



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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DECEMBER 2022

2022 FISH HOUSE PARADE

Aitkin's World Famous Fish House Parade is a success!

On Friday, November 25th, MLEC participated in the World Famous Fish House Parade. Employees and their families rode the winter-themed MLEC float down Minnesota Avenue in Aitkin. It was a great day for a parade with a large audience. Thank you to all who attended and to the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce for organizing a great event. We are looking forward to next year!



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Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

MAIL:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

FAX: (202) 690-7442

EMAIL: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**Questions or concerns?
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represent you!**

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Find minutes from
MLEC Board meetings at:
<http://www.mlecmm.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

CAPITAL CREDITS

When dealing with a business or a service, how many times do you get part of the profit? At MLEC, you do because you're an owner.

In December, MLEC will distribute capital credit refunds totaling \$804,809. The refunds are based on electric accounts that were active 1992-1998 (UPA), 2001 (GRE), and 2005-2006 (MLEC).

If you have an active account, you will see the refund on your December electric bill. If not, you will receive a check.

The 2022 payment brings the total dollars refunded by your Cooperative through the years to over \$21.6 million. Just another example of the Cooperative difference!

How Do Capital Credits Work?



1 MLEC tracks how much electricity you use throughout the year.

2 Each year, after expenses are paid, MLEC calculates margins (leftover funds).

3 MLEC uses the margins to pay down debt, invest in facilities and improvement projects, and allocates to members as capital credits based on their usage of electricity.

4 MLEC retires (returns) capital credits to members.

2023 BUDGET & RATES

Dear Member:

Last month, I wrote to you about MLEC being caught in the same cost escalation vortex as the rest of the world, and the need for us to consider some sort of rate recovery in 2023. After much calculation and discussion with the board and staff, we believe that our rate recovery will come in the form of an increase in the access charge.

In short, the access charge is the mechanism by which MLEC (and other service providers like gas companies, phone companies, cellular providers, etc.) recover the basic cost of doing business, regardless of whether a member uses electricity or not. Revenue from the basic cost covers everything from keeping your home or business connected to the power grid after a storm to making sure your bill goes out every month.

A 2020 Cost of Service Study (a study performed to identify our real costs per consumer classification) indicated that our access charge for residential service should be approximately \$50 per member. That was the actual cost to have electricity readily available to you, our member, whether you use electricity or not. As you can imagine, our cost of doing business has increased substantially since our last cost of service study.

At MLEC, some of our members are large electricity consumers, and some of our members use very little electricity. Some of our members have permanent homes, and some have seasonal homes or hunting shacks that are used only weeks out of the year. Regardless of the time spent at these properties, or the amount of power these members consume, the cost of getting and maintaining power to their locations remains the same.

Bear in mind, if you want power to heat your home, pump your well, cool your food and beverages, or light your path, your MLEC staff spends a significant amount of time, equipment, infrastructure, and capital investment to ensure the power is there to meet your energy needs when you decide to flip the switch.

That is the access charge. It is our commitment to providing you with reliable electric service, when you want and need it.

As we fine tune the 2023 budget, we will determine exactly what we will need to recover in the access charge. We anticipate you will see that first adjustment in your March

billing (for February's usage). We also anticipate that as GRE continues to see an unstable energy market and hard costs that you will continue to see a wholesale power cost adjustment passed on directly from them – just as you have for several years now. You may recall that some months this wholesale power cost adjustment is a charge, and some months this is a credit – you did see a credit on your November bill.

It is our hope that as the global economy starts to stabilize, we will also see our costs start to stabilize. That will mean a more stable future for your energy rates.

Please continue to watch your monthly Outlet newsletter for more information on the topic of our 2023 budget and rates. Until next time, have a safe and happy holiday season!



Sarah Cron
CEO

MLEC AWARDED RECONNECT GRANT

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Minnesota State Director Colleen Landkamer announced that the Department is providing \$16.1 million to bring high-speed internet access to people living and working across rural Minnesota. Today's investments provide a historic \$65 billion to expand reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all communities across the U.S.

MLEC received a \$3,788,680 Rural Development investment to deploy a fiber-to-the-home network to connect 473 people, 15 farms and nine businesses to high-speed internet in Aitkin and Crow Wing counties in Minnesota. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will make high-speed internet affordable by participating in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program. MLEC Fiber is the fastest and most reliable Internet available in our area. We are excited to, once again, partner with

Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) on the construction of this project and expand our MLEC Fiber Internet network.

A map of the project area is available at www.mlecmn.net/fiber. Construction is expected to begin in late 2023 and continue into 2024.

MLEC is always searching and applying for grant opportunities to bring our members fast, reliable, and local Internet service. Residents in these project areas will have expanded educational, economic and health care opportunities. Please continue to read the Outlet, Facebook, and our website for more information and updates on our upcoming fiber projects.

LET'S DISH

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:

kpeterson@mlecmn.com



POTATO CHIP COOKIES

3/4 cup butter
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg yolk
1 tsp vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups flour
3/4 cup crushed potato chips
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Cream butter and sugar. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Roll into balls the size of walnuts. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten cookies with a fork. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes. This recipe makes about 3 dozen. Enjoy!

