



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 53  
NUMBER 11  
NOVEMBER 2022

## VETERANS POWER MLEC

*Thank you to all of the brave men and women who have served our country!*

Electric cooperatives have long had a special affinity for veterans. Perhaps because they are both so closely aligned in outlook, focusing on service, mission, and country. Maybe it's because a disproportionate number of veterans come from rural communities and return to their hometowns following active duty. Or, maybe it's due to the shared work ethic of teamwork, cooperation, and a "get it done" attitude. Most likely, it is all of the above.

MLEC wants to extend a special thank you to all veterans including four of our employees/board members.

***Bruce Robinson - MN Army National Guard 1971 - 2002***

***Don Appel - United States Navy 1968-1972***

***Harold Harms - United States Air Force 1965-1969***

***Travis Powers - United State Air Force 1996-2000***

To all our veterans and active duty military, thank you for your hard work, dedication and service to the United States of America. You are so appreciated!



Travis Powers



Bruce Robinson

# FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY

## MLEC attends Fire Prevention & Safety Day at Nay Ah Shing School

On Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, Mille Lacs Energy participated in Fire Prevention & Safety Day at Nay Ah Shing Lower School. Each grade level had a different activity and learning opportunity. MLEC taught students safety tips using a powered tabletop display. Linemen Tony Klee and Chayse Watson answered questions and talked about the bucket truck and equipment needed to work with electricity and power lines.



## OFF PEAK HEATING

What is Off Peak Heating? It is a heating system that draws energy during off-peak hours (nighttime) while electricity is in lower demand, and, therefore, less expensive. Heating systems that work for this would be highly efficient furnaces or room units that would generate the heat at night and store in ceramic bricks to distribute the heat when needed throughout the day. When the room thermostat calls for heat, the stored heat in the bricks is discharged into the area to satisfy the heating requirements. The amount of heat stored in the brick core of the heater is regulated in relation to weather conditions. With this heating system, you can take advantage by being on a lower kilowatt rate of 5.35¢ when putting in a separate meter and radio receiver controls for the furnace or room units.



### More than just lowering your bills

- Safe form of heating
- Stable and predictable rates
- No need to remember to fill a tank
- Pay for consumption after using it
- No need for a carbon monoxide detector
- Clean and reliable, no house chimney or exhaust required

By participating in MLEC's Off Peak program, you not only realize savings on your own monthly bills, but you also contribute to the overall vitality of the cooperative and allow it to maintain delivering on its mission of providing affordable, reliable electricity.

For more information on which home heating system will work best for you, contact the Energy Services Team to assist you at 218-429-0432 or 888-433-4279.

Questions or concerns?  
MLEC's Board of Directors represent you!

**Mark Anderson - District 1**  
320/469-0951  
manderson@mlecmm.com

**Derik Midthun - District 2**  
218/821-4349  
dmidthun@mlecmm.com

**Harold Harms - District 3**  
218/232-2935  
hharms@mlecmm.com  
President

**Aileen DeMenge - District 4**  
218/768-4900  
ademenge@mlecmm.com  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Don Appel - District 5**  
218/927-4134  
dappel@mlecmm.com

**Bruce Robinson - District 6**  
218/851-4760  
brobinson@mlecmm.com  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

**Michael Reem - District 7**  
218/839-5697  
mreem@mlecmm.com  
Vice President

**Sarah Cron - CEO**  
218/927-8224  
scron@mlecmm.com

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

# VOLATILITY IN THE MARKET

Dear Member:

According to Merriam-Webster.com, **volatility** is “a tendency to change quickly and unpredictably”. That aptly sums up the present situation in our world. I can identify with you all when I ring up my groceries, fill my gas tank, feed my pets, or spend money on pretty much anything these days.

After two years, I know that we are all exhausted of talking about the pandemic, supply chain issues, and the economy; however, we seem to keep facing more challenges as a nation and a world. While we may seem insulated from the Russia/Ukraine war, this atrocity is having cascading effects we don't often think about.

Working for international financial stability, the International Monetary Fund has been keeping a close eye on this war and its global impacts. According to their website (imf.org) Russia and Ukraine account for 30% of the world's global exports of wheat. The damage in Ukraine coupled with the sanctions on Russia are putting immense pressure on the global wheat market.

Think about your weekly purchases: breads, cereal, crackers, pancakes, cakes, cookies, pizza, pasta, pastries, pudding, muffins, frosting, Worcestershire sauce, imitation crab meat, packaged gravies, even some chocolate and alcohol... these are just a few common products that are being impacted in real time.

As the United States phases out of a primarily coal-based electricity production country, we are seeing a higher reliance on natural gas to offset the baseload needed to keep the lights on 24-hours a day. At the same time, we are seeing a high demand for natural gas in Europe due to shortages from their typical supplies from Russia. In the first four months of 2022 alone, The United States exported 74% of its liquefied natural gas to Europe (eia.gov). This high demand for natural gas has been a primary driver for uncertainty in the energy markets, resulting in higher electricity prices every time you flip the switch.

