



# THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## KEEPING THE LINES CLEAR

As the MLEC line crews head into the busy summer months, the Right-of-Way (ROW) crew is doing the same. Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our members. MLEC has taken an aggressive approach to clearing ROW and operates with a four-man crew. You may find Mille Lacs Energy in your neighborhood identifying and addressing hazardous trees and vegetation. We ask that you give the crew room to work, so all can stay safe. If you need to pass the bucket truck, please do so with care.

***We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as Right-of-Way, to:***

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Are you planning on planting some trees this summer? There are many beautiful varieties of trees, low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening and shade. Consider the types of trees that coexist well with power lines and the environment to avoid the need for trimming for line clearance.



# POWER SUPPLY CHANGES

*Our promise to members: Energy that's clean, without the added cost.*

Great River Energy is the wholesale energy provider to MLEC. Like MLEC, Great River Energy is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by its members.

Twenty years ago, Great River Energy began receiving electricity from three wind turbines in southern Minnesota. Today, there are nearly 350 turbines spinning to provide you emission-free electricity.

Now, Great River Energy is striving to serve MLEC with energy that is 50% renewable by 2030. We are ahead of schedule, too, reaching 30% this year.

Meanwhile, Great River Energy's average wholesale electric rates have remained flat.

Great River Energy and its 28 member-owner cooperatives are committed to providing clean energy that is as affordable and reliable as ever.

## Carbon emissions are declining

Great River Energy has long sought strategic ways to reduce the carbon emissions on its system, and we have made real progress. We exited two contracts for coal-based electricity and closed a long-running coal power plant. Those decisions were made for economic benefit while also providing for reductions in carbon emissions.

## Using electricity in new ways

Electricity is improving so rapidly that it has become a favored energy source for transportation, which is currently the state's largest source of carbon emissions.

Minnesota is encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions because they have no tailpipe emissions. Members are drawn to them because they require no stops at the gas station and very few trips to the mechanic.

Your co-op has programs that make it easier to purchase an electric vehicle and at-home charger, as well as other efficient electric devices such as air conditioners, water heaters and heat pumps.

## Remaining focused on our members

The electricity you receive is improving because of you, the cooperative membership. Our research shows that members strongly believe adding more renewables is a good idea and support our efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Cooperative members want electricity that is affordable, reliable and clean. As your wholesale power supplier, that is what we will continue to provide.



David Saggau  
President and CEO  
Great River Energy

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

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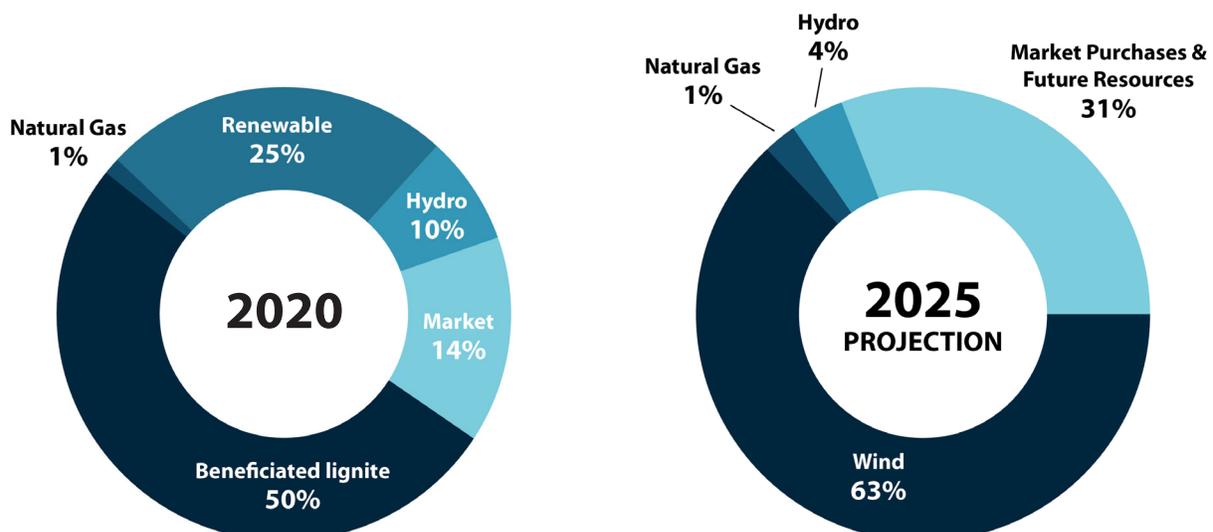
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Find minutes from  
MLEC Board meetings at:  
<http://www.mlecmn.net>  
under **My Co-op**

