



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## 2021 DRIVE-IN ANNUAL MEETING

*All MLEC members are invited to the Drive-In Annual Meeting!*

The 2021 Annual Meeting format is different this year, but it might be your style! The drive-in meeting will allow members to register, vote, then listen to the business meeting from the comfort of their own cars. This year's theme is "Strength Moving Forward." Members will hear from Board President Harold Harms and CEO Sarah Cron about co-op news and various projects. **In place of a meal and gift, the first 200 members to register will receive a \$15 credit on their next energy bill.**

Attendees will be entered to win a variety of door prizes including MLEC bill credits, gift cards, and a stay at the Grand Casino. The drawing will take place the day after the meeting, and prizes will be mailed. We look forward to seeing you there!

### Submit questions for the Annual Meeting

Since attendees will stay in their vehicles and listen to the business meeting over the radio broadcast, we encourage members to submit their questions ahead of time via email or mail. To be addressed at the Annual Meeting, questions must be received prior to Monday, May 3rd. Questions submitted after May 3rd will receive a response after the Annual Meeting by phone or email.

**MAIL TO:**  
Kassie Peterson  
Mille Lacs Energy Co-op  
P.O. Box 230  
Aitkin, MN 56431  
**OR E-MAIL:**  
[annualmeeting@mlecmn.com](mailto:annualmeeting@mlecmn.com)

**WHEN:** Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Grand Casino Mille Lacs  
South Parking Lot  
777 Grand Ave  
Onamia, MN 56359

**SCHEDULE:** Registration - 3:30-5:00 p.m.  
Business Meeting - 5:00 p.m.



# ANNUAL MEETING CONT.

## How can you vote?

MLEC offers three different ways to cast your vote, including online, by mail, and in-person at the Annual Meeting. A sample ballot is located on the back page of this newsletter and available online at [www.mlecmm.net/annual-meeting](http://www.mlecmm.net/annual-meeting).

### 1. Voting Online

A new feature this year is voting online. Follow the directions shown on this page to login to the DirectVote election website.

### 2. Voting By Mail

Ballots were mailed to all members on April 6. Simply follow the directions, fill out the ballot, enclose it in the designated envelopes, and send.

### 3. Voting In-Person

If you prefer to vote in-person, you may do so at the Annual Meeting. Drop off your completed ballot or fill one out when you register for the meeting. All in-person ballots will be added to the electronic and mail votes when the business meeting begins.

**Don't forget to vote! Online and mailed ballots must be received by May 5<sup>th</sup>.**

## Online Voting Instructions



#### DirectVote Election Website

To access the login page of the official 2021 MLEC election, please type [www.directvote.net/MLEC](http://www.directvote.net/MLEC) into the address bar located at the top of your Internet browser.



#### Login Information

Use the **Member Number** and **Election Passcode** printed on the back of the return envelope included in your mail-in ballot. You will need these two numbers to login online.



#### Cast Your Ballot

Once registered, follow the online voting instructions and vote for candidates and bylaw changes.

*\*Do not mail your ballot if you plan to vote online.*

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

**Barbara Welty - District 1**  
320/692-4800  
[bwelty@mlecmm.com](mailto:bwelty@mlecmm.com)  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Carol Pundt - District 2**  
218/678-3256  
[cpundt@mlecmm.com](mailto:cpundt@mlecmm.com)

**Harold Harms - District 3**  
218/232-2935  
[hharms@mlecmm.com](mailto:hharms@mlecmm.com)  
President

**Aileen DeMenge - District 4**  
218/768-4900  
[ademenge@mlecmm.com](mailto:ademenge@mlecmm.com)  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

**Don Appel - District 5**  
218/927-4134  
[dappel@mlecmm.com](mailto:dappel@mlecmm.com)  
Vice President

**Bruce Robinson - District 6**  
218/851-4760  
[brobinson@mlecmm.com](mailto:brobinson@mlecmm.com)

**Michael Reem - District 7**  
218/839-5697  
[mreem@mlecmm.com](mailto:mreem@mlecmm.com)

**Sarah Cron - CEO**  
218/927-8224  
[scron@mlecmm.com](mailto: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

# NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will be held at The Grand Casino Mille Lacs, 777 Grand Ave, Onamia, Minnesota, on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Registration will begin at 3:30 P.M. and the annual business meeting will begin at 5:00 P.M. The purpose of the meeting is:

1. Election of directors from Districts 2, 5, 6 and 7. In accordance with Article III, Section 4 of the Cooperative's Bylaws, directors shall be elected at the annual meeting by those members who are present in person, vote online, or by mail vote.
2. Members may vote in person, vote online, or by mail vote on proposed amendments to the Bylaws. The first amendment is new and will allow use of an electronic signature:

The Member or Director consents and agrees to use, accept, send, receive, and transmit an Electronic signature, contract, record, notice, vote, communication, comment, and other document regarding an action, transaction, business, meeting, or activity with, for, or involving the Cooperative.