Just two years ago, our wholesale electricity provider, Great River Energy (GRE), predicted that we would see an approximate reduction of their wholesale rates by 13%. One year ago, GRE predicted that we would see flat rates moving forward. In 2023, GRE anticipates passing on a 7% – 10% rate increase to MLEC. Much of this predicted increase is due to the **volatility** in the energy market; however, GRE is also facing the same **supply chain** issues and crippling **cost increases** for essential products needed to maintain our electrical infrastructure as MLEC and the rest of the world are facing. In 2019, we paid \$272 for a 40-foot power pole. In 2022, that price went up to \$374 (a 37% increase). We cannot even get a price on them today.

In 2019, we paid \$1,407 for a 25 KVA pad mount transformer. In 2022, that price went up to \$2,577 (a 83% increase), and we have been quoted \$4,038 for 2023. That is another 56% increase – and that is if the prices do not increase in the 72-month lead time they are anticipating.

Every common piece of equipment we use to build and maintain our electric distribution system from anchors to bare copper to conduit. The story is the same.

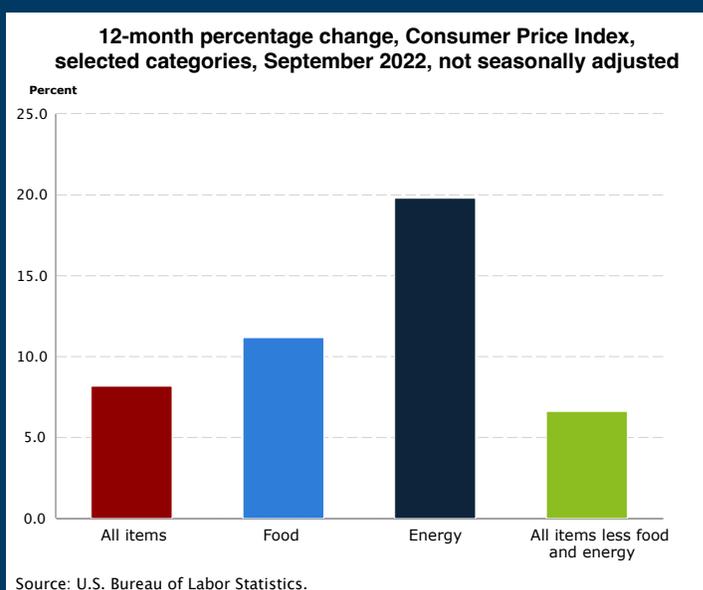
By the time you read this month's newsletter, the board will already have reviewed the first round of the 2023 budget, and we will be at the drawing board to determine where they want us to cut. While we have done our level best to maintain costs



Sarah Cron  
CEO

and return millions in capital credits over the last three years, I do want you to be prepared for a rate adjustment during these difficult times. We will do everything we can to make that impact as minimal as we can on you, our member, while spending what we have to in order to maintain a safe, reliable, and healthy distribution system.

Until next month,



# 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@mlecmm.com



## DUCK WONTONS

1/3 lb. duck tenderloins (finely diced)  
2-3 green onions (chopped)  
1 tsp soy sauce  
1 tsp ginger  
1 tsp rice vinegar

Salt, pepper, and garlic powder (to taste)  
1-1.5 blocks cream cheese (softened)  
oil for frying  
Approx. 25 wonton wrappers

Combine diced duck, green onion, soy sauce, ginger, rice vinegar, seasonings, and cream cheese in a bowl and stir. Place a spoonful of filling inside the flat wonton wrapper, then use water to moisten the wrapper edges and fold them together to close. It makes it easier to seal the edges if you use a fork to crimp them after they are pressed together. Deep fry for 2.5-3 minutes then drain on paper towels. Enjoy!

# TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This September, the board awarded \$22,600 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Advocates Against Domestic Abuse (HOPE), Aitkin Alano Society, Inc., Aitkin County Homeless Coalition, Aitkin County Search and Rescue, Aitkin County TRIAD, Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project, Long Lake Conservation Center, Mille Lacs Health System Auxiliary, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, South Aitkin First Responders, and Wealthwood Rod and Gun Club. The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,434,229!

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative where our generous members round-up their electric bill payment to the nearest dollar. All of the funds raised go into the trust fund which is donated back to

the community. Board members include: Lisa Anderson, Kim Waffensmith, Darlene Stigen, Bethany Sellers, Charles Schotzko, Linda Weimer, Jack Gilbertson, and Lowell W. Larson.

To receive a Trust application, contact Deb Chute at 218-927-8221 or 1-800-450-2191. The Trust Board meets the second Wednesday in March, June, September and December. Applications are accepted at any time. Those submitted a week before the quarterly meetings will go to the board. Anything submitted after will be seen at the next board meeting.

