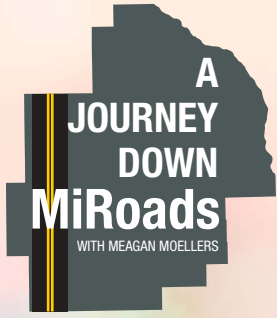


MiN News

July 2025 Vol. 9 Issue 7
A monthly publication for members of
MiEnergy Cooperative.



Farm to freezer

Summertime and ice cream

How to keep the
charm & add the
efficiency when
it comes to home
improvements

*Don't make
mistakes with
your generator*





Operational challenges

Construction season at MiEnergy Cooperative is underway, and to date, we've already installed 84 new services and retired 37 services for members. Our construction crews are busy with multiple projects including line rebuilds, pole replacements and service upgrades.

Unfortunately, some of our system improvement projects, which we track for system reliability, are currently unable to be completed. We've been delayed for nearly two years on two specific projects. The delay is not due to material, equipment, labor or easements; it's due to the permitting and the environmental review process.

Electric cooperatives are often subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental permitting processes that require federal permits or projects that receive federal loans or grants. This can have an impact on building and modernizing electric and broadband infrastructure, particularly as electric cooperatives expand their broadband infrastructure or upgrade their electric distribution systems.

MiEnergy utilizes the Rural Utility Service (RUS) loan program under the USDA for financing our work plan projects, including new distribution line construction, new services, pole replacements, underground distribution lines and substations. Underground projects require an environmental review from RUS before construction can begin. This process involves review and approval by the Tribunal, the Department of Natural Resources and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which is not quick.

MiEnergy and our nation's electric cooperatives support the appropriate consideration of the potential environmental impact of projects; however, NEPA and the environmental process have become unworkable and outdated. Congress passed important NEPA reforms in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 to improve agency coordination and timelines, but more improvements are needed. The current NEPA process, which allows for virtually unconstrained reviews, undermines the ability of electric cooperatives to provide affordable, reliable and safe electricity.

We're fortunate to have incredible USDA/RUS staff who do excellent work for MiEnergy, but they have a tremendous amount of work to complete before they can officially release projects for completion. The challenge is the process and requirements.

For example, a group of MiEnergy members in the Brownsville area is experiencing numerous electrical outages due to large dead trees falling off the side of the bluffs. While storms create most of the issues, the emerald ash borer has killed thousands of trees across our service territory. Our vegetation management team has done excellent work clearing our power line rights-of-way. Unfortunately, large trees, far up the bluffs and well outside our rights-of-way, fall and damage our overhead distribution line. We can rebuild the overhead line with a new overhead line, but the hillside trees will continue to take down the line causing power outages. The best solution is to put the line underground. Yet, despite having the underground cable, cabinets and equipment, we cannot bury the line until a RUS environmental review is completed.

We have similar cases in Fountain, Winona and throughout the entire MiEnergy service territory, and it's not just impacting our electric distribution system improvements. It's also having an impact on our fiber broadband buildout. Our 2024 ReConnect 4 federal broadband award for Fillmore County has not been able to begin due to the Minnesota SHPO not approving our permitting, despite having completed the initial environmental study.

In Houston County, we were working to develop a 5-megawatt solar project at our Caledonia Substation as part of our efforts to add renewable energy and meet the 100% clean energy requirements by 2040. We must reach 60% by 2030. We've done similar projects in Winona County and Fillmore County. Due to a six-month moratorium on utility-scale solar being expanded to another six months in Houston County recently, our project will likely need to be relocated to another county to meet the project deadline. We appreciated the opportunity to provide input and direction to the commissioners and staff of Houston County. We will continue to support their efforts to develop a favorable plan for utility-scale solar, despite having to relocate our project.

This spring, MiEnergy participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's legislative conference in Washington, D.C. Permitting reform was one of our top issues. It was also a conversation that we had in Des Moines and St. Paul with our state legislators. While there is a lot of talk about reform at all levels of government, reform is necessary. MiEnergy will do everything possible to help guide and provide input on these important decisions. MiEnergy greatly appreciates being at the table with local and state government officials in drafting new or reform language for the betterment of our membership.

As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.