The second proposed amendment to the Bylaws is a change from "General Manager" to "CEO (Chief Executive Officer)".

By Order of the Board of Directors,  
Barbara G. Welty, Secretary.

# GROWING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

Dear Member:

Electric cooperatives are as local and community-centered as a business can be. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative was built by local members who came together to serve a need: bringing electricity to our rural communities. By nature, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you, our members. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are prepared to meet the needs of the communities we serve because we are locally governed. MLEC's leadership team and employees live right here in our communities. Our board members, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, live on co-op lines. These directors have been elected to their positions by neighbors like you.

Our close connection to our communities ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term strategic commitments and investments. Recently, our board of directors and management team has investigated the feasibility of building a new operations center. Our current facility is preventing us from efficiently serving our members due to space constraints, poor building functionality, and the inability to effectively expand or remodel.

I understand that some of our members are skeptical of this need and are resistant to changing our location; but I can assure you that our dedication to our members, communities, and local businesses will stay the same. We will continue to shop, service equipment, eat, bank, donate, and volunteer locally. Commitment to community is one of our Seven Cooperative Principles, and we take that responsibility to heart. We hope you will think of MLEC as more than your energy provider, and see us as a local business that supports our communities and powers economic development and prosperity for our people.

The time is right to think of Mille Lacs Energy's future. In 80 years, we have gone from providing a single lightbulb in a barn to connecting you to the world. We are in a unique

financial position that will allow the construction of a new operations center without a planned rate adjustment for our membership. Our organization is thriving and needs to grow – and we are committed to growing WITH, not away from, our communities. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by our communities, for our communities.

Take care and stay safe.




Sarah Cron  
CEO

## PREMIUM WI-FI SERVICE

**Get fast and reliable Wi-Fi with extended range and coverage!**

If you're looking for a way to manage your MLEC Fiber Internet service, look no further than Premium Wi-Fi. We understand that you need a wireless connection that's reliable and secure to power your various devices. Premium Wi-Fi ensures that your Internet connection will reach all areas of your home or business. Premium Wi-Fi includes local service and support, extended range and coverage, and first-class equipment.

MLEC does the hard work for you by managing your Wi-Fi remotely. We will make sure that software upgrades are performed at regular intervals to keep your router performing its best. Also, if your router fails, MLEC Fiber will replace it at no additional cost.

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



# LET'S DISH

Thank you to Joyce Schrupp of Garrison 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:

kpeterson@mlecmmn.com



## LEMONY BLUEBERRY LAYERED PIE

1 - 9 oz. graham cracker crust	1 box - 3.4 oz. instant lemon pudding mix
1 - 8 oz. package cream cheese (softened)	1/4 tsp. lemon juice
1 - 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk	1 - 12 oz. can blueberry pie filling
1/4 cup powdered sugar	

Combine cream cheese, sweetened condensed milk, and powdered sugar in a large bowl. Mix with an electric mixer at medium speed for 1-2 minutes, until smooth. Add pudding mix and lemon juice and mix until it appears to be well blended. Spoon about half of the blueberry pie filling evenly into the bottom of the graham cracker crust. Put the lemon filling mixture on top and spread evenly. Cover and chill for at least one hour or until completely set. Spoon remaining blueberry pie filling on top just before serving. Enjoy!

# TRUST BOARD GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This March, the board awarded \$16,250 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Crescent Cove, C-I 2021 Grad Blast, Food Shelves (Aitkin, Aitkin Community, Cuyuna, Garrison, McGregor, Onamia, and St. James of Aitkin), Jaques Art Center, McGregor Area Scholarship Foundation, and True Friends. The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,308,679!

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.

**THANK YOU MEMBERS!**

# THE CO-OP IN YOUR POCKET

**Battery-powered devices allow members to benefit from electric service away from home.**

Your cooperative membership provides all the comforts of home that come from electric service: cooking, entertainment, hot water. Your co-op also charges all your devices for when you leave the house.

Keeping those batteries charged is a remarkable value, too. According to the Electric Power Research Institute, charging a smart phone for an entire year costs around 40 cents. If you use a tablet, the cost rises to just \$1.50 for a year of charging.

Cooperative members are also adopting battery-powered models of tools traditionally powered by gas, such as lawnmowers, chainsaws and even all-terrain vehicles.

A growing number of members are driving electric as well. Compared to gasoline and diesel models, electric vehicles (EVs) can shave 50-70% off your annual transportation fuel expenses, and they require far less maintenance. Several of the top selling EV models available in Minnesota can travel 200-300 miles on a

full charge, well beyond the average American's daily round-trip commute of 30 miles.

You can learn more information about all types of electric devices by visiting [www.energywisemn.com](http://www.energywisemn.com).





