

January 2023 Vol. 7 Issue 1  
A monthly publication for members of  
MiEnergy Cooperative.

# MiNews

## Co-op secures \$1.86 million for childcare and discovery center

### Student scholarship and D.C trip deadlines approaching

### REMINDER ABOUT WINTER PEAK ALERTS

### 2023 rebates announced

### IS BEING "SMART" ENERGY EFFICIENT?

MiEnergy Cooperative lineworkers Josh Carolan, Matt Ginther, Chris Horn, Kraig Johnson, Cole Kingsley, Mitch Kuhn, Clint Lickteig, Tony Rislove and Zach Steinmetz assisted in restoring power December 15-19 at Barron Electric Cooperative, Barron Wis.; Jackson Electric Cooperative, Black River Falls, Wis.; and Riverland Energy Cooperative, Arcadia and Holmen, Wis. Pictured are Kraig in the bucket and on the ground L-R Clint, Josh and Tim (Barron employee).





## Happy New Year!

The year ended with blizzard conditions around the holidays and disrupted travel plans for Christmas. The week prior to Christmas brought wet snow in abundance that resulted in a request for a Restoration of Power Emergency (ROPE) from our northern and central Wisconsin electric cooperative friends. Nine MiEnergy lineworkers answered the call and provided emergency assistance to Riverland Energy Cooperative, Jackson Electric Cooperative and Barron Electric Cooperative in Wisconsin.

Support during weather emergencies is one of the greatest strengths of our electric cooperative program, much like neighbors helping neighbors during times of despair. MiEnergy crews did great work, and we were thankful they returned back safely following challenging working conditions.

The year end also brought our wholesale power supplier's 2023 power cost results and budget development. The Board of Directors of Dairyland Power Cooperative approved their 2023 operating budget that includes a wholesale power cost increase of 6.5%. For the past several years, Dairyland has passed on minimal increases. Wholesale power costs account for nearly 70% of MiEnergy's annual operating expenses. The increase is primarily driven by the increased cost of natural gas. Increases in generation costs are being seen across all electric energy markets throughout the United States. Wholesale power providers in our region are also seeing increases, most of which are greater than Dairyland's.

This will result in a retail rate increase for MiEnergy. Staff is finalizing the 2023 operating budget to present to the board in January and has launched a cost-of-service study to determine future retail rates. The changes will be implemented in May.

MiEnergy has seen cost increases due to supply chain shortages and the impact of inflation. For example, the cost of a 15 kVA residential transformer has increased 40% in the last year. Traditionally, they would ship within 60 days of placing an order and now it is 18 months. Poles, conductor, cabinets, meters, etc. are seeing similar increases and extended delays. We are also seeing two-year delays on substation transformers, along with bucket truck replacements and switching cabinets. We are optimistic that the supply chain issues will work through the system in time, but we have not seen any indication from our suppliers that material pricing will return to pre-pandemic levels.

MiEnergy continues to look for opportunities to reduce our distribution operating expenses. In last month's board highlights, you may have noticed the change to our office hours for 2023. Our new hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday (we open a half-hour earlier) and on Friday the office is open by appointment only. With organizational changes, we tracked our walk-in traffic and have just a handful of members come in on a weekly basis and even less on Fridays. Most member transactions are made through a phone call or electronically. Employees will still be reporting to work on Fridays.

In other news, MiEnergy was awarded a \$4 million FEMA mitigation grant last month to build 27 miles of electric distribution line in 2023. This grant award will provide a significant jump forward in our 5-year capital work plan. We are also submitting grant applications for Department of Energy and Inflation Reduction Act programs.

System reliability, affordability and outstanding service remain our focus and priority. Thank you for your continued cooperative support and as always, I welcome your calls, emails, and personal visits.

Happy New Year!

## Board room highlights | Dec. 29, 2022

- CFO Shelly Hove gave a favorable year-to-date financial report.
- Approved Resolution 22-17 for an amendment to the current Rural Utilities Services approved revenue deferral plan.
- Appointed members to serve as Operation Round Up Trustees.
- Selected advisory committee members as presented. The cooperative is still seeking additional members to serve.
- Received a quarterly safety update from Safety and Compliance Coordinator Brad Pecinovskiy.
- Appointed and approved voting delegates for national meetings.

The next board meeting will be held at the Rushford office on January 31 at 9 a.m.

## Are smart home technologies energy efficient?



You've probably heard the term "smart home" a lot in recent years. You may be curious about what makes a home smart, how it can boost energy efficiency and help you save money.

"Smart" was originally an acronym for self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology. This refers to technology that can be programmed for automation or controlled remotely using Bluetooth or Wi-Fi from a smart phone app or online. A smart home is one with automated control of appliances and systems, such as lighting fixtures and heating and cooling systems.

There are multiple reasons people choose to automate their homes, including convenience, energy efficiency and security. Just because a product is smart, don't assume it's energy efficient. Added connectivity, lights and touchscreens can actually increase your energy use. Always look for the ENERGY STAR® logo when shopping, which certifies the products meet standards for energy efficiency.

Energy savings typically come from automating the systems, devices and appliances in your home to use less energy or use energy when it costs less. Here are a few ways you can start implementing smart technology at home.

### SMART UPGRADES FOR THE ENTIRE HOME

Because heating and cooling account for the most energy use in a home, these systems are the best place to look for energy savings.

Smart thermostats offer features and functionality that can help you save energy and money without thinking about it, including learning preferences and automatically setting temperatures. Geofencing is a feature that uses your phone's location to gauge your distance from home and adjusts the temperature accordingly.

Smart thermostats also let you control the thermostat from anywhere with an internet connection, and automatic software updates use new algorithms to maximize energy savings. Features vary by product, so be sure to choose the one that's right for you.

Smart window coverings are increasing in popularity and availability. They can help save energy both in the winter and summer by operating based on the temperature of the room or a preset schedule.

Smart lighting can help you remotely control lights in your home, based on occupancy or a preset schedule. Lighting also can be paired with home security systems.

You can use smart outlets and power strips to control devices from outside the home or manage use based on load. For example, you can plug your computer and devices into a load-sensing power strip that turns off peripheral devices, such as monitors and printers, when your computer is not in use.

### SMART STREAMING FOR THE LIVING ROOM

Many people use Wi-Fi to stream TV shows and movies. Smart TVs with built-in streaming functionality offer the most efficient way to stream content. If your TV cannot connect to the internet for streaming, opt for a streaming media player, such as Roku or Apple TV. They use 15 times less energy than a gaming console to stream the same shows and movies.