Board room highlights | June 30, 2025

- Director of Finance Johanna Stayskal presented the financial report which is tracking to budget
- Management provided updates on operations, legislative updates, economic development projects, large load initiatives and broadband projects
- Discussed the updated Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program and took action to reapply for resources in Minnesota.
- MiEnergy's Iowa Youth Tour representative Emma Godman provided a report to the board.
- CEO Krambeer provided an update on cooperative subsidiaries.

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

The local



Several stops along MiRoads have delicious possibilities for cooling down with your favorite sweet treat!

Summers in the Midwest are known for being hot and humid, and we all know what helps beat the heat: a tasty serving of ice cream! Every year, the third Sunday in July marks National Ice Cream Day, and we're here to celebrate. Honestly, it doesn't have to be hot outside to enjoy ice cream; it hits the spot even during the winter months when you cozy up with some hot fudge sauce. Lucky for us, there are many great local places to visit throughout our service territory to enjoy a sundae, malt, shake or cone, complete with your favorite syrup and toppings. It's time to make some "cone'ctions" on MiRoads as we all excitedly 'scream for more ice cream' according to the childhood saying.

The seasonal shift from spring is in full swing, and by now, you've had opportunities to partake in county fairs and small-town celebrations where people can embrace the local moo mobiles, also known as mobile ice cream wagons. Those machines on wheels, courtesy of county dairy promoter associations, have made thousands of ice cream fans pleasantly happy over the years. Or maybe you've found a nostalgic ice cream truck passing through the streets while you're vacationing or visiting somewhere, its speakers playing those old, familiar tunes. Iowa even holds naming rights to the 'ice cream capital of the world' in Le Mars. Add that to your travel bucket list and experience the history of the Blue Bunny namesake. Midwest Dairy® recently announced in May their annual "Flavor of the Fair" for the Minnesota State Fair in 2025 is Cookie Butter Cheesecake – so if you find yourself at the state fairgrounds this year, be sure to make your way to the Dairy Goodness Bar to try it!

Before indulging in America's favorite dessert, we must first thank our local dairy farmers (officially recognized in June during National Dairy Month) for their hard

DAIRY FUN FACTS:

Minnesota Dairy Farms:

- Number of Cows 445,000 (2020).
- Rank in the top 10 in number of dairy cows and milk production in the nation.
- Produces 9.5 billion pounds of milk annually.

Iowa Dairy Farms:

- Howard 3,100 + Winneshiek 16,100 + Chickasaw 2,200 (2020).
- Number of Cows 215,000 (2020).
- Pounds of milk production 5.27 billion annually (2020).

DID YOU KNOW?
It takes 3 gallons of milk to make 1 gallon of ice cream

work and commitment to harvesting a value-added ag product that eventually turns into delicious ice cream to satisfy our sweet tooth. Both Minnesota and Iowa ag producers have impressive statistics in the dairy world, and many of those farms historically have their roots planted right here in the MiEnergy driftless region. We thank you and appreciate your dedication!

MIFAVORITES:

It's time to reveal some fun facts we learned about our MiEnergy friends on social media as they voted for their favorite ice cream flavors, toppings and local shops that they visit regularly. Results show they love a large variety of ice cream flavors, but chocolate, hot fudge and caramel toppings ranked at the top. Your summer could be really busy if you were to journey down MiRoads and hit every ice cream place that members mentioned adoring. Happy ice cream hunting and splurging throughout northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota! Thank you to everyone who participated, and congratulations to the lucky winner, who was randomly selected from the comments of cooperative members. We hope all of our members enjoy the dog days of summer by adding their mark to the 1.3 billion gallons of ice cream consumed annually across the nation, which is roughly 4 gallons for the average person. That's an incredible amount of ice cream feasting! And thanks again to the local farmers who make it all possible.



Submitted photos at left from Michelle Woodard and above from Barb Krause Larson.





EFFICIENCY AND CHARM CAN GO HAND IN HAND

The features of older homes can make them less efficient than modern construction, but it doesn't have to be that way. You can keep the charm and make your home more efficient.

Start by prioritizing the invisible upgrades that make your home more comfortable and efficient. Insulation is not as exciting as new countertops or a remodeled bathroom, but air sealing and insulation can save you money every month. Then you can apply the savings to aesthetic improvements.

