



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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JULY 2021

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 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.



BEFORE



AFTER

TUNE-UP THIS SUMMER

The best way to ensure efficient operation of your cooling system is by having it tuned-up every two years. A tune-up by a service expert can improve your unit's efficiency by as much as 20 percent, extend its life, and help protect the environment.



To qualify for a \$25 tune-up rebate:

1. Tune-up must be conducted where electricity is supplied by MLEC.
2. The CAC or ASHP must be in operating condition, over three years of age, and not had a tune-up in the last two years.
3. Rebate submittal must follow the guidelines as listed.
4. Program is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Call MLEC to verify rebate status.
5. Program is for tune-ups only; it does not cover the cost for repairs of the air conditioner or heat pump.

Contact a local HVAC contractor and receive the rebate!

- Hire the contractor.
- After completing the tune-up, have your contractor fill out the contractor portion of the coupon below.
- Complete the member portion of the coupon.
- Return the coupon to MLEC along with a copy of the contractor invoice.
- The rebate option is available to members through Dec. 31, 2021.

ENERGY WISE  MN

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

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bwelty@mlecmn.com
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218/678-3256
cpundt@mlecmn.com

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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

Member Information

Member name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact phone number _____

Account number _____

I certify that a tune-up has been performed at the residence above by a HVAC contractor

Member signature _____

Mail to:
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
PO Box 230
Aitkin, MN 56431



Contractor Information

Equipment brand _____

Model number _____

Serial number _____

Approx. age of unit _____ yrs. SEER rating _____

I certify that I have completed the following on this unit.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> clean condenser coil | <input type="checkbox"/> check belt, if needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check coolant level | <input type="checkbox"/> lube motor, if needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check coolant pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> visually inspect the entire system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> test all controls | <input type="checkbox"/> blow out drain lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check indoor furnace filter | <input type="checkbox"/> educate homeowner on system operation |

Contractor signature _____

Contractor company _____

SUMMER STORM PREPAREDNESS

Dear Member:

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like being with family and friends, weekends on the lake, and simply slowing down a little bit to enjoy life. The beauty that surrounds us is truly breathtaking and reminds me of how lucky we are to live here in central Minnesota.

However, summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) crews and staff are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages. Stay away from downed power lines and always assume they are energized. If an MLEC crew is working near your home, please keep a safe distance and allow them to focus on the task at hand. Safety of our members and employees is top priority.

Make sure you and your family are prepared in the event of a prolonged power outage. Have a supply of food and water and other emergency items readily available. You can report outages by calling our office or using the SmartHub app. Outage alerts and updates can be found on our website or Facebook page.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. To keep outages at a minimum, we have continued to work hard at tree trimming and maintaining the Right-of-Way (ROW) areas near MLEC's power lines through our vegetation management program.

“Potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative crews and staff are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.”

A right-of-way is the land we have legally obtained to construct, maintain, replace, or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights-of-way enable MLEC to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance, or operation. Without them, we would not be able to provide you with electric service. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located easements near a business or home. Regardless of where they are located, MLEC must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community.

Having a proactive vegetation management program provides many personal benefits to our membership. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a safety risk to the public. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members'



Sarah Cron
CEO

yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. We keep the lines clear to keep you and your family safe.

As important as safety is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency and the duration of power outages. Years of neglected ROW proved how important this maintenance is. In the last four years we have undertaken an aggressive reclamation process of our ROW and the outage statistics have shown dramatically reduced numbers.

Lastly, MLEC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

It is always our goal to keep the lights on for our members, but sometimes the weather can be unruly. Remember that your cooperative is ready to spring into action when needed, 24/7! With our dedicated staff, we are prepared for future weather events, as well as working hard every day to prevent them.

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@mlecmn.com



Thank you to Richard Gross of Aitkin for sharing this month's recipe.