### SAVE ON SUDS IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Smart washing machines can be scheduled for off-peak energy times (when people in your community use less energy), which is helpful if your electric rate is based on the time of day energy is used. Smart clothes dryers can shut off automatically when your clothes are dry.

### SMART SAVINGS IN THE KITCHEN

There are many options for smart appliances in the heart of the home. Smart refrigerators offer energy-saving features, such as notifications when the door is left open, and digital screens that show the contents to keep you from opening the door.

Smart ovens let you preheat when you are on your way home or check if you forgot to turn off the oven when you are away. Toasters, range hoods, microwaves and countertop ice makers are among the growing list of additional smart kitchen gadgets available.

More smart home technologies are on the horizon, bringing more ways to operate the various systems, devices and appliances in your home.

As you think about ways to make your home smarter, remember to look for products that use the same smart home apps, which will make these new technologies even easier to manage.



- **In person.** Our offices are open 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and by appointment only Fridays.
- **Dropbox.** Payment drop-off boxes are available 24/7 at our offices in Cresco and Rushford.
- **Phone.** Call our toll-free payment line at 1-877-853-6517.
- **Online.** Log in and/or download the SmartHub app today. Find more details at [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop).
- **Automated.** Deduct from a bank account or charge to a credit card each month.

*If you are having difficulty paying your bill on time, please call the cooperative to work out a payment plan and to see if utility assistance may be available.*



## CAPITAL CREDITS NOTICE

In October 2022, MiEnergy distributed nearly \$2.2 million in patronage capital credit retirements to current and former members of the cooperative. Current members received an electric bill credit and former members received their refunds as a check. MiEnergy Cooperative’s office located at 24049 Highway 9, Cresco, IA 52136 is holding unclaimed patronage dividend checks for the person(s) listed as follows. The owner may claim this property by contacting us at the address listed above, calling 800-432-2285 or emailing [jmadsen@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:jmadsen@MiEnergy.coop). The December MiNews listed person(s) with last names of A-J.

**K**  
Kacena, Charlene, Venice, FL  
Kaiser, Joseph, Beldenville, WI  
Kaminski, Jason, Onalaska, WI  
Kansteiner, Richard, Trempealeau, WI  
Kauffman, Mavis, C/O Swift, Katie, Johnston, IA  
Keefe, Kevin, Hawley, MN  
Keller, James, Hustisford, WI  
Kidder, Randy & Jody, Fergus Falls, MN  
Kies, Charles & Jackie, Cascade, IA  
Kimber, Laurie, Decorah, IA  
Klapperich, Rhonda, Riceville, IA  
Kleist, Arnold, Minn City, MN  
Klimesh, Mary Estate, Calmar, IA  
Klug, Leonard & Loretta, Rushford, MN  
Kneller, Dennis & Rebecca, Farmington, MN  
Knock, Alan & Michelle, Waterloo, IA  
Knudsen, Ross, Farmington, MN  
Knutson, David & Cathy, New Hampton, IA  
Knutson, John, New Hampton, IA  
Koch, Katie, Preston, MN  
Kock, Ava, Caledonia, MN  
Koehler, Duane Estate, C/O Sowers, Pam, Marshalltown, IA  
Koehn, Willis, McIntire, IA  
Koenig, George Jr, C/O Koenig, Debra, Hopkins, MN  
Koo, Joseph & Susan, Winona, MN  
Korger, Matthew, Houston, MN  
Koster, Daniel, Lime Springs, IA  
Kraling, Randy & Yvonne, Spring Valley, MN  
Kremer-Seelye, Penny, Sparta, WI  
Kreutzer, Theresa, Hokah, MN  
Kruegel, Jeremy, Harmony, MN  
Kruse, Dave, Stewartville, MN  
Kruse, Sue, Spring Grove, MN  
Kryzer, Seth, Winona, MN  
Kuboushek, David, Chester, IA  
Kuhl, Rick & Laney, Lime Springs, IA  
Kuhl, Rick, Lime Springs, IA  
Kulas, Jeanette, Winona, MN  
Kurtz, Donna, Caledonia, MN

**L**  
LaFleur, Theresa, Decorah, IA  
Landsom, Robert & Kathryn, La Crescent, MN  
Landsteiner, Stephen, Spring Valley, MN  
Landswerk, Carlton Estate, Lawler, IA  
Lange, Corey, Mabel, MN  
Lange, Laura, Decorah, IA  
Lange, Randy, Caledonia, MN  
Langreck, Ray, Cresco, IA  
Lansing, Delores Estate, Lansing, Gary, Ossian, IA  
Larsen, Amy, Waucoma, IA  
Larson, Evelyn, Lanesboro, MN  
Larson, Ronald & Deborah, Racine, MN  
Laska, Doris, Winona, MN  
Lawlor, Tim & Anne, La Crescent, MN  
Lazzara, Michael, Pueblo West, CO  
Lee, Steven, Ridgeway, IA  
Lee, Thomas, LaCrescent, MN  
Lenz Family Farm Corp, C/O Lenz, Wayne, Harmony, MN  
Lichty, Gary, LaPorte City, IA  
Lien, Rose, Belmond, IA  
Lindell, Clinton, Hayward, WI  
Lindh, Thomas & Betty, Rushford, MN  
Linkenmeyer, Marcella, Riceville, IA  
Loden, Alexandra, Ossian, IA  
Loken, Michael, Caledonia, MN  
Long, Jamie, Wykoff, MN  
Loomis, Teresa, Caledonia, MN  
Louks, Richard, Mantorville, MN  
Loveless, Nonnie, Wabasha, MN  
Lovstuen, Jana, Orange City, IA  
Lukes, William, Riceville, IA  
Luzum, Dan, Calmar, IA

**M**  
Malanaphy, Thomas & Kimberly, Ossian, IA  
Mann, Randy, Brownsville, MN  
Martin, Mark, Phillips, Lori, Decorah, IA  
Martinson, Diane, Winona, MN  
Marvets, Kevin & Karol, Frederika, IA  
Maust, Courtney, Houston, MN  
McAndrew, Timothy, C/O McAndrew, John, Minnetonka, MN  
McAvoy, Mike, Rock Valley, IA  
McCabe, Lori, Decorah, IA  
McCollum, Guy, Granite Falls, MN  
McConnell, Michael & Sarah, Rochester, MN  
McCormick, Heather, Canton, MN  
McGee, Laura, Elma, IA  
McGillicuddy, Jeffrey & Jennifer, Pleasanton, CA

McNally, Michael & Gina, LeRoy, MN  
McNally, Michael, LeRoy, MN  
Means, Jamie, Waukon, IA  
Mehaffey, Megan, Winona, MN  
Melaas, Eric, Northfield, MN  
Melver, Leonard, Elma, IA  
Mensink, Brandon, Rochester, MN  
Mensink, Karen, Spring Valley, MN  
Meyer, Adam, Amendola, Lori, Winona, MN  
Meyer, Carol, Rushford, MN  
Mikkelson, Melenor, Harmony, MN  
Mikkelson-Foster, Lynda, Cresco, IA  
Miland, Gary & Karen, Spring Valley, MN  
Miller, Bill, Daytona Beach, FL  
Miller, Brad, Decorah, IA  
Miller, Daniel, Winona, MN  
Miller, Frank, McGregor, IA  
Miller, James & Kimberly, Fredericksburg, IA  
Miller, Mrs Vernon, Harmony, MN  
Mills, Kenneth, Houston, MN  
Moe, Carmen, Westby, WI  
Moe, Ray, Winona, MN  
Moellers, Joel, Cresco, IA  
Moothart, Gregg, Des Moines, IA  
Moothart, Gregg, Treasure Island, FL  
Mueller, James Estate, C/O Mueller, Leah, Minneapolis, MN  
Mueller, Joshua, Winona, MN  
Muenkel, Matthew, Caledonia, MN  
Myli, Jason, Decorah, IA

**N**  
Naig, Christopher & Monica, Galesville, WI  
Nasset, Joel, Minneapolis, MN  
Nation, Bruce & Tammie, Rushford, MN  
Nelson, Cheryl, La Crosse, WI  
Nelson, Gertrude, Riceville, IA  
Nelson, Henrietta, Northfield, MN  
Nelson, Kent, Decorah, IA  
Ness, Charles, Caledonia, MN  
Ness, Mary, La Crosse, WI  
Ness, Sheryl, Holmen, WI  
Newstrom, Michael & Barb, Winona, MN  
Nielsen, Shannon & John, Decorah, IA  
Niemeyer, Tanner & Katie, Saint Michael, MN  
Niesen, Collin, Houston, MN  
Nissalke, Danica, La Crescent, MN  
Nittys Auto Salvage, C/O Steve Neuzil, Fort Atkinson, IA  
Nittys Iron and Metal, Leroy, MN  
Norman, Tim & Jana, Edwardsburg, MI  
Norris, Deborah, Scottsdale, AZ

**O**  
Oberbroeckling, Geraldine & Paul, Decorah, IA  
O'Connor, Richard, Stoddard, WI  
Oevering, John & Jo Ellen, Winona, MN  
O'Heron, James, Panama City Beach, FL  
Olson, Dinah & Eric, Oswego, NY  
Olson, Kristin, Waterloo, IA  
Olson, Randall & Kristen, Las Vegas, NV  
Orth, Wendy, Lime Springs, IA  
Ostert, Burt & Marge, Madison, WI

**P**  
Pahl, Brian, Decorah, IA  
Palen, Stephanie, Caledonia, MN  
Papenfuss, Brandon, Lanesboro, MN  
Parpart, Betty, Winona, MN  
Patterson, Robert, Mabel, MN  
Pauley, Scott, Waterloo, IA  
Paulson, Beverly, Rushford, MN  
Pauly's Canton Pub, Canton, MN  
Pavlovec, Gretchen, Decorah, IA  
Payette, Terry, Poplar, WI  
Peck, Rusty & Cheryl, Austin, MN  
Peebles, Robert & Jacqueline, Fort Myers, FL  
Pember, Lisa, Winona, MN  
Perry, Nathan, Hammond, MN  
Peter, John, Goodview, MN  
Peterson, Greg, Caledonia, MN  
Peterson, Jennifer, Dotzler, Dennis, Decorah, IA  
Phillips, Mrs James, Fredericksburg, IA  
Phillips, Stacy, Waukon, IA  
Pierce, Andy, Winona, MN  
Pierce, Howard, Cresco, IA  
Pladsen, Patty, Decorah, IA  
Plemmons, Arthur & Alison, Winona, MN  
Polzin, Alan & Star, Chatfield, MN  
Powers, Kip & Elizabeth, Cresco, IA  
Powers, Phillip, Cresco, IA  
Privet, Kenneth & Julie, Caledonia, MN

Propst, Everett & Laura, Flat Rock, NC  
Prudoehl, Michelle, Lake City, MN  
Purdy, Thomas, Parker, CO

**Q**  
Quandahl, Sylvia, Cresco, IA  
Quanrud, John, Meridian, ID

**R**  
Rahif, Tina & James, Lime Springs, IA  
Rain, Bradley, Pine Island, MN  
Rainwater, Reace & Kristi, New Ulm, MN  
Rank, Tamara, Hokah, MN  
Rannels, Danny & Jackie, LeRoy, MN  
Ransom, Steve & Laura, Decorah, IA  
Rasmussen, Tricia, Fountain, MN  
Rasmussen, Troy, Fountain, MN  
Rau, Doug, Huron, SD  
Raygor, Jackson, Rochester, MN  
Reichstadt, Rodney, Wykoff, MN  
Rennie, Sean, Chaska, MN  
Reusch, William, New York Mills, MN  
Rhoades, Dusty, Cresco, IA  
Richardson, William, Winona, MN  
Rickard, Richard, Calmar, IA  
Ridenour, Stefani, Alta Vista, IA  
Riehl, Donald & Betty, Preston, MN  
Rislov, Kenneth & Linda, Springfield, OR  
Ritterling, David & Soojin, La Crescent, MN  
Robers, Marikaye, La Crosse, WI  
Robinson, Norma, Cresco, IA  
Roenfanz, Charles & Kasie, Harmony, MN  
Roethler, Melissa, Osage, IA  
Rogich, Michael, Caledonia, MN  
Romie, Gordon, Mabel, MN  
Rugaard, Jill, Grandview, MO  
Russet, Margaret Estate, C/O Reynolds, Sandy, Rochester, MN  
Rustad, Kathy, Decorah, IA  
Ruud, Bonnie Lou, Lime Springs, IA  
Ryan, Erin, Edgewood, IA

**S**  
Sacquitne, Virginia, Decorah, IA  
Samuelson, Marty, Decorah, IA  
Sand, Georgja, Houston, MN  
Sanness, Kaare, Dorchester, IA  
Santee, Donald, Dover, MN  
Saratoga Enterprises Inc, Cedar Falls, IA  
Sayers, Heather, La Crescent, MN  
Scell, William, Albermarle, NC  
Schaeffel, John & Jill, Phoenix, AZ  
Schaffer, Jean, Hokah, MN  
Scharmach, Glen & Cynthia, Rushford, MN  
Schaufenbil, Michael, Winona, MN  
Scheidel, Todd & Cathy, Ridgeway, IA  
Schindeldecker, Scott & Tiffany, Rollingstone, MN  
Schlichter, Theodore Jr, Preston, MN  
Schloegel, John & Rita, Lewiston, MN  
Schlumbohm, John & Karen, Decorah, IA  
Schmalzried, Carl & Brenda, Waukon, IA  
Schmidt, David Estate, C/O Schmidt, Keith, Bangor, WI  
Schmidt, Joyce, La Crosse, WI  
Schmitt, Robert Estate, or Schmitt, Wendy, Cedar Falls, IA  
Schmoll, Wilbur, Spring Valley, MN  
Scholbrock, Kenneth, Lawler, IA  
Schrepf, Patrick, C/O Estes, Carol, Poolsbo, WA  
Schroeder, Todd, Caledonia, MN  
Schuchhardt, Lacey, Rahif, Nick, New Hampton, IA  
Schug, Harold, Rowley, IA  
Schuh, Stephen, Winona, MN  
Schultz, Gregory, Caledonia, MN  
Schultz, Jeremy Sr, Mantorville, MN  
Schultz, Jessica, Missoula, MT  
Schuweiler, Gregory, Fort Thompson, SD  
Schwanbeck, Bernard & K M, Prior Lake, MN  
Schwanbeck, Patricia, Rushford, MN  
Schwartz, Daniel, Spring Valley, MN  
Scott, James & Muriel, Winona, MN  
Seegmiller, David, Monticello, MN  
Seekamp, Alicia, Sargeant, MN  
Semmen, Loretta, Preston, MN  
Severson, Matthew, Sparta, WI  
Severson, Philip, Decorah, IA  
Shafar, Cynthia Sue, Fort Dodge, IA  
Shanks, Jeremiah & Stacy, Decorah, IA  
Shea, Donald, Cresco, IA  
Sheridan, Donald Estate, C/O Sheridan, Tony, Farley, IA  
Shileny, Sylvia, C/O Bematz, Tom, Dade City, FL  
Shindelar, John & Christie, Temecula, CA  
Shoemaker, Jeff & Michelle, Cresco, IA

Shorter, Todd, Spring Valley, MN  
Shuck, Jenifer, Grand Meadow, MN  
Sikkink, Harold Estate, Harmony, MN  
Simonson, Robert, Sarasota, FL  
Sims, Russell & Lisa, Waucoma, IA  
Sinnwell, Paula, Zumbrota, MN  
Sitze, Clinton, La Crosse, WI  
Sjarpe, Carol, Preston, MN  
Smith, Anthony, Cresco, IA  
Smith, Greg, Preston, MN  
Smith, Margaret, St Lucas, IA  
Smith, Nathan & Margaret, La Crescent, MN  
Snow, Kelly & Audrey, Indianola, IA  
Soland, Marilyn, Yankton, SD  
Solberg, John & Gloria, Peterson, MN  
Solum, John, Genoa, WI  
Soukup, David, Montgomery, MN  
Specht, Vernon & Marcia, Fountain, MN  
Spreen, Neil Jr, Medford, WI  
Stampka, Travis & Ambliia, Minn City, MN  
Stanger, Kathryn, LeRoy, MN  
Steen, Melissa, Edina, MN  
Steine, Debbie Estate, Lime Springs, IA  
Stellmaker, Pete & Martha, Morrison, IL  
Sterling, Rachel & Bryan, C/O Gile, David, Hokah, MN  
Stika, Dorothy, Cresco, IA  
Stirkins, Troyce, Lawler, IA  
Stokes, Mathew, Eyota, MN  
Stokes, Suzanne, C/O Shimshak, Greg, Houston, MN  
Stolpa, Kurt, Winona, MN  
Stoltz, James & Elsie, Caledonia, MN  
Stone, George & Judith, Caledonia, MN  
Stoskopf, Verl Estate, Decorah, IA  
Streiff, James & Kathryn, Rochester, MN  
Strittmater, Donald, Dorchester, IA  
Strittmater, Jessica, Waukon, IA  
Strobach, Chris & Carrie, Coral Springs, FL  
Swinbank, Jeff, Zumbro Falls, MN

**T**  
Talmontas, Kirk, Fountain City, WI  
Theisen, Greg & Lauri, Holmen, WI  
Thesing, Eric, Jergenson, Kristin, Brownsville, MN  
Thillen, Terry & Autumn, Rochester, MN  
Thompson, Corey, Mabel, MN  
Thompson, Dean, Boone, IA  
Thompson, Mabel, Peterson, MN  
Thompson, Merlyn, Sartell, MN  
Thompson, Tom, Decorah, IA  
Thorne, Terry, Garber, Joyce, Cresco, IA  
Thornton, Lon & Paula, Rochester, MN  
Tibbals, Shirley, Evansdale, IA  
Tieskoetter, Adella, Lawler, IA  
Tieskoetter, Randy, Ossian, IA  
Tieskoetter, Roman Estate, Tieskoetter, Melvin, Decorah, IA  
Timm, Jennifer, Plainview, MN  
Tomten, Casey & Kathryn, Hokah, MN  
Torgerson, James, Tomahawk, WI  
Torgerrud, Roger, Adams, MN  
Townes, Larry, Johnston, IA  
Treat, Chasity, Burke, Nick, Harmony, MN  
Trende, Tyler, Atwood, Karly, Spring Valley, MN  
Tripp, Mabel, Mabel, MN  
TriTech Emergency Medical Systems, Decorah, IA  
Turner, Connie, Cresco, IA  
Tweten, Laurie, Onalaska, WI

**U**  
Ulwellung, Donna, Fountain, MN  
United States Cellular, C/O Midwest Region, Chicago, IL

**V**  
Vagts, Robert Jr, Harmony, MN  
Van Lin, Theresa, La Crosse, WI  
VanDerWoude, Eric, Lansing, IL  
VandeWalker, Timothy & Lori, Stewartville, MN  
Vargason, Rodney, Elysian, MN  
Varner, Timothy Sr & Deanna, Homer City, PA  
Veit, Janet, Neenah, WI  
Verdick, Patricia, Winona, MN  
Vix, Benjamin, Rochester, MN  
Voong, Lam, Hoong, Kieubac, Cresco, IA  
Voshart, Pamela Estate, Brownsville, MN  
Vote, Mike & Beverly, Alta Vista, IA  
Voves, Mark, Cresco, IA  
Vrieze, Donna, Spring Valley, MN

**W**  
Waldenberger, Gerald, Houston, MN  
Walton, Connie Sue, Las Vegas, NV  
Warnke, Leon, Denver, IA  
Warnke, Lucille, Postville, IA  
Wedeking, Kevin & Sherry, Humboldt, IA  
Weeter, Darrell, Cleveland, OH  
Wenke, James & Sharon, Iron River, WI  
Welch, Earl, La Crescent, MN  
Welly, Alyce, Phoenix, AZ  
Wenger, Michael & Brenda, Melbourne, FL  
Wentworth, Sally, Grand Marais, MN  
Whalen, John, C/O Whalen, David, Harmony, MN  
White, Glenn & Krista, Decorah, IA  
White, Jay & Lori, Elgin, IA  
White, Mary Jane, Deer River, MN  
White, Robert, New Hampton, IA  
Wicks, Loren, Decorah, IA  
Wickstrom, David & Joan, Winona, MN  
Wiebke, Roger, Caledonia, MN  
Wiedow, Christopher, Castalia, IA  
Wiemerslage, Bruce, Dorchester, MN  
Wildt, Daniel & Teri, La Crosse, WI  
Williams, Randy & Rhonda, Winona, MN  
Winans, Marvin & Joan, Rochester, MN  
Winter, Gary & Karla, Ossian, IA  
Wirtanen, Carl & Patricia, Lake City, MN  
Witt, Cheryl, Cresco, IA  
Witt, Joyce, C/O Stoltman, Christine, Winona, MN  
Witt, Nicole, Winona, MN  
Witt, Steven, Houston, MN  
Wold, Nicole, Mabel, MN  
Wolter, Darlene, Holmen, WI  
Woodland Estates Home Owners, Winona, MN  
Wright, Marcia, Fiint, MI

**Y**  
Yearling, Julie, St Charles, MN  
Yoder, Jacob, Harmony, MN

**Z**  
Zaiger, Angela, Caledonia, MN  
Zbornik, Stephen Estate, C/O Bildstein, Hannah, Dubuque, IA  
Zeien, Louis, New Hampton, IA  
Zenke, Mindy & Tyler, La Crosse, WI  
Zibrowski, Carol, La Crescent, MN  
Zilka, Lawrence, Decorah, IA  
Zoerner, Gery & Carolyn, Winona, MN  
Zook, Joel, Bergan, Johanna, Decorah, IA  
Zwack, Daniel, Decorah, IA  
Zweibahmer, Jerry & Brenda, Fort Atkinson, IA  
Zweibohmer, Michael, Decorah, IA



**New Year, New Savings.** 

Visit our website to learn about programs to help you save energy and money.

[www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop)

# ElectricSense® 2023 Rebates

Rebates help you save up front on the purchase of energy efficient products. Plus, buying products that lower your energy use can reduce your monthly bills, saving you money over the long term.

**2023 rebate forms can be found online at [www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates)**

## ENERGY STAR RATED APPLIANCES

Clothes dryer (electric).....	\$25
Clothes washer .....	\$25
Dehumidifier.....	\$25
Dishwasher .....	\$25
Freezer (≥10 cubic ft.).....	\$25
Inductive Range <sup>e</sup> .....	\$25
Refrigerator (≥10 cubic ft.).....	\$25
Recycling a working freezer, refrigerator or room air conditioner .....	\$25

## ASSESSMENTS / AUDITS

Audit recommended improvements.....	up to \$500
Touchstone Energy® New Home Program.....	\$500

LED lamp (5 lamp min.).....	50¢
LED exit sign.....	\$5
Occupancy sensor (not motion detector fixtures) .....	\$5

Residential high efficiency electric water heater  
85 & 105 gallons (purchased at MiEnergy)\*\* ..... \$734-\$1,059

Heat pump water heater .....\$300

Solar storage water heater w/electric backup (75-99 gal.)\*\* ...\$150

Solar storage water heater w/electric backup (100+ gal.)\*\* .....\$300

New furnace with ECM blower motor ..... \$35  
**Variable speed motor (not multi-speed) OR Eae ≤ 670 kWh/year.**

Heat Pumps  
Geothermal .....\$500/ton  
Air source & mini-split.....\$300/ton  
**SEER 14+, HSPF 8.2+, or EER 11+**

Electric vehicle (EV) charging station..... \$400  
**Must be enrolled on the co-op's EV rate.**

*This is a summary of residential rebates. Rebates are first come, first serve while funds last. Additional terms & conditions are on rebate forms; please read thoroughly before submitting. Ag, commercial, industrial & custom rebates are also available.*

<sup>e</sup>All inductive ranges apply.

\*\*Must be on energy management program as defined by cooperative.



# 4 things to know about extending rechargeable battery life

Many of us are so connected to our phones, tablets and laptops that we panic when their battery nears the dreaded 0% mark.

If you ever find yourself fretting over your device's power levels, here are a few tips on striking the right balance between battery health and how you work and play.

## KEEP YOUR BATTERY ABOUT 40% TO 80% CHARGED

There's a lot of reasonable advice around the internet to keep your phone charged between 20% and 80%, or between 40% and 80%. To understand those recommendations—and why you might want to either follow them or ignore them—it helps to understand how rechargeable batteries work.

Up until about 20 years ago, batteries benefitted from occasional “deep discharges”—running the battery down

until the device shuts off. But because of different materials used in batteries today, that's not true anymore.

Rechargeable batteries work by containing two different materials that produce electricity when particles flow from one to the other. They flow the other direction when being recharged. That process will degrade any battery over time. Keeping both sides of the battery in balance, with the device charged at about



50%, will put the least amount of stress on the battery and make it last longer.

But that's unrealistic—no one's going to keep their phone half-charged all the time. So, the experts try to make it easier by recommending 40% to 80% or 20% to 80%. Apple devices offer even more flexibility, pointing out that modern rechargeable batteries are designed to last for years under a variety of ways you use them. They recommend rather than worrying about the battery, just focus on using and enjoying your device.

## OVERNIGHT CHARGING CAN ADD STRESS TO SOME BATTERIES

Charging your device up to 100% or letting it drain to 0% until it shuts down does put extra stress on the battery and can shorten its life. That's why it can make sense to charge your devices occasionally throughout the day rather than keeping them plugged in while you sleep. Newer electronics will actually stop charging at 100%. But then each time the charge drops to 99%, charging will resume.

## KEEP IT COOL, BUT NOT COLD

One absolute in battery care is don't let your device get

warmer than 95 degrees. Keep it out of the sun, and never leave it in a hot vehicle. If the device does get hot, don't go to the other extreme and put it in the freezer. Just place it in the shade or take the cover off for a while.

## USE LESS POWER

It sounds simple, but one of the easiest ways to put less stress on the battery is to use less power. You can close energy-draining apps and functions when you're not using them, and you can activate energy-saving settings like putting the device to sleep sooner. Another easy way to reduce battery use is to activate the “airplane mode” button every now and then. You may be inconvenienced by a temporary pause on receiving e-mails or phone calls, but it might help you focus on that movie you're watching, the trail you're hiking or the conversation with your dinner companions.

If you're the kind of person who likes to turn in their electronics every couple years for the latest versions, these recommendations likely won't apply. But if you're someone who wants your devices to last longer, these suggestions can help prolong battery life.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS



## CO-OP TO GRANT \$70,000 IN 2023

### Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ Must be a high school senior graduating in 2023.
- ✓ Must continue your education after high school at an accredited technical school, college or university.
- ✓ Must be the son, daughter or legal dependent of a MiEnergy member with an active electric account. (Children of MiEnergy Cooperative employees and directors are not eligible).
- ✓ Must demonstrate community service, according to scholarship instructions.
- ✓ Must have at least a “B” grade point average.

The application is posted at [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop). Deadline is March 1. Seventy \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. Question can be directed to Annie Hoiland at [ahoiland@MiEnergy.coop](mailto:ahoiland@MiEnergy.coop) or by calling 800-432-2285. Scholarships are funded with unclaimed capital credit funds that would otherwise be forfeited to the state.

## Annual Youth Tour

CO-OP OFFERS FREE TRIP

IOWA YOUTH TOUR JUNE 17-23, 2023

MINNESOTA YOUTH TOUR JUNE 13-18, 2023

Two area high school students will be selected by MiEnergy to represent the cooperative as delegates on the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour. They will join hundreds of other students from across the country -all expenses paid- for one incredible week at our nation's capital. The Youth Tour group will explore D.C., spend a day on Capitol Hill, meet their congressional leaders and see our government in action. The students will learn first-hand about our government and its history, their responsibilities as citizens and how they work together. The tour is a fast-paced leadership opportunity to see what makes America tick!

To be eligible, the student must currently be a high school sophomore or junior and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must be members of MiEnergy. The co-op will be selecting two students, one from Minnesota and one from Iowa. Past Youth Tour recipients are not eligible to apply.

To be considered, students must complete the online exam by February 28, 2023. The exam and more information can be found at [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop).



# MiRecipes | Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the May 2023 newsletter. Deadline is April 12. Send to Meagan at PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136 or email: mmoellers@MiEnergy.coop. MiRecipes will be printed quarterly in this publication. If we publish your recipe, you will receive a \$5 credit on your next electric bill. Limit one recipe published per member annually.

## MANDARIN ORANGE SALAD DON KRIVACHEK, FORT ATKINSON

- 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding mix (dry)
- 1 large can crushed pineapple (drained)
- 2 large cans mandarin oranges (drained)
- 1 (8 oz.) Cool Whip

Mix together cool whip and instant pudding dry mix. Add 2 cans mandarin oranges. Fold in the pineapple and stir to combine all well. Save a few for topping. Refrigerate until it thickens or overnight.

## EASY SLOW COOKER RAVIOLI CASSEROLE JOLENE PITZENBERGER-TIMP, JACKSON JUNCTION

- 1 (24 oz.) jar marinara sauce
- 1 (24 oz.) package frozen cheese ravioli (uncooked)
- 1 lb. ground beef, chicken or turkey
- 1 small onion (finely chopped)
- 1 bell pepper (finely chopped)
- 2 t. minced garlic
- 1 (6 oz. pkg.) shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese

In a skillet brown beef, onion, bell pepper, and garlic over medium heat until meat is no longer pink. Season with salt and pepper as needed and drain.

Spray a large slow cooker with cooking spray. Spread 1 c. of marinara into the bottom of the prepared pot.

Top marinara with half of the ravioli, half of the cooked meat mixture, and half of the mozzarella. Add another layer of the remaining sauce, and top with the rest of the ravioli, the rest of the meat, and the rest of the mozzarella.

Cover the slow cooker with the lid and cook on high for 2-3 hours, or low for 4-5 hours. Large frozen ravioli may take an additional 30 min.

Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese before serving.

## CHICKEN TETRAZZINI | TANYA JOHNSON, ELMA

- ½ c. butter (melted)
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 2 c. sour cream
- ½ c. chicken broth or stock
- ½ t. salt
- ½ t. black or white ground pepper
- 4 chicken breasts (cooked and chopped)

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a large mixing bowl, combine the melted butter, cream of chicken soup, sour cream, chicken broth, salt and pepper. Add the cooked, chopped chicken and mix well. Pour the cooked linguini into the mixing bowl and toss until combined into the sauce. Pour the pasta and sauce into a 9x13 inch glass baking dish. Distribute the shredded mozzarella cheese evenly over the casserole, then sprinkle the grated parmesan cheese over the top. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes, until the cheese is melted and the sauce is bubbling around the edges of the pan. Cool slightly before serving.



## HAMBURGER STEAKS WITH ONION GRAVY CATHLEEN MASON, CHESTER

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef  | 1 clove garlic (minced)   |
| 1 egg              | 1 t. Worcestershire sauce |
| 1/3 c. breadcrumbs | 1 T. oil                  |
| ½ t. black pepper  | 1½ c. thinly sliced onion |
| 1 t. salt          | 2 T. all-purpose flour    |
| ½ t. onion powder  | 1 c. beef broth           |

In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef, egg, breadcrumbs, pepper, salt, onion powder, garlic, and Worcestershire sauce. Form into thick patties. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Fry the patties and onion in the oil until patties are nicely browned. Remove the beef patties to a plate and keep warm. Sprinkle flour over the onions and drippings in the skillet. Stir in flour with a fork, scraping bits of beef off of the bottom as you stir. Gradually mix in the beef broth. Season with seasoned salt. Simmer and stir over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes, until the gravy thickens. Turn heat to low, return patties to the gravy, cover, and simmer for another 15 minutes.

## RASPBERRY FLUFF | LOVEN FAMILY, PETERSON

- Beat together:
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese
  - 1 c. of sugar

Gently fold in 1 tub of Cool Whip (8 oz.), very carefully fold in 4 c. of raspberries. Put filling in graham cracker crust and enjoy!

## 3 WAYS TO UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

When was the last time you updated your phone numbers with MiEnergy? Having up-to-date phone numbers and email addresses helps the co-op send messages about planned power outages or power emergencies. It also makes reporting outages more efficient.

There are three ways to update your info:

- 01 CALL 1-800-432-2285**
- 02 MAKE THE CHANGE ON THE REMITTANCE PORTION OF YOUR BILL**
- 03 LOG IN TO YOUR SMARTHUB ACCOUNT AND UPDATE MY PROFILE**



## Want this newsletter delivered to your inbox?

Did you know that you can sign up to receive your copy of MiNews electronically each month? It's easy. Visit our website [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop) >News & Education>Co-op Publications>MiNews to find the link to sign up. You'll need to provide your name, address, email address and your MiEnergy account number. By signing up, you will no longer receive MiNews by regular mail.

# WINTER PEAK ALERTS

During the winter months, you may see messages on local television stations, hear messages on the radio or view posts on social media from MiEnergy regarding a Peak Alert. We encourage our members to take note of the messages and conserve electricity.

TOMORROW | 6:55 A.M. - 10:05 A.M.

## PEAK ALERT!

Due to high demand on the regional grid, please shift flexible energy use until after 10:05 a.m.

## NEW CONSERVATION SCHEDULE

Historically, Peak Alert messages for winter months were in the evenings from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. In the December issue of MiNews, members were notified of changes. A morning timeframe has been added that asks for conservation from 6:55 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. The morning alerts will be communicated the evening prior.

Members can conserve electricity during this peak alert period by setting their heating systems to at least 68, lower if no one is home; running the dishwasher or doing laundry later in the evening; using a microwave instead of the oven to cook; charging electric vehicles later in the evening; and refraining from turning on televisions or gaming systems. Each seemingly small action can collectively make a big difference in the demand made on the electric grid.

This change also affects members participating in energy management programs including dual fuel/interruptible heat and water heaters.

For details check out the Dec. MiNews, visit [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop) > Members Services > Ways to Save > Energy Supply Alerts, or call the co-op at 800-432-2285.



## WORKSHOP SAFETY

1. Are your electrical outlets equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)?
2. Are your heavy-duty extension cords rated for the tools you plan to use?
3. Is your metal workbench grounded?

Learn ways to make your home workshop safe at:







# Personnel changes at the co-op

## RETIREMENT

Jim Culhane retired from MiEnergy on December 30 as service center coordinator. He has worked for the cooperative since June 1985 starting as a grounds worker/truck driver. Thanks to Jim for his 37 years of service and dedication.



## PROMOTION UPDATES

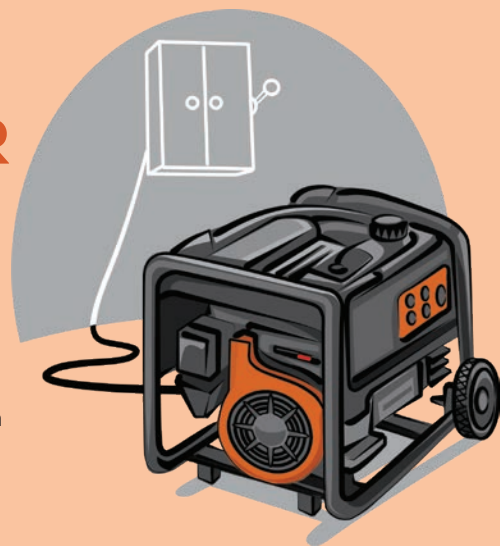
Jordan Williams has accepted the Warehouse Person position in Rushford. Jordan has been working as the Facility Service Coordinator/Light Duty Mechanic for the past three years. Jordan started his new position on September 26.

Brett Bergan has accepted the Facility Service Coordinator/Light Duty Mechanic position in Rushford. Brett has been with the cooperative for 21 years, most recently as the system operations dispatcher and a lineworker for ten years prior. Brett started his new position on November 1.

Kari Steele has accepted the operations assistant position in Rushford. Kari has been with the cooperative as a member services representative for eight years. She started her new position on December 12.



# What is a Generator TRANSFER SWITCH?



A transfer or throw switch, sometimes called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.

## The transfer switch has an important job.

The switch is typically used for generators rated at 5,000 watts or more.

It connects the generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.

In other words, the transfer switch changes or transfers the power load from one source to another.

It prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

## The type of switch depends on the type of generator.

A permanent standby generator has an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home.

Standby generators are called just that because they automatically turn on when the power goes out.

Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

Portable generators can also be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

## Always use a generator safely.

Learn more at:



# out & about in your COMMUNITY

## HOLIDAY GIFTS – HOWARD COUNTY

MiEnergy employees purchased gifts for two families through the local CARE (Communities About Reaching Everyone) program, helping to make their holidays a little brighter. Pictured back row L-R: Wayne Hageman, Clint Lickteig, Shawn Omar, Kevin Reicks, Janelle Sunnes, Ruth Riha, Marlyn Ohloff and Tom Hart. Front row: Meagan Moellers and Josh Carolan.



## HOLIDAY GIFTS – FILLMORE COUNTY

MiEnergy employees donated money to the annual Christmas in Fillmore County program. This year, \$300 was collected and given to help local families during the holidays. The office ladies pose for a holiday photo with the Grinch. From L-R: Adrienne Lofgren, Brittany Benson, Heather Larson, June Vitse, Tammy Brown, Rhonda Bauer, Audra Skalet, Lori Clodes, Kari Steele and Brenda Tesch.

