

MiNews

November 2023 Vol. 7 Issue 11
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.

While farmers feed America, we feed communities

Going beyond the wires with food drives

**Election information
for districts 2 & 3**

Members give \$5,000 locally
with Operation Round Up

Stars and stripes cover corn stalk bales after field was harvested:
an honorable salute to our area Veterans as well as our American farmers.



Co-op meets with local legislators

Every fall, MiEnergy hosts a state legislative meeting at our cooperative offices with our locally-elected officials to review the last legislative session and to address the upcoming session. On October 12, Senator Miller and representatives Davids and Pelowski attended the Minnesota meeting in Rushford. On October 19, Senator Klimesh and Representative Bergan attended our meeting in Cresco. Our focus during these meetings was reliability, affordability and sustainability.

MiEnergy meets and communicates with all our elected officials throughout the year and consistently when the legislatures are in session. Thankfully, we have received tremendous support from our local elected officials. Whether Democrat or Republican, they are all champions of MiEnergy and supporters of electric cooperatives.

In fact, in July 2023, MiEnergy and a dozen electric cooperatives in Minnesota appealed our property tax valuation from the Minnesota Department of Revenue's reinterpretation of a 1939 state statute on "attachments and appurtenances" that added a tax on streetlights and electric meters on electric distribution lines. This reinterpretation increased our property tax valuation by millions of dollars. MiEnergy filed an appeal and invited representatives Pelowski, Davids, and Senator Miller to our virtual hearing. With our facts, calculations and the support of our elected officials, we successfully lowered our valuation below the previous year.

For 2024, property taxes are one of our Minnesota legislative priorities. With the help of our elected

officials, we will be introducing legislation to clarify the misinterpretation by the Minnesota Department of Revenue to avoid future challenges. Permitting new generation resources – including solar; increased Department of Natural Resources fees for crossing and timber management fees; education on repealing Minnesota's nuclear moratorium for future small modular reactor applications; and concern for new energy industry mandates round out our 2024 Minnesota issues.

For Iowa, utility-scale solar setbacks will likely resurface. Electric cooperatives believe local cities, townships and counties should determine these issues, and we do not support a state law – one size fits all – on setbacks on utility-scale solar projects. Electric cooperatives are "neutral" on carbon pipeline legislation. While we support ethanol and the industry, we do not want our electric distribution and transmission lines to be lumped into the same regulatory requirements as carbon pipelines. MiEnergy is also concerned about potential legislation being introduced regarding a recent farm organization survey about overhead line clearance above the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC).

During our legislative meetings, we communicated that Dairyland Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, and MiEnergy set new historical system peaks on August 23. MiEnergy's peak occurred at 8 p.m. and exceeded the previous peak by nearly 10%. Maintaining baseload generation units and natural gas peaking units will be critical for maintaining system reliability during our country's energy transformation to become carbon-free.

MiEnergy also took the opportunity to highlight a federal Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) program application to install an additional 5 megawatts (MW) of utility-scale solar on our distribution system. MiEnergy's application is a joint effort by 14 electric distribution cooperatives who are members of Dairyland Power Cooperative to install over 80 MW of solar generation.

Through the years, MiEnergy has built very positive relations with all our elected officials. Representatives Pelowski and Davids are the two longest-tenured representatives in the Minnesota legislature, and it's reassuring that all our legislators support and carry the legislation that supports our electric cooperative.

As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Board room highlights | Oct. 31, 2023

- CFO Shelly Hove provided a favorable financial report year-to-date.
- Approved a revolving loan fund application for \$75,000.
- Acknowledged support for the Minnesota Rural Electric Association international electrification project.
- Approved resolutions for a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) fund transfer notice, an accelerated meter depreciation request, and support and commitment for future broadband projects.
- Received subsidiary updates from CEO Brian Krambeer.
- Approved meetings, schedules and director attendance at upcoming meetings and events.
- Directors provided reports on recently attended meetings.
- Reviewed the results from the board evaluation.

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

Unique way to celebrate bountiful harvests

Employees reap & sow, donating to local food shelves

BEYOND THE WIRES

It is harvest time and things come to mind like gathering together, counting blessings, ag workers spending countless hours in the fields, and sharing the bounty with family and friends around a festive dinner table. Farmers in America devote their lives to feeding millions of people. We depend on them and year-after-year, when harvest season rolls around, they always show up to get the job done. Despite the weather obstacles Mother Nature throws at them during the growing, gathering and reaping, it's time to yield the goods they have worked so hard year-round to ensure a successful crop and harvest. We would like to thank all area producers involved in agriculture. We appreciate you, we acknowledge your hard work and dedication, and we offer our endless thanks.