BLUEBERRY, APPLE, AND PINEAPPLE DUMP CAKE

1 can (12 oz.) apple pie filling	1 box white cake mix
3/4 cup unsweetened crushed pineapple (drained)	2/3 cup butter (melted)
1 pkg. (12 oz.) frozen unsweetened blueberries	1 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup sugar	1/2 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix pie filling and pineapple in a greased 9x13 inch baking dish until combined. Toss blueberries with sugar, spoon over pie filling mixture. Sprinkle with cake mix, drizzle with melted butter. Top with walnuts and almonds (do not stir). Bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 45-55 minutes. Serve warm and pair with heavy cream, ice cream, or cool whip! Enjoy!

INVEST IN HOME SECURITY

MLEC Fiber provides the bandwidth to keep your security system running.

Being away from your home, business, or cabin can leave your property vulnerable to wildlife, unwanted visitors, or even burglars. Luckily, there have been many advancements in personal, easy to use, video security systems. For an affordable price, you can now see who or what is at your front door and when!

However, if a modern security system has any weakness it's that you need a strong Internet connection with plenty of bandwidth to keep it running. That's why MLEC Fiber Internet is the obvious choice for those who have a security camera system or want to invest in one. The massive bandwidth you get from speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second will give you plenty to spend on round-the-clock security while still having enough left over to stream videos, download movies,

communicate with remote workers, and do everything else you need an online connection for. Google Nest outdoor and doorbell cameras are available for purchase at www.energywisemnstore.com.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Is an EV right for you? Chargers and installation are available through Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative!

Electric vehicle owner and cooperative member, James Bohn, worked with MLEC's Energy Services team to install a Zef Energy EV charger near his cabin. Bohn was inspired to purchase an electric vehicle because of its low carbon footprint, quiet nature, and ease of maintenance. He is the owner of a Chevrolet Bolt and says, "It is excellent! Quiet, zippy, and easy." His driving routine has not changed since he made the switch, although he no longer needs to stop at the gas pump.

Mille Lacs Energy has EV chargers available and provides installation services. Bohn said, "MLEC made the installation inexpensive and efficient. The service was responsive and the work was first class." He has had a great experience with his EV and recommends that other members plan for a charging station at their home before purchasing the electric vehicle.

Thank you, James, for providing your feedback. MLEC values your membership! Enjoy your EV charger!



Cool down with hot deals



Smart thermostats are now making it easy to stay comfortable while using only a fraction of the energy. Luckily for you, Energy Wise MN is having a sale on select ecobee, Emerson and Google smart thermostats. Shop now for up to \$50 off!

Offer valid July 1 through August 17, 2021.
No coupon code necessary. While supplies lasts.
www.energywisemnstore.com



Regular office hours are
Mon-Fri 8:00 to 4:30
927-2191 or
800-450-2191 (toll free)

811 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
Nathan Readle 218-537-8419

Northern Crow Wing County
Jeff Overmyer 218-252-0919

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

TRUST BOARD AWARDS GRANTS

The Mille Lacs Community Trust Board meets quarterly to distribute funds raised through Operation Round Up. This June, the board awarded \$20,500 in grants to local non-profit organizations including: Advocates Against Domestic Abuse dba HOPE, Aitkin Area Youth Baseball Association, Alzheimer's Association/Aitkin Area Team, Angels Anonymous, Knights of Columbus Cuyuna Range Council #3474, Lakes Area Chaplaincy, Lakes Area Music Festival, Riverwood Foundation, St. Vincent de Paul for the "Lunch Bunch", Salem West - Social Ministry. The total amount of grants awarded since the start of Operation Round Up has reached an astounding \$1,329,179!

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.



Photographed left to right:
Irmgard Boyer, Judy Waytashek,
Mark Greninger, Megan Cummings,
Connie Zeitler, Steve Harrison, Katie Nelson.

2022 PHOTO CALENDAR

See your photo in MLEC's 2022 Calendar! We're asking members to submit photos by October 27, 2021. 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@mlecmmn.com
by 11:59 p.m. on October 27, 2021.

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

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.



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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 an MLEC member to participate. Be sure to include your name and service address! Entries must be received by **July 30th**.

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

That's why MLEC Fiber Internet is the obvious choice for those who have a _____ system or want to invest in one.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Congrats to Pauline Novak of Aitkin, the May gift card trivia winner!



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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