



THE OUTLET

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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STAY SAFE AROUND POWER LINES

Coming into contact with a power line can be deadly, but you don't have to touch one of them directly to be in danger. Thankfully, some simple precautions are all you need to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Overhead power lines carry thousands of volts of electricity and have the potential to be harmful to anyone, or anything, that gets too close. MLEC wants our members to understand the dangers of electricity and stay safe around power lines.

When flying objects like kites and drones, make sure to look up and stay clear of power lines. If you're carrying tall tools like ladders and boards, working on a roof, trimming trees, or using tall vehicles or equipment, be careful so these items don't hit a power line. You should always stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Mylar balloons pose a significant threat to power lines. When a metallic balloon touches a power line, it can cause a surge of electricity that short circuits equipment and can lead to power outages, fires, and injuries. Proper handling and disposal of these balloons can prevent this from happening and they should never be released into the air.

If you see a tree touching a power line, don't climb it. And if something gets caught in a power line, don't try to knock it down yourself. Call MLEC to safely remove it. You should also

never attach things to power poles, such as signs, decorations or basketball hoops.

If a power line or pole comes down for any reason, always assume the line is energized and keep all people and pets far away. When a line falls, the current can travel through the ground and nearby objects. Notify MLEC and call 911 as soon as possible to report a downed line or pole.

If a person or vehicle has come in contact with a downed power line, do not touch either of them as they could also be energized. Call 911 immediately. And if you're in a car that has encountered a power line, stay inside the vehicle. Call 911 and wait until help arrives and you can safely get you out. If you must exit your car, jump out with both feet and shuffle until you are a safe distance from your car.

Electricity is an important part of our everyday lives, but can be very dangerous when not treated with caution. The safety of our employees and members is of utmost importance. You should always keep a safe distance from power lines and other equipment the cooperative uses to bring electricity to your home, including transformers, meters, and electric boxes.

EV CHARGING OPTIONS

The ability to charge an electric vehicle (EV) at home is one of the major benefits to making the switch from traditional cars fueled by gasoline.

Every EV comes with a Level 1 charging cord that plugs into a regular household outlet. If you drive less than 30 miles per day on average, Level 1 charging will meet your needs. If you exceed 30 miles per day, or prefer a faster charge, you will want to invest in a Level 2 charging station.

To alleviate the up-front cost associated with this equipment, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative currently offers members a rebate of up to \$800 on EV chargers, when purchased through our online store. After buying your EV and deciding to invest in a Level 2 charger, you need to pick which model of charger is right for you. To help with this decision, we have vetted and chosen three Minnesota-made ZEF Energy chargers.

Follow these steps to purchase an EV charger:

- Visit energywisemnstore.com
- Create an account if you are new to the store. If not, simply sign in.
- Click on "Shop," then Electric Vehicle Chargers
- Peruse the three available options:
 - **ZEFNET 40:** Charges your EV five times faster than the cordset that came with it. This is a hardwired car charger that works indoors and outdoors with all EVs.
 - **ZEFNET 50:** Charges your EV up to seven times faster than the cordset that came with it. This charger is also hardwired and works indoors and outdoors with all models of EVs.
 - **ZEFNET 60:** The fastest EV charging station is high-quality and packed with features. It's built and tested to automaker standards to ensure a reliable charge every time. Its NEMA 4 outdoor-rated enclosure means it can be installed anywhere.
- Add your choice of EV charger to your cart. Please note the installation cost, which can vary from \$500 to \$1,000, is not included.



You will be required to provide additional information and a cooperative representative will contact you to answer any questions you may have, as well as ensure you meet the eligibility requirements for the rebate. The charger will arrive at your home within eight to thirteen weeks of purchase and is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Questions or concerns?
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represent you!