Thank you to Patricia Trombley of Anoka for sharing this month's recipe.

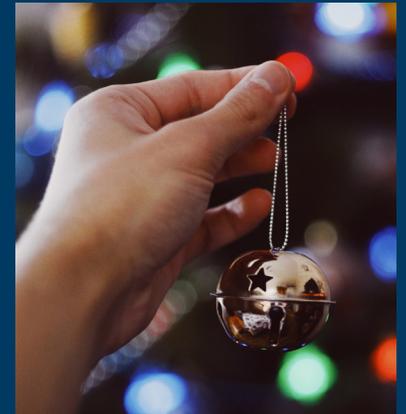
LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Light up your home this holiday season while saving energy.

- Switching to LED holiday lights can save up to 90% of energy use when compared to traditional incandescent string lights.
- LED bulbs always remain cool to the touch unlike older incandescent models making them safer for pets & kids.
- LEDs last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent strands and do not contain fragile filaments that break from shaking and rattling.

Recycle your old light strands!

Mille Lacs Energy is joining with the Brainerd Sunrise Sertomas to sponsor the holiday Bites for Lights recycling program. Drop off your old strands at the Aitkin office and the Sertomas will work with Kenwood Enterprises to recycle them. Consider going green and recycle to help area food shelves.



Get 10% off LED holiday lights for a limited time.

www.energywisemnstore.com

*Restrictions apply

MLEC GIFT CERTIFICATE



Any MLEC member would welcome one less bill to pay during the holiday season. It's easy - return the completed form with the desired gift amount to:

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

This gift is for: _____

Address _____

This gift is from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Certificate amount \$ _____

Recipient's gift will be applied to their MLEC account

WINTER EFFICIENCY TIPS

Five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter

1. Mind the thermostat. This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees.

2. Button up your home. The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy.

3. Use window coverings wisely. Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out.

4. Consider your appliances. When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads.

5. Think outside the box. If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.

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.mlecmn.net under *Quick Links*.



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

XMAS TREE RECYCLING

Drop off your real Christmas tree at the MLEC office for chipping.

This year, MLEC will be offering free Christmas tree recycling for members. Drop off your tree at the Aitkin office in the member parking lot. There will be signs to direct you to the drop off spot. To prep your tree for chipping, please remove all decorations and lights.



Third Quarter Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Comparative Operating Statement for the Quarter Ending Sept. 30, 2021 & Sept. 30, 2022

	2022	2021
OPERATING REVENUE	22,733,860.96	22,130,167.44
COST OF PURCHASED POWER	13,302,690.90	13,072,252.22
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-OPERATION	1,195,738.50	1,050,531.79
DISTRIBUTION EXPENSE-MAINTENANCE	1,792,965.52	2,006,203.74
CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS EXPENSE	595,252.79	595,049.82
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATIONAL EXPENSE	354,501.27	185,604.77
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSE	1,410,121.18	1,420,459.48
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	5,348,579.26	5,257,849.60
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	18,651,270.16	18,330,101.82
DEPRECIATION	1,629,253.72	1,538,634.49
TAX EXPENSE	1,360.00	1,344.00
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	966,788.26	1,040,945.49
INTEREST EXPENSE-OTHER	389.04	411.57
OTHER DEDUCTION	768.56	881.30
TOTAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICE	21,249,829.74	20,912,318.67
OPERATING MARGINS	1,484,031.22	1,217,848.77
NON OPERATING MARGINS-INTEREST	87,134.66	66,827.25
NON OPERATING MARGINS-OTHER	(42,818.51)	(159,823.69)
GENERATION & TRANSMISSION CAPITAL CREDITS	-	-
OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	129,132.57	124,902.07
NET MARGINS	1,657,479.94	1,249,754.40

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
DECEMBER 23RD & 26TH
JANUARY 2ND



"MLEC Fiber service enhances our day to day operations. If it is available in your area, don't hesitate for a second!"

— Dale & Carol Grandt, Owners, Grandt Builders



Helping *businesses* stay connected.

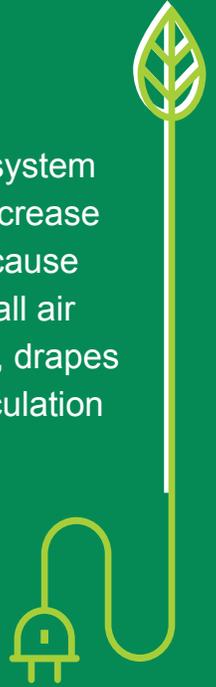
Learn more about MLEC Fiber and stay updated on expansion projects!

(218) 429-0433 • www.mlecmmn.net/fiber

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: energy.gov



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 **December 31st**.

MAIL TO:

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

OR E-MAIL:

kpeterson@mlecmmn.com

Fill in the blank.

In December, MLEC will distribute capital credit refunds totaling

\$ _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Congrats to Loren Farrar of Aitkin, the October gift card trivia winner!



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • www.mlecmmn.net

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.