OPEN THE  
TAP TO  
SAVINGS

## Take 50% off water-saving products at [energywisemnstore.com](http://energywisemnstore.com)!

Water-saving products, such as showerheads and faucets aerators, are engineered to use less water without affecting your water stream or pressure. They help you use less water, save energy, and lower your utility bills.

*Offer valid March 3 through April 28, 2021.  
No coupon code necessary. While supplies lasts.*

ENERGY WISE  MN

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

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



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One Call or log on to:  
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Then contact a licensed electrician  
to locate your secondary wires.

### **MN Electrical Inspectors**

Aitkin County &  
South East Crow Wing County  
Mike Wenzel 218-270-2265

Northern Crow Wing County  
Bradley Rasmussen 218-543-1023

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)

# THANK A LINEWORKER

## Celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 12<sup>th</sup>!

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative, I bet you would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7.

"Lineworker" is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That's why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at MLEC, it's important to note that there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn't be able to "bring the light" to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent MLEC, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, thank them for their exceptional service. Also remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep.



**Build. Maintain.  
Repair. Repeat.  
That's how lineworkers  
power our lives.**



## MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

The following members have filed to appear on the ballot for election of one (1) Director from Districts 2, 5, 6 and 7. In accordance with Article III, Section 4 of the Cooperative's Bylaws, directors shall be elected at the annual meeting by those members who are present in person, vote online, or by mail vote.

### Instructions for Casting Your Vote

Whether using the mail to return your ballot, voting online, or delivering the ballot to the Cooperative in person, please follow these instructions carefully.

#### Voting by Mail

- You may vote for one director candidate in each district below.
- Place the ballot in the enclosed envelope marked "Ballot Secrecy Envelope" and seal the envelope. Place this envelope in the Business Reply envelope. Whether mailing the ballot or bringing it to the annual meeting, these directions should be followed.
- Mailed ballots must be received in the proper envelopes by May 5, 2021.
- An add-on to mailing or voting online, your ballot may be submitted in person at the annual meeting before the start of the business meeting at 5:00 PM. The Annual Meeting of the members of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will be held at The Grand Casino Mille Lacs, 777 Grand Ave. Deering, Minnesota, on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Registration will begin at 3:30 P.M. and the annual business meeting will begin at 5:00 P.M. Ballots cast at the annual meeting will be counted and added to the mail-in and online ballots for final election results.
- DO NOT ENCLOSE checks or any other Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative correspondence with your ballot.

#### Voting Online

- To access the login page of the official 2021 MLEC election, please type [directvote.net/MLEC](http://directvote.net/MLEC) into the address bar located at the top of your internet screen.
- Use the Member Number and Election Passcode printed on the back of your return envelope to log in.
- Once registered, follow the online voting instructions.
- Online voting begins April 6, 2021 and ends at 10 AM Central, May 5, 2021.
- Do not mail your ballot if you plan to vote online.

If you have any problems voting online, please email [support@directvote.net](mailto:support@directvote.net).

### MARKING INSTRUCTIONS EXAMPLE

Fill in the box to the left of your choice.

#### District 5 Director

(No vote needed)

Donald Appel, No vote needed, Per MLEC Articles and Bylaws, Article II, Section B, Donald Appel shall be re-elected for a 3-year term by acclamation.

### You May Vote In All Districts

District 2 Director (1-Year Term) Vote for one (1) *One-year term to complete the remainder of a three-year term.	District 6 Director (3-Year Term) Vote for one (1)	District 7 Director (3-Year Term) Vote for one (1)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dennis Charles <input type="checkbox"/> Carol Pundt, Incumbent	<input type="checkbox"/> Leo Offerman <input type="checkbox"/> Bruce Robinson, Incumbent	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Pisarek <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Reem, Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Tom Veenker

#### Bylaw Change 1-

##### Electronic Documents and Actions

Vote for one (1)

- Yes, I approve the change  
 No, I do not approve the change

#### Bylaw Change 2-

##### Correction of Title

Vote for one (1)

- Yes, I approve the change  
 No, I do not approve the change

DirectVote

Ballot must be received no later than May 5, 2021. Ballots tabulated by Survey & Ballot Systems. 2021

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

#### MAIL TO:

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

#### OR E-MAIL:

[kpeterson@mlecmn.com](mailto:kpeterson@mlecmn.com)

What are the 3 ways you can vote for MLEC board candidates?

Name:

Address:

  

Congrats to Marcia Rose of Deerwood, the February gift card trivia winner!



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# SYSTEM-WIDE METER UPGRADE

MLEC is in the process of making a substantial investment in infrastructure, building one of the most technologically advanced power control systems. In 2021, MLEC will continue to implement an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and install a meter data management system (MDMS). The new meters will improve reliability and give you more tools and opportunities to manage and save energy.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**(218) 927-2191 • (800) 450-2191 • [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net)**



## MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

36559 US Highway 169, Aitkin, MN 56431 • (218) 927-2191 / (800) 450-2191 • [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net)

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