Did you know that there is also a bountiful

harvest that takes place at your local electric cooperative during this time each season? For many years, we stuffed grocery bags or filled bucket trucks with heaps and mounds of food items, turkeys, potatoes, green beans, corn, gallons of milk and pumpkin pies to donate traditional Thanksgiving Day feasts to local families in need. In recent years, we simply gather monetary donations from employees as funds can go further in substance for the nearby food shelves in Minnesota and Iowa. Our employees take pride in knowing that they are helping a family enjoy a plentiful banquet on their table this holiday season. Gobble, gobble! Happy Thanksgiving to our cooperative family and friends. Be sure to include MiEnergy employees during your thankfulness this year as well, as they have gone above and beyond the wires to feed local communities.

Thank you to the employees who donate to make our Thanksgiving Food Drive plentiful for so many local families in our service area. After all, that's the co-op way of doing things.



2022



2019



2021



2017



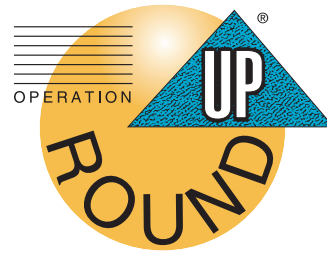
2022



2018



Members give \$5,000 in local donations



MiEnergy Cooperative's Operation Round Up Trust Board met in September and elected to donate \$5,000 to the following local organizations:

- **\$2,000, Fillmore County Ag Society, Preston, Minn.,** to update restrooms at the Fillmore County fairgrounds.
- **\$1,500, City of Spring Grove, Spring Grove, Minn.,** to purchase automated external defibrillators.
- **\$500, Decorah Quilts of Valor #541, Decorah, Iowa,** to purchase quilting supplies.
- **\$500, St. Charles Public Schools, St. Charles, Minn.,** to support the drama club's fall performance.
- **\$500, Quilters Therapy, Mabel, Minn.,** to purchase quilting supplies.

Operation Round Up is funded by donations made by members of MiEnergy Cooperative who voluntarily have their electric bill rounded up to the next dollar. The average donation is \$6 per year, 2,100 MiEnergy members participate and 100% of the funds generated are granted to local organizations via an application process.

The Operation Round Up Trust Board, made up of MiEnergy members, determines where the funds are donated. The trust board members include Neil Broadwater, of Winona; Dan Dietzenbach, of Fort Atkinson; Beth George, of Houston; Roy Kryzer, of Lewiston; Dennis Ostwinkle, of Decorah; Teresa Ross, of Hokah; Perry-O Sliwa of Decorah; Tom Tibor, of Minnesota City; and Mike Tuohy, of Chatfield.

Donations to Operation Round Up are tax deductible. 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.

SNOWBIRDS & 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.



Don't forget about rebates

Don't wait to send in your rebate forms. MiEnergy has a variety of rebates available to members who 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.

Serving up savings for the holidays

Be festive without breaking the bank

- LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent ones, plus they are shatterproof.
- Use smart light timers connected to a smart phone app to program lights to turn on and off at certain times.
- Turn off overhead lights and use your Christmas tree lights to illuminate the room.
- Close the flue of the fireplace when you are not burning a fire to keep heat from escaping through the chimney.

Cook up savings in the kitchen

- Use small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers instead of a stovetop or oven.
- Bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency.
- Match the size of the pan to the size of the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

Opportunities to serve for members living in districts 2 & 3

Preparations for director elections for districts 2 and 3 begin now and will conclude with the results being announced at the annual meeting on April 10, 2024.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

MiEnergy must appoint three members from each district up for election 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 14 at 800-432-2285 or hl Larson@MiEnergy.coop.

DIRECTOR NOT SEEKING REELECTION, BOARD SIZE TO BE REDUCED

Dennis Young shared with the board that he would not be seeking reelection. This will reduce the board to 10 directors. Per the bylaws, the cooperative must have at least nine directors, but no more than 14.

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 hl Larson@MiEnergy.coop. The director application deadline is January 11.