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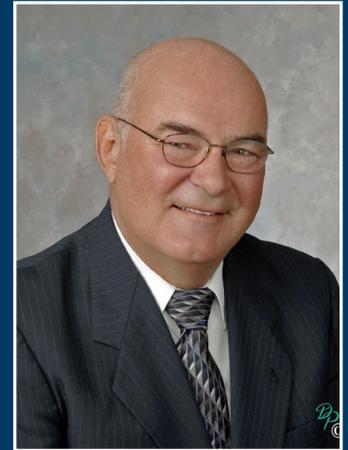


# ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

## A NOTE FROM YOUR BOARD CHAIRMAN:

What a year this has been. No one planned on having our vocabulary expanded with words like pandemic, social distancing, and flatten the curve. We certainly didn't plan on being locked down with no more handshakes, wearing masks in public, and limited social interactions. When this pandemic was just starting, we were planning your 2020 Annual Meeting. As we implemented our pandemic response plan to protect our members and employees, it was apparent that we couldn't safely hold our Annual Meeting, so we decided to postpone it until summer. Things still haven't improved to where the CDC and state health guidelines will allow large indoor gatherings. After much discussion, and guidance from our legal counsel, your board has decided that we will hold the 2020 Annual Meeting in conjunction with the 2021 Annual Meeting in April 2021. This decision was not made lightly. Your meeting is very important to us, as is the health and well-being of our members and employees. We hope that you are staying physically, mentally, and emotionally well during this difficult time and know that we look forward to seeing you at your Annual Meeting in 2021.

Sincerely,  
Harold Harms



Harold Harms  
Board President

Dear Member:

You heard it straight from the horse's mouth, we will not hold our traditional Annual Meeting in 2020. To say the decision was not made lightly is an understatement. Your MLEC Management Team and Annual Meeting Planning Committee followed a long list of electric cooperatives, watching to see how they were handling their Annual Meetings. I will tell you, it was a mixed bag of responses. With venues still experiencing capacity limits through mid-July (with no guarantee the Peace Time Order is not extended again), we talked about a virtual meeting, a parking lot meeting, even a drive through meeting. As you will recall, both the MLEC board seats that were up for election in 2020 were running unopposed; therefore, we determined that with no elections necessary, we would combine the 2020 and 2021 business meetings in April 2021.

As Harold indicated, your Annual Meeting is very important to us. If you have a topic you really wanted to address this year, you will be able to address it next April at the combined business meetings. If your topic is something you want addressed immediately, please feel free to contact me, your elected board member, or a member of your MLEC Management Team at your convenience. We will address your concerns on an individual basis.



Sarah Cron  
CEO

***"As you will recall, both the MLEC board seats that were up for election in 2020 were running unopposed; therefore, we determined that with no elections necessary, we would combine the 2020 and 2021 business meetings in April 2021."***

We miss having our office open to the public and seeing you all. Interacting with our members is part of what makes our cooperative what it is. With that said, we are going to keep our offices closed to the public until we have more information on the state of the COVID-19 Pandemic. As Harold indicated, the health and well-being of our members, our employees, and the community is very important. If we can do just one thing to help in this crisis, we believe limiting public exposure is our duty. As soon as we have definite information on when our office will be open, we will notify you through our website, Facebook, and our newsletter. Like you all, everyone at MLEC is looking forward to life returning to some state of "normal". Stay well.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'Sm'.

# 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



Thank you to Jenny LaFlamme of McGregor for sharing this month's recipe.

