



THE OUTLET

Monthly Publication of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

VOLUME 51
NUMBER 5
MAY 2020

STANDBY GENERATOR PROGRAM

Designed to provide peace-of-mind and keep your life uninterrupted.

Reliability is of upmost importance at MLEC. However, we sometimes experience outages due to a variety of causes, such as weather, animals, or damaged power lines from digging or car crashes. For most members, being without power is merely an inconvenience, but for others, continuity of service is very important. For this reason, we offer a standby generator program that is ideal for members with a home business, sump pump, medical needs or simply desire to always have the comfort and conveniences that electricity provides.

MLEC is now offering Briggs and Stratton standby generators. When the power goes out, the generator automatically takes over. All generators are professionally installed and serviced by MLEC and come with a 10 year parts and labor warranty.

Call Mille Lacs Energy for more information or a price quote at 218-429-0432.

12 KW Fortress



20 KW Fortress



YOU. POWERED.

COOLING YOUR HOME

Keep cool with efficient electric appliances!

Since cooling your home makes up a considerable portion of your home's energy use in the summer months, MLEC offers innovative, efficient solutions to keep you comfortable that also allow you to receive rebates for installing them.

Air source heat pump

A heater in winter and a hyper-efficient air conditioner in summer, air source heat pumps (ASHPs) move heat rather than converting it from fuel, providing the most energy efficient cooling systems available. When you need to cool your home, the ASHP pulls heat and humidity directly from your indoor air and pumps it outside using 72% less electricity than conventional air conditioners while doing so.

Ground source heat pump

Much like ASHPs, ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) combine heating and cooling in one system; however, GSHPs operate with 300% to 400% efficiency. To cool your home, a GSHP will take the heat from your house and disperse it through a series of plastic pipes buried 4-6 feet beneath the ground. These ground loops provide a renewable, reliable source of energy as underground temperatures remain stable.

Cycled air conditioning

For those looking to stick with a traditional air conditioner, MLEC offers a cycled air conditioning program for members. It's an energy conservation program that cycles your air conditioner on and off in 15-minute intervals on specific days when energy demand is higher than usual. There are typically 20 to 25 days when cycling occurs per year, usually occurring in the late afternoons and early evenings. You then in turn will receive a \$10 credit on your bill for the months of June, July and August.

Contact MLEC at (888)433-4279 or (218)429-0432 for more information on current rebates for efficient electric appliances for your home.



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

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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

50% OFF Specialty Bulbs

April 1 – May 31, 2020

Make the upgrade to energy-efficient LEDs during our 50% Off specialty bulbs sale! Shop now at www.energywisemnstore.com



WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Dear Member:

We are entering our second month of dealing with COVID – 19. I would like to say that we are adjusting and adapting, but I do not know if you can really adjust and adapt to this. Our office is closed to the public. Travel has been eliminated. Meetings are attended remotely. Most staff are alternating shifts to keep staff congregating to a minimum. Line workers and internet installers have even stopped going into members' homes attempting to stop the spread. Productivity, communications, and efficiencies have all been compromised during this time, but I am very glad to say that our employees are not.

It is going to be some time before we understand the full effects of what this infection will have on MLEC, our communities, our families, and our human psyche. You see people filled with hope, kindness, and philanthropy. Then you turn and you see people filled with disdain, malice, and anger. COVID – 19 is bringing out the best and the worst in us.

MLEC ended 2019 in a very positive financial position. I was comfortable and confident announcing that we would not have a rate increase in 2020 and hoped to hold rates in 2021. I began discussing the prospects of a desperately needed new headquarters building with your Board of Directors. Then...2020 came along.

January 2020 temperatures reached record highs – meaning low kilowatt sales. Early spring storms hit our entire service territory causing three days of power outages – meaning thousands of dollars in extra labor and contract crews' expense. Non-essential businesses closed due to COVID – 19 – meaning low to no kilowatt sales from key accounts. More than 350,000 Minnesotans applied for unemployment benefits in just one month – meaning members are falling behind on bills (including their electric bills).

To reach our 2020 financial goals, MLEC has suspended our mechanical tree clearing efforts – our largest controllable expense. While this will positively impact our bottom line, it may also have unintended negative consequences. Remember that early spring storm I just talked about? When we fall behind on our tree clearing efforts, that causes our right-of-way to become overgrown. When that happens, it may lead to longer, more severe power outages during storm season.

I believe our community will pull together. Between local support from friends and neighbors, the Paycheck Protection Program, MLEC's Operation Round Up Program, Civic Groups, churches, and volunteers, we have a great network here. Throughout the past two months we keep seeing #InItTogether, and now is the time to prove it. We can make the choice to let COVID – 19 bring out the best in us or the worst in us. I say let it bring out the best in us.



Sarah Cron
CEO

“I believe our community will pull together. Between local support from friends and neighbors, the Paycheck Protection Program, MLEC's Operation Round Up Program, Civic Groups, churches, and volunteers, we have a great network here.”

As for our families and human psyche, please make sure you are taking care of that most precious part of your life first. We are social creatures and being isolated is not easy. Psychologists are even trying to predict if we are going to have another baby boom or record divorce rates by the end of this whole thing. When you are frustrated, feeling alone, at your worst, remember, we are in this together. We will come out on the other side of COVID - 19 worrying about all the silly stuff again.

Peace and health to you and your family. Please, stay well.

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



SUNSHINE BARS

1 yellow cake mix
3 eggs
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 stick butter, melted
4 cups powdered sugar

Mix cake, butter, and one egg into soft dough. Grease a 9x13 pan and press mixture on the bottom. Mix sugar, cream cheese, and remaining two eggs until smooth (1-2 minutes). Pour into the pan and bake 40-50 minutes at 300 degrees. Enjoy!