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Find minutes from
MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlecmn.net>
under **My Co-op**

*This newsletter is the voice of
your tax and interest paying
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,
an organization which was
formed to supply you with
low-cost, dependable
electricity when other sources
failed to do so.*

Managing Editor: Kassie Peterson,
Communications Specialist

**Did you know a
ZEFNET 40 charger
can replenish 200
miles of range
in an eight-hour
charging session?**

Faster isn't always better!

Additionally, since most EVs are driven far less than 200 miles each day and will remain parked overnight, most EV owners do not need to take on the added expense of a faster charger. This approach can save you some money on material and installation - plus it will help your utility keep electric rates low.

ENERGY WISE  MN



SUMMER OUTAGE SUMMARY

Dear Member:

May and June were big months for storm-related power outages. I know that they were long and inconvenient for us all. Extensive storm damage is costly to repair. While there were many outages I could discuss, I want to concentrate on the three major ones that impacted our system.

On May 18th, the outages were focused in the areas around Spencer, Aitkin, and north of Glen. As is typically the case of storm outages, high winds toppled trees that landed on our power lines. All MLEC crews were immediately dispatched to find the problems. In total, this storm caused 29 separate power outages that impacted 1,315 members. Luckily for this storm, there were only two broken power poles, and our crews were able to get the power restored in just six hours.

I am not being dismissive. I know that six hours is a very long time when you are sitting in the dark and worried about the food in your refrigerator; however, restoring power after an outage is a meticulous process. Think of it as working backwards from the biggest powerline to the smallest attempting to get the largest number of members back on first, then looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack.

First, our crews check the status of high-voltage transmission lines. These are the big lines that bring power to our substations. Without these, there definitely is no power to our members.

Second, our crews check our substations. If the problem is at the substation, fixing that can sometimes restore power to thousands of members at once.

Third, our crews check the main distribution lines. These are the main lines you see on busy roads or highways. They feed large groups of communities or housing developments and can restore power to hundreds of members.

Fourth, the harder work begins. Our crews check the tap lines next. These outages are on smaller lines that deliver power to individual transformers. You may see the transformer on a pole, or it may be in a green box in the yard of your home or business.

The fifth and final thing our crews check is that needle in the haystack. They are out trying to find that very last home our business still without power. This part of the process has become much more efficient with our new Automated Meter Infrastructure in place.

This is the very same process we used when storms hit on Monday morning, May 30th. One part of the storm took out our Aitkin substation. Unfortunately, there was nothing we could do because the outage occurred on the high-voltage transmission line that feeds our Aitkin substation. We were unable to detect and repair those outages until power to our substation was restored by our power supplier.

Crews worked on repairing other outages throughout the day when another line of storms hit that evening. They continued to work all night and into the next day, following the steps listed above. After 30+ hours, we had to send our crews home for some rest; but they were back at it the next morning to get the rest of our members' power back on. In total, we had 13 broken poles leaving close to 5,000 MLEC members without power.



Sarah Cron
CEO

Our process, and our members' fortitude, were put to the test on June 20th. After our crews worked a full day and went home to eat dinner with their families, storms rolled through our area again. This time our Aitkin, Kimberly, McGregor, Glen, Spirit Lake, and Opstead substations all experienced outages due to high-voltage transmission interruptions. While transmission outages were restored within three hours, MLEC crew's work had just begun.

Only the very southern part of our service territory was spared, leaving us with 12 broken poles and over 9,000 members without power – 75% of our membership. Days later, crews were still replacing poles and cleaning up temporary service repairs.

The May 30th storm cost MLEC approximately \$50,000 in man hours alone, and the June 20th storm an additional \$46,000. This does not include the cost of fuel, equipment, and other extraordinary expenses associated with an unexpected power outage. We are currently in the process of applying for FEMA funding for the May 30th storm, and State Disaster Emergency Funding for the June 20th storm. While we hope to see some reimbursement, it will not cover the full cost of these storms, or the others we have experienced during this unusually high storm season.