## COLD MEXICAN PASTA SALAD

Rotini noodles (1 box)	1 chopped onion
1 can drained whole kernel corn	Garlic powder to taste
1 can drained kidney beans	2-3 tbsp. chili powder
1 chopped green pepper	16 oz. french dressing

Cook rotini noodles in boiling water, drain, and let cool. Mix together noodles and remainder of ingredients. Stir until noodles are coated and all ingredients are incorporated. Enjoy!

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# 2021 PHOTO CALENDAR

See your photo in MLEC's 2021 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 27, 2020. 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.

**Email photos to: [photos@mlecmn.com](mailto:photos@mlecmn.com)**



## Photo Contest Guidelines

- Only MLEC members are eligible for the contest.
- Photos must be electronic.
- Photos should capture the beauty of the area we serve, if possible, but any Minnesota photos are acceptable.
- Pets, animals, food, etc. are acceptable.
- **PHOTOS MUST NOT INCLUDE PEOPLE.**
- The photos must be taken by the member.
- Please include the name of the member submitting, location taken, and a title for each photo.
- You may submit up to 8 photos each year, but we limit each photographer to no more than two winning entries each year.
- Entered photos must be in color and appropriately sized for printing at 12 inches wide by 9 inches high (300 ppi resolution).
- Only horizontal photos will be accepted. Vertical photos do not qualify.

# METER TAMPERING

If you need your meter removed or service disconnected, please contact our office instead of attempting to remove it on your own. One of the features of our new metering system is that it notifies MLEC when and where an outage occurs. Crews are then dispatched to fix the outage. If meter tampering is discovered at the site, fees will be assessed. It is better to call our office to learn about the available options rather than to tamper with the meter and put yourself in danger's way.

## DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.



If you know of or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.

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  
Mike Wenzel 218/270-2265

Northern Crow Wing County  
Bradley Rasmussen 218/543-1023

Mille Lacs County  
Tim Emery 320-692-4104

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

Find load control schedule at  
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# SUMMER ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Finally, it has arrived – summer! After a long winter of struggling to keep warm, now we have to make the shift to keep things cool. Here are a few tips to help you conserve on energy and keep your cool.

- 1.** Get outside and grill! By cooking outside, you are keeping the excess heat outside and not in your home that you are trying to keep cool.
- 2.** Use your ceiling fans – by circulating the blades counter clockwise they will keep you cool with the wind chill effect. Just remember to shut them off when you leave the room. Fans cool people, not furniture.
- 3.** If you have a nice cool basement and it is hot upstairs, place a floor fan in the basement and push the cool air upstairs.
- 4.** Hang your clothes out on the line, take advantage of the free solar power. Also, by not running your dryer and causing excess heat, it will help keep your home cool.
- 5.** Replace your air filters. A clean filter will also prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system – leading to expensive maintenance and/or early system failure. Remember to change the filter every three months.
- 6.** Get your air conditioning unit tuned up. MLEC offers a \$25 rebate to our members when you get your AC unit or air source heat pump tuned up.
- 7.** Take advantage of the cooler night air. Open the windows at night to let in the cool air and keep them closed during the day to keep the cool in. Close drapes during the daytime to keep the heat of the sun out.
- 8.** Use a programmable thermostat to keep it warmer in the summer when you are not home and set it to cool when you are home. Many now have an app you can use on your phone to control your heating and cooling system. Plus, there is a \$25 rebate from MLEC if installed.
- 9.** If replacing an air conditioner, look into the idea of putting in an air source heat pump to take advantage of the higher rebate amount when installed during May, June, and July.



ENERGY WISE  MN

Questions? Contact your Energy Services Team at MLEC  
at 888-433-4279 or see us online at [www.mlecmn.net](http://www.mlecmn.net)



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# 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 a MLEC member to participate. Be sure to include your name and service address! Entries must be received by **July 31<sup>st</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)

According to our wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, what percentage of our energy is estimated to come from wind in the year 2025?

\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Address:

## 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. MLEC plans to implement an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and install a meter data management system (MDMS) throughout 2020. The new meters will improve reliability and give you more tools and opportunities to manage and save energy.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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### MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE