
 Adam Heberlein, Caledonia
 Donald Helgeson, Canton
 Jessica Henderson, Winona
 Julie Holzwarth, Brownsville
 Joe Kelly, Chester
 Richard Lechtenberg, New Hampton
 Charles & Susan Le Jeune, Brownsville
 Scott Johnson, Racine
 George Johnston, La Crescent
 Dave Malek, Decorah
 Bill Mashek, New Hampton
 Edward Moldenhauer, La Crescent
 Carrie Mueller, St. Charles
 Rita Prodzinski, Winona
 Allan & Barbara Shatek, Fort Atkinson
 Matthew Snyder, Canton
 Gladys Sovereign, Cresco
 Arthur Stika, Decorah
 James Thomas, Lime Springs
 Denise Van Etten, Lewiston
 Linus Voves, Ionia
 Steve & Michelle Vrieze, Lanesboro
 Heather Welch, Spring Valley
 Bradley Westra, Preston

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GIFT GUIDE



Give the gift of safety!



Portable Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)

Designed for locations where there is not a permanent GFCI installed, these devices detect an abnormal flow of electricity and shut off the power, preventing shock or electrocution.



Heavy Duty Extension Cord

Power devices safely. Too often the tools or equipment necessary for larger projects are powered by extension cords that are inadequate for the environment or heavier electrical load.



Outdoor Remote Control Outlet Switch

Leaving outdoor lighting on overnight can be costly and pose a potential hazard. An alternative to smart lights, this remote control switch allows you to turn outdoor lights or other gadgets on or off remotely.

Learn more at | SafeElectricity.org

ELECTRIC VEHICLES | ENERGY EFFICIENCY | RENEWABLE ENERGY



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