I want to thank you, our member, for your unbelievable patience and support during these trying times. I want to thank our crews that miss holidays, birthdays, and family gatherings to get our power back on. And I want to thank our staff that takes the calls, of both gratitude and irritation, during these times. They say it takes a village. I say it takes a cooperative. I am very proud to be part of this one.

LET'S DISH

Thank you to Lori Weidner of Pleasant View for sharing this month's recipe.

SEND US YOUR RECIPES!

We'll credit your account **\$10.00** if it's printed in THE OUTLET

MAIL TO:

Kassie Peterson
Mille Lacs Energy, P.O. Box 230 Aitkin,
MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:

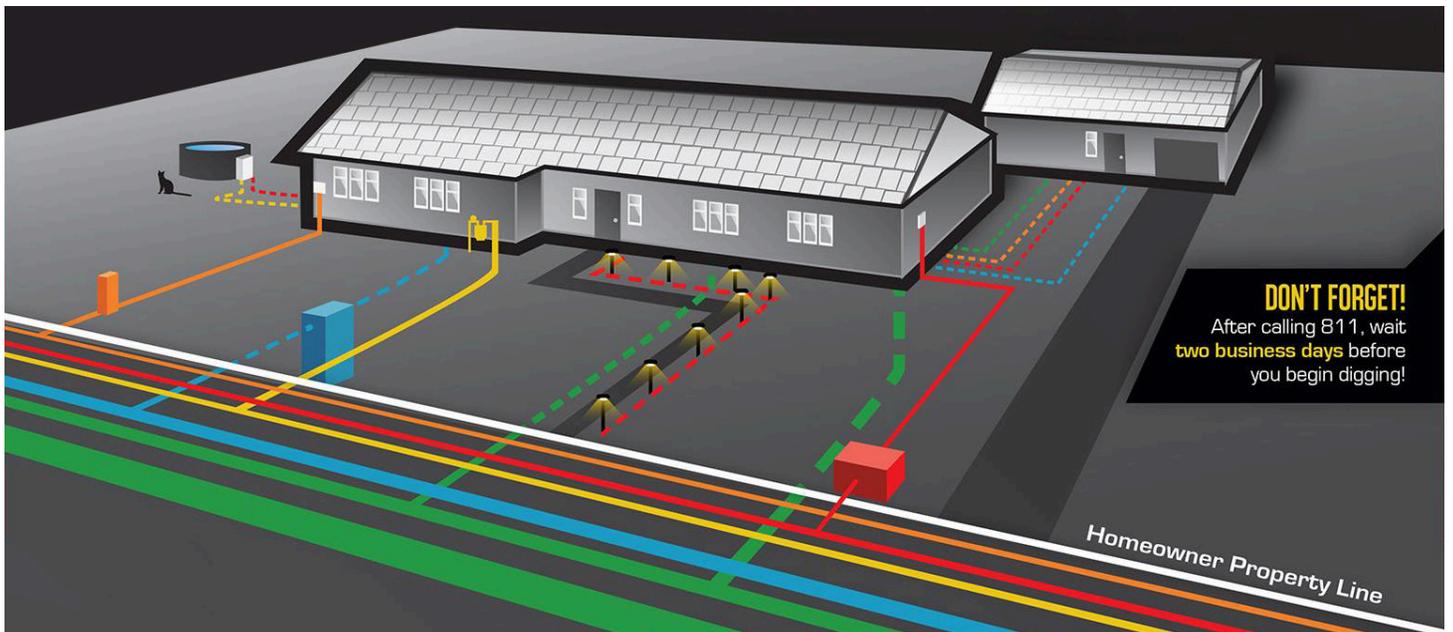
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CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI BREAD

2 squares (1 oz each) unsweetened chocolate	1 tsp vanilla
3 eggs	2 cups flour
2 cups sugar	1 tsp baking soda
1 cup vegetable oil	1 tsp salt
2 cups grated zucchini	1 tsp cinnamon
	3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans, set aside. In microwave safe bowl, microwave chocolate until melted, stir occasionally until chocolate is smooth. In large bowl, combine eggs, sugar, oil, zucchini, vanilla, and chocolate. Next, stir in flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Fold in chocolate chips then pour batter into pans. Bake for 1 hour, or until toothpick comes out clean. Enjoy!