Thank you to Lisa Paulson of Aitkin for sharing this month's recipe.

MLEC fiber

Powered by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

MLEC is bringing Fiber-to-the-Home Internet to more members! We are expanding our MLEC Fiber Internet network and beginning construction on our new projects soon. Sign up to guarantee service to your home!

CONTACT US FOR MORE DETAILS!

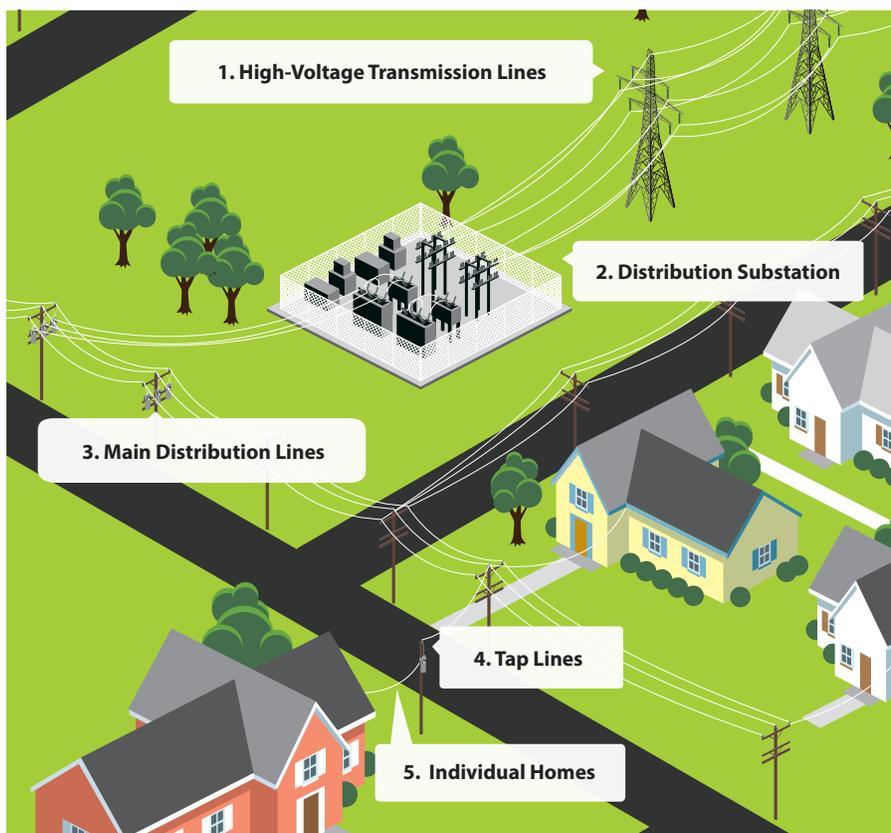
Call MLEC at (218) 429-0433 or visit online at www.mlecmm.net/fiber

MLEC HELPS FUND 3D PRINTER

MLEC Trust Fund donates to help Aitkin Public School create plastic face shields

On April 20th, the MLEC Trust Board donated \$1,950 to Aitkin Public Schools to help fund a new 3D printer. Staff at Aitkin schools have been developing and printing plastic face shields for health care workers and those in need. However, after their 3D printer broke during production, they asked MLEC to help fund a new machine. In times of concern, it is important to stick together. The MLEC Trust Board is proud to give to this great cause. Thank you, Aitkin educators, for your dedication and generosity! Keep up the great work!





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



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www.gopherstateonecall.org

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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
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Find load control schedule at
www.mlecmm.net under *Quick Links*.



Visit our website -
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E-mail us - mlec@mlecmm.net

POWERING UP AFTER AN OUTAGE

When the power goes out, we usually expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1. **High-Voltage Transmission Lines:** Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) don't often fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.
2. **Distribution Substations:** A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist further down the line.
3. **Main Distribution Lines:** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members.
4. **Tap Lines:** If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, or homes.
5. **Individual Homes:** If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired.

As the outage calls come in, line crews are called to action and begin outage repairs immediately. Outage updates can be found on our website and Facebook page. We do our best to keep members informed and post updates when new information becomes available. On our website, the outage map is a powerful tool to keep members up-to-date during an outage. Outage maps are just what they sound like: a graphical representation of an outage displayed on a map of MLEC's service area. Our map shows where the outage is occurring and includes information such as the number of members without power. The map is updated in real-time so members can see the progress of outage repairs.

Sometimes the cause of the outage is very obvious and easy to identify like a broken power pole or downed power line along the roadside. Sometimes the cause is harder to find, like a blown fuse on a line in the middle of a swamp. No two outages are the same, and the complexity of the outage will determine how long it takes to restore each outage.

Minnesota weather is always presenting challenges, therefore MLEC is investing in our Right-of-Way Program and the new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) which will help us pinpoint outage locations more efficiently. These investments will help MLEC reduce the number of outages along with the duration of them when they occur.

If you are experiencing an outage, reporting is simple. You can use the SmartHub App from your mobile phone/tablet or call MLEC's toll-free number (24/7) at 800-450-2191.

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.

Photos must be emailed to:

photos@mlecmn.com

by 11:59 p.m. on October 27, 2020.

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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**OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, MAY 25TH
IN HONOR OF MEMORIAL DAY**

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

(218) 927-2191 • (800) 450-2191 • www.mlecmn.net



MILLE LACS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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