Many older homes are not properly insulated. Insulation has benefits beyond keeping outdoor air from seeping in. It reduces outdoor noise, making your home quieter.

Always properly air seal before you insulate. Older homes with pocket doors, coved ceilings, dumbwaiters, doors to attic spaces and laundry chutes allow indoor air to escape through the cavities, gaps and cracks around these classic features. Sealing off open cavities around those features often requires plywood, rigid foam or drywall fastened into place and then caulked around the edges.

Keep an eye out for framing features that cause drafts. Balloon framing is a type of construction where wall studs run all the way from the foundation to the roof, allowing air to flow freely through those spaces. Second floors with knee wall attics on both sides are notorious for air leakage. Open cavities allow air to flow horizontally between the attic spaces, making the home uncomfortable and inefficient. Seal off the open cavities in the floor framing and insulate attic spaces.

Dense-packed cellulose or closed cell foam insulation can be sprayed into exterior walls. Skilled contractors can remove pieces of siding and drill holes to fill the wall cavities from the outside of the home. For brick or stone homes, holes can be drilled from the inside and then patched and painted. Insulating walls from the inside of the home requires more time and effort in preparation and cleanup, but having well-insulated walls is worth it.

People often think new windows are the best way to improve a home's efficiency. Considering the cost of replacing windows, it is recommended to invest in air sealing and insulation first. Then consider storm windows to keep the charm of the original windows, such as leaded glass and stained-glass windows in good condition. Choose from interior or exterior options that are operable and inoperable.

Once you've addressed the envelope of your home, consider appliance improvements. Invest in high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment. A mini-split heat pump, also known as a ductless heat pump, is a more efficient option than electric baseboard heating and provides the benefit of air conditioning.

Older homes don't have to be inefficient. Show your home some love and invest in energy efficient upgrades.

Miranda Boutelle has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Don't generate problems

The wind howls outside your windows as a major storm system blows through the area in the late evening. Your lights flicker for a moment or two before you're plunged into darkness. The social media feed on your phone is packed with reports of damage and power outages, and the storm shows no sign of letting up for hours.

Fortunately, you had the foresight to buy a backup generator big enough to handle your refrigerator, freezer and other key needs. Flashlight in hand, you attach extension cords. Within minutes, you hear the quiet humming that tells you they're working again.

MiEnergy knows power outages are a major inconvenience, and we do our best to prevent them. But when severe weather rolls through, outages can sometimes stretch into several hours or even days after a major storm. Co-op members may consider buying backup generators to provide for their family's needs while waiting for service to resume.

Backup generators fall into one of two categories. Standby generators are permanently wired into the home's electrical system by a qualified

electrician. They come in a variety of sizes, so homeowners can match the generator to their home's power needs. Portable generators, as the name implies, can be moved to wherever they are needed. Because they're small enough to move, they generally provide less power than standby models. Most use gasoline or diesel fuel, and when they're operated correctly, both types provide a safe source of backup power.

Some homeowners make the mistake of plugging their backup generators directly into a wall outlet or connect them to their home's electrical panel. Beyond the significant risk of electrocution and fire that can create, plugging generators directly into your outlets can send the voltage your generator creates into the power lines connecting your home to the electric grid. That creates a dangerous condition called "backfeed," which can seriously injure the lineworkers who are working so hard to restore your electricity, as well as anyone who accidentally comes in contact with power lines. Backfeed can also damage the generator.

That's why permanently installed backup generators are required to have



what's known as a transfer switch, which should be installed by a qualified electrician. The transfer switch creates a barrier between your home's electrical system and the outside wires, so backfeed cannot occur. When the transfer switch senses that power has been restored, it switches the power from the generator back to the outside lines.

The biggest danger associated with backup generators is carbon monoxide. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, one portable generator can produce as much CO as hundreds of cars and nearly 100 Americans lose their lives each year because of CO poisoning from generators. It's why generators should only be used in dry, well-ventilated areas away from your home and garage.

The National Institutes of Health warns that CO has the potential to kill in as little as five minutes. People exposed to CO typically become dizzy, feel nauseated and experience headaches. Often, they lose consciousness before noticing any