*Front row: Bob Nelson, Melanie White, Jim Jensen, Megan Cummings, Bill Fayo, Shirley Scollard, Jackie Perry, Jessi Goble, Kim Besch, Doyle Jelsing, Todd Brown, Dave Skillings*

*Second Row: Kevin Pullis, Lorna White, Jim White, Ian Oman, Rick Perry, Gail Pullis, Jim Stigen, Joy Borden, Rocky Barden, Peggy Larsen, Brian Andrews.*



# FAMILY FUN NIGHT

## MLEC attends Family Fun Night at Rippleside Elementary

On Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, MLEC participated in Family Fun Night at Rippleside Elementary. This year's theme was electricity. Students got to see the "War of the Currents" presentation by the Bakken Museum and experience a variety of hands on learning stations. MLEC's Line Superintendent, Cory Brix, shared safety tips using the electrically-powered display. Thank you to Rippleside staff for hosting a fun and educational event!



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](http://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](http://www.mlecmm.net) under *Quick Links*.



Visit our website -  
[www.mlecmm.net](http://www.mlecmm.net)  
E-mail us - [mlec@mlecmm.net](mailto:mlec@mlecmm.net)

## RED FLAGS RULE

As many as nine million Americans have their identities stolen each year. As a result of that startling statistic, the Federal Trade Commission has developed a regulation called the "Red Flags Rule." The Red Flags Rule requires businesses to develop a program to detect, prevent, and minimize the damage that could result from identity theft.

The data privacy of our members is important to us, and as a MLEC member, you may be asked to provide additional information and identification when you make inquiries on your account, such as verifying the last four digits of your social security number.

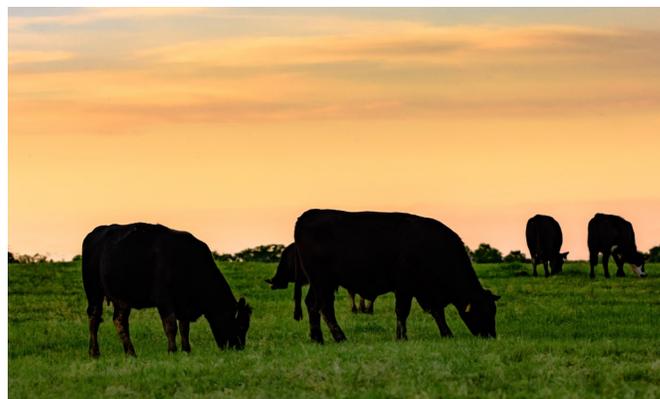
A member may complete an Authorized Contact Agreement form to allow us to give account information to anyone other than the member. This permits an Authorized Contact to make inquiries on the account to which they are authorized. The Authorized Contact must provide their name, date of birth, and the last four digits of their social security number in order to receive account information. While these practices may seem intrusive, please understand that these procedures are in place to protect your member data and prevent the occurrence of identity theft.



## STRAY VOLTAGE

Electrical supply systems delivering power to farms, homes, and businesses are grounded to the earth to make them as safe as possible and to ensure their reliability. The ground of these electric systems results in some current flow through the earth. Animals sometimes respond to the voltage differences between two points, a condition commonly referred to as stray voltage.

Help with stray voltage problems can come from many sources: veterinarians, dairy field representatives, electricians, county agents, and your electric cooperative. If you suspect stray voltage may be a problem on your farm, the first step is to have your electrician check your equipment in the barn and balance the load, if possible. If the problem continues, contact MLEC at **218-927-2191** or **800-450-2191**.



HAPPY  
*Thanksgiving*

**MLEC WILL BE CLOSED ON  
NOVEMBER 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
TO CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING**

*Honoring All Who Served*  
**THANK YOU VETERANS!**

**MLEC will be closed  
November 11<sup>th</sup>**



**Rural lifestyle.**

**Big city Internet.**

Just because you're not in the big city, doesn't mean you can't have access to great Internet service. Let MLEC Fiber give you the fast and reliable Internet you deserve!

218-429-0433 • [www.mlecmm.net/fiber](http://www.mlecmm.net/fiber)

**MLEC fiber**  
Powered by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative



# CONTRACTOR NOTICE

With the implementation of our new AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) metering system, MLEC has revised our procedure for allowing electricians or members to work on any part of live transformer secondaries or meter socket enclosures.

MLEC recognizes the safety hazard created by unsealing and removing meters from their meter sockets. Our new AMI metering infrastructure allows notifications to be sent when an outage occurs, or a meter is removed.

As of October 1, 2022, electricians or members **ARE REQUIRED** to contact MLEC to schedule the removal of a meter, or the need for the disconnection of service to work within a live meter socket enclosure or for work on transformer secondary wiring. Failure to do so will result in monetary reimbursement equal to the cost of labor and equipment dispatched to the site. Wiring on the secondary side of transformer taps is owned by, and the responsibility of, the members.

You can schedule an outage by calling 1-800-450-2191, both during and after business hours. If calling during business hours, please ask for Operations.

# 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 **November 30<sup>th</sup>**.

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

**OR E-MAIL:**  
[kpeterson@mlecmm.com](mailto:kpeterson@mlecmm.com)

*Fill in the blank.*

As many as \_\_\_\_\_

Americans have their identities stolen each year.

Name:

Address:

*Congrats to Marliss Kingsley of Palisade, the September gift card trivia winner!*

 **MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • [www.mlecmm.net](http://www.mlecmm.net)  
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.