LOCATE LINES FOR FREE

Water, natural gas, and residential electric lines are usually owned by the utility up to the meter. Some sewer districts own only the mains; others extend their ownership to laterals up to the property line. The customer typically owns everything beyond these points.

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through Gopher State One Call applies ONLY to facilities owned by utilities. The diagram above shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the homeowner. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.

	WATER
	SEWER
	GAS & OIL
	ELECTRIC
	PHONE & CABLE





WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

Take advantage of these hot promo rebates when you install a qualifying, energy-saving air source heat pump!

For a **LIMITED** time, if installed in August, you can double your rebates on ducted air source heat pumps when installed by a qualified contractor and put on our dual fuel program. Call MLEC at 218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279!

Air Source Heat Pump	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
SEER 14.5	\$480	\$960
SEER 15	\$580	\$1,160
SEER 16	\$630	\$1,260

Regular office hours are
Mon-Fri 8:00 to 4:30

927-2191 or
800-450-2191 (toll free)



48 hours before you dig
Dial 811 - Gopher State
One Call or log on to:
www.gopherstateonecall.org

Then contact a licensed electrician
to locate your secondary wires.

MN Electrical Inspectors
Aitkin County &
South East Crow Wing County
Jeff Larson 320-227-3009

Northern Crow Wing County
Nathan Readle 218-537-8419

Mille Lacs County
Benjamin Husom 320-277-6277

Off-peak and dual fuel system
consumers should call an
electrician or heating contractor for
service or repairs.

Find load control schedule at
www.mlecmm.net under *Quick Links*.



Visit our website -
www.mlecmm.net
E-mail us - mlec@mlecmm.net

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE



FOOD TRUCK DAYZ AT THE CO-OP

Fun lunch options are coming to MLEC this summer! Food trucks will be visiting the co-op to serve our members and the public. Stop in for something tasty on the dates listed below.



SCHEDULE

8/11 - Pit Happens BBQ

8/18 - Benny's Hotdogs & Lemonade

8/25 - Eliana & Brothers Mexican Food

* Dates are subject to change.

Follow the MLEC Facebook page for updates/ cancellations*



PHOTO CALENDAR

See your photo in MLEC's 2023 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 28, 2022. Winning photos will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Voting will take place after the deadline on the MLEC Facebook page. The 12 photos with the most likes will be featured in the calendar.



Photos must be emailed to: photos@mlecmn.com by 11:59 p.m. on October 28, 2022.

Winning photographers automatically give MLEC permission to use the photos in the calendar, in other publications, member presentations or electronically online.



"MLEC Fiber Internet has allowed us to monitor our trees more successfully, manage our online presence, and host meetings. Our grandkids love it too!"

— George & Sonja LeMire
Owners, Lemire's Pure Maple Syrup

GIFT CARD TRIVIA!

Correctly answer the question below for your chance to win a gift card from a local business within our service area. The answer can be found within this issue of The Outlet. You must be an MLEC member to participate. Be sure to include your name and service address! Entries must be received by **August 31st**.

MAIL TO:
Kassie Peterson
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
P.O. Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431

OR E-MAIL:
kpeterson@mlecmn.com



Helping businesses stay connected.

Learn more about MLEC Fiber and stay updated on expansion projects!
(218) 429-0433 • www.mlecmn.net/fiber

Fill in the blank.

Every EV comes with a _____ charging cord that plugs into a regular household outlet.

Name:

Address:

Congrats to Curt Carlson of Palisade, the June gift card trivia winner!