Current District 2 Directors

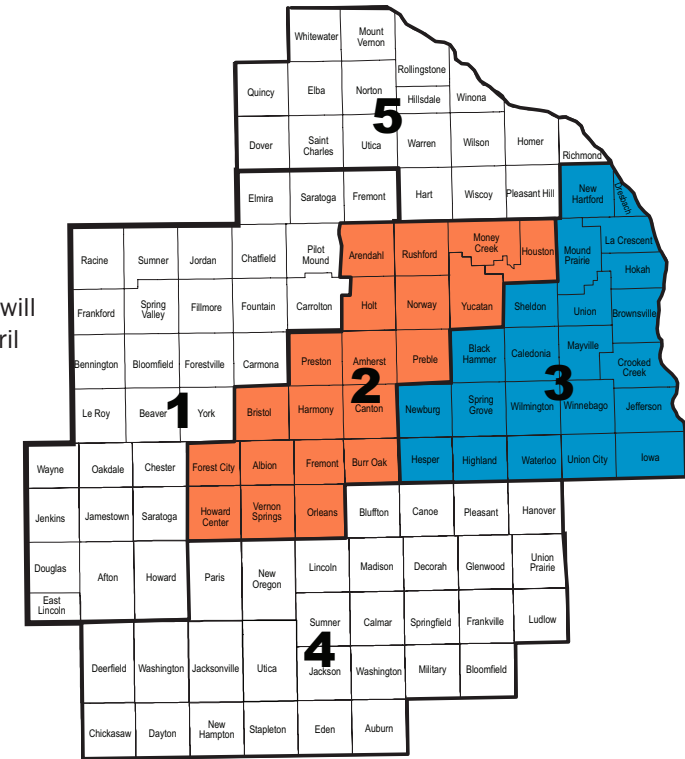
Dean Nierling, Decorah, Iowa
Ron Stevens, Preston, Minn.

Current District 3 Directors

Don Petersen, Hokah, Minn.
Skip Wieser, La Crescent, Minn.
Dennis Young, Decorah, Iowa

MiEnergy Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 2024
7:00 p.m.
Mabel Community Center, Mabel, Minn.



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SECURITY AUTOMATION VIDEO MEDICAL ALERTS

MiRecipes | Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the February 2024 newsletter. Deadline is January 12. 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.

APPLE SALAD | RHODA REIFF, RICEVILLE

2 yellow apples
2 red apples
¼ c. peanut butter
1 c. whipped cream

Dice apples. Mix whipped cream and peanut butter. Pour mixture over apples and toss. Refrigerate until cool or serve immediately.

PEACH CRISP | DIANA NESS, WAUKON

4 c. peaches (peeled and chopped)
1 c. sugar
2 T. Flour

Stir together and pour in bottom of 9x13" baking pan.

Mix crumble as follows:

1 c. flour
1 c. brown sugar
1 c. quick oats
1 stick butter (softened)

Mix together and spread on peach mix. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes.

TURTLE PECAN BARS | JESSICA HEBERLEIN, CALEDONIA

1 pkg. graham crackers
2 c. dark chocolate chips
1 c. salted butter
1 c. brown sugar
1 c. chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a 9x13" pan with parchment paper. Place graham cracker sheets along the bottom of the pan, ensuring the bottom of the pan is covered. Add butter to a large saucepan over medium heat and allow it to melt. Add the brown sugar and pecans, and stir constantly, bringing the mixture to a full boil. Boil for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and pour mixture over graham crackers and spread into an even layer. Bake for 4 minutes. While the bars are baking, in a small sauce pan, melt chocolate chips on low, stirring frequently. Remove bars from oven, and cool for 5 minutes. Carefully spread melted chocolate over the top of the bars. Allow to cool completely before serving.

TEXAS ICE BOX FRUIT CAKE | EILEEN MENSINK, PRESTON

1 lb. graham crackers
1 lb. dates
1 lb. pecans
1 lb. marshmallows
4 T. brown sugar
2 t. vanilla
½ lb. candied cherries
½ lb. candied pineapple
1 lb. butter

Melt butter and marshmallows together; add brown sugar and vanilla. Stir crushed cracker crumbs, candied fruit and nuts into butter-marshmallow mix. Mix well. Shape into rolls and wrap in waxed paper. Refrigerate. Slice rolls to serve. Can use 1 lb. of cherries and pineapple and be sure to use butter, margarine just doesn't work. There are a lot of slices in this recipe.

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 800-432-2285.

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.



LEGISLATIVE FORUMS – CRESCO & RUSHFORD

Local representatives and senators recently attended our annual legislative forums held at both the Rushford 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. Thank you senators Mike Klimesh and Jeremy Miller, and thank you representatives Mike Bergan, Greg Davids and Gene Pelowski.



TRUNK-OR-TREAT – RIDGEWAY

MiEnergy's Meagan Moellers and her family handed out pretzels and stickers to kids on October 29 during Ridgeway's Community Trunk-or-Treat event at the Ridgeway Community Center.



TRUNK-OR-TREAT – CRESCO

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

TRUNK-OR-TREAT – RUSHFORD

MiEnergy's Lori Clobes and Heather Larson handed out popcorn to over 320 trick-or-treaters during the Rushford Peterson Valley Business Trick-or-Treat event on October 31.



ENERGY SMART SOLUTIONS – WINONA

MiEnergy's Brenda Tesch and Kent Whitcomb met with members at Merchants Bank's Energy Smart Solutions event on October 25 to share information about energy efficiency, solar energy and electric vehicle charging.



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

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 KRAMBEEER president/chief executive officer
SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer
JILL HUFFMAN broadband chief operating officer
STEVE OIAN vice president of electric operations
VASSIL VUTOV vice president of information technology
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
DEC 29 Close at 11 a.m. (New Year's Eve Observance)

CLOSED
NOVEMBER 23-24

Call 800-432-2285 to report outages at any time, day or night or holidays.

To make payments, visit www.MiEnergy.coop or call the payment phone line at 877-853-6517.

4 WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

SAFETY FIRST

- Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Test once a month and replace batteries annually.
- Inspect electrical cords. Double-check for frays and cracks. Never plug a space heater into a power strip.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. Make sure strips can handle the electric load and choose ones that include surge protection.
- Clean the fireplace and chimney to improve safety and efficiency. Creosote builds up. Regular cleaning improves airflow and limits carbon monoxide seepage.



Congratulations to the following members for winning one of our 50 gift baskets that were given away during our Cooperative Month celebration:

- Betty Backes, Calmar
- Lauri Bauer, Rushford
- Meghan Betz, Caledonia
- Rachel Bjerke, Spring Grove
- Joy Boldt, Winona
- Don Brincks, Ossian
- Dennis Brown, Rollingstone
- Wayne Carrigan, Chatfield
- Theresa Cook, Cresco
- RJ Dorenkemper, Preston
- Debbie Fangman, Elma
- Pearl Finseth, Fountain
- Renee Foster, La Crescent
- Roger & Rebecca Gage, Lawler
- Verna Gerdes, Dakota
- Glen Grabau, Fountain
- James & Linda Grupa, Winona
- Brad Haagenon, Lewiston
- Tracy Halverson, Decorah
- Eugene Hansen, Rushford
- Ervin & Dorothy House, Lewiston
- Scott Iverson, Decorah
- Edna Jacobson, Decorah
- John Kahoun Jr, Rushford
- Lyle Kiral, Lewiston
- Chad & Jenelle Larson, Minnesota City
- Dave Lehmann, Hokah
- Larry Lukes, Fort Atkinson
- Julie Lutz, Winona
- Sandra Mahan, New Hampton
- Charles Martin, Waucoma
- Joel Mielke, Preston
- Joan Mitchell, La Crescent
- Raymond & Ruby Mundt, Spring Valley
- Ronald Nagle, Houston
- Dennis & Michelle Pape, Houston
- Janel Rediske, Winona
- Peter & Lisa Reicks, Lawler
- Vernon Ristau, Preston
- Michael Rivers, Winona
- Denise Rostad, Houston
- Joel Ruen, Preston
- Art Schmelzer, Decorah
- Soukup Bros, Ridgeway
- Gerald & Jeanne Tippery, Houston
- Ron Underwood, New Hampton
- Ron Valvoda, Elma
- Greg Voss, La Crescent
- John Weinberger, Winona
- Shirley Zenk, Minnesota City



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MINNESOTA PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971

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Members-Only Fall Event

Over 1,000 MiEnergy members met us at Pinter's Gardens & Pumpkins for the 3rd Annual Fall Event on October 20. The family-friendly event provided attendees with hours of "agritainment" with numerous outdoor activities.

Congratulations to our members who won an attendance prize:

\$50 credit: Brian and Melanie Vobr, Cresco; Jason and Karie Gardner, Elma; Missy Otteson, Decorah; and Sheil Courtney, Ridgeway

\$100 credit: Mark and Rhonda Theismann, Decorah

Electric battery-powered lawn mower: Roger and Susan Meyer, Decorah



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