## HOLIDAY PARADE - RUSHFORD

MiEnergy employees Annie Hoiland and Kari Steele, along with their families and friends, participated in the Rushford Parade of Lights this holiday season.



## STUDENT TOUR – CRESCO

Students from NICC's environmental science course through Crestwood High School visited the Cresco office. Dave Wilkes, staking/technology superintendent, and Kent Whitcomb, vice president of member services, presented information to the class and gave a tour of the facility.



## ROTARY LIGHTS – LA CROSSE

Jenny Scharmer, MiEnergy's board representative at Dairyland Power Cooperative in La Crosse, Wis. recently volunteered at the Rotary Lights event in La Crosse. She is pictured with Dairyland President/CEO Brent Ridge. This annual tradition is a cooperative favorite as many spectators in local communities come to enjoy over three million lights at the holiday display.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## OFFICE INFORMATION

Open Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Friday by appointment.  
IOWA 24049 Highway 9, PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136  
MINNESOTA 31110 Cooperative Way, PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971  
\*\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.\*\*

## PHONE NUMBERS

LOCAL 563-547-3801 (Cresco); 507-864-7783 (Rushford)  
TOLL-FREE & 24/7 OUTAGE REPORTING 800-432-2285  
PAYMENT LINE 24/7 877-853-6517  
UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING 811

## ONLINE

WEBSITE [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop)  
SOCIAL MEDIA Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1 Dennis Ptacek, secretary and Jeff Redalen  
DISTRICT 2 Dean Nierling, chair and Ron Stevens, vice chair  
DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer, Skip Wieser and Dennis Young  
DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks  
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer

## MANAGEMENT STAFF

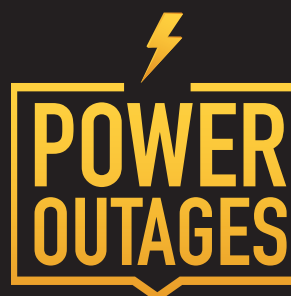
BRIAN KRAMBEEER president/chief executive officer  
SHELLY HOVE chief financial officer  
STEVE OIAN vice president of operations - Minnesota  
VASSIL VUTOV vice president of information technology  
MIKE WALTON vice president of operations - Iowa  
KENT WHITCOMB vice president of member services

## MINEWS STAFF

MEAGAN MOELLERS communications specialist, editor  
ANNIE HOILAND communications specialist  
BRENDA TESCH marketing and communications manager

## 2023 OFFICES CLOSED

MAR 23 Employee Development Day  
APR 7 Good Friday  
MAY 29 Memorial Day  
JUN 8 Employee Development Day  
JUL 4 Independence Day  
SEP 4 Labor Day  
SEP 20 Employee Development Day  
NOV 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday  
DEC 6 Employee Development Day  
DEC 22, 25 Christmas Holiday  
DEC 29 Close at 11:30 a.m. (New Year's Eve Observance)



# TEXT NOTIFICATIONS

MiEnergy offers power outage text notifications. Sign up online at [www.MiEnergy.coop/outages](http://www.MiEnergy.coop/outages). Select Power Outage Notification Sign Up and be prepared to have your electric account number handy. The site will walk you through the set-up to have a text message sent to you when your power is out and another when power has been restored.

prepared to have your electric account number handy. The site will walk you through the set-up to have a text message sent to you when your power is out and another when power has been restored.

Wed, Dec 14, 8:57 PM

MiEnergy: Your service location is currently involved in a power outage. Service Address: 12345 POWER LINE RD

MiEnergy: This number is opted in to receive power outage notifications from MiEnergy Cooperative. Reply STOP to cancel.

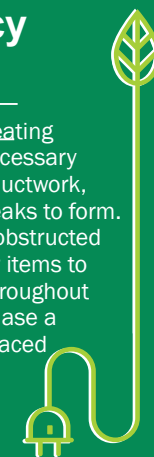
Wed, Dec 14, 10:06 PM

MiEnergy: Our system shows your power has been restored. If not, please call 1-800-432-2285: Service address: 12345 POWER LINE RD

# Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





## Application deadline Feb. 15

Twice a year  
the Operation  
Round Up  
(ORU) Trust  
Board meets to

review applications and grant funds for local, worthy causes. A list of program guidelines and an application is available online at [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop).

ORU is a community support program that helps local organizations and worthy causes via spare change. All members of MiEnergy have the opportunity to join the program. Visit [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop) to sign up.



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# MiEnergy helps Sunflower access \$1.86 million for childcare and discovery center in Decorah

MiEnergy Cooperative was one of three cooperatives announcing support for childcare during a check presentation event on Tuesday, December 13 at the Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce.

MiEnergy Cooperative helped Sunflower Child Development Center, of Decorah, secure a \$1.86 million loan and grant through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program. Others announcing awards were Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative which helped the center secure another \$1.5 million through USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan Financing, and Dairyland Power Cooperative which contributed \$2,500 that was matched by CoBank, a national bank cooperative, through CoBank's Sharing Success Program.

“Communities looking for job growth opportunities need to consider childcare. The center is projected to help families meet childcare needs across seven counties surrounding Decorah,” stated Brian Krambeer, MiEnergy's president/CEO. “It is a great business model to combine childcare with a discovery center. We are happy to play a role in partnering



Pictured above from L-R: MiEnergy representatives Dennis Ptacek, board director; Kent Whitcomb, vice president of member services; Brian Krambeer, president/CEO, Dean Nierling, board chair; Stephanie Fromm, executive director for Winneshiek County Development & Tourism and vice president of Sunflower Development Center; and Sunflower board directors Merlene Brown and John Schroeder.

with others to support the building of this center for use by many in the local area for years to come.”

Sunflower is constructing a new, approximately 27,000 square foot, Northeast Iowa Child Development and Discovery Center. The new facility at 902 Commerce Street will replace the current aging center and support capacity of 214 children with room to grow. It will include 19 classrooms with direct access to age-appropriate outdoor playgrounds.

Classrooms will be separated from

the discovery center's STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) learning areas, indoor play areas and other common-use areas so that children throughout the region can benefit. In the evenings and weekends, the discovery center will be open to the public to provide additional revenue for supporting Sunflower operations.

Site preparations began in October with the building scheduled for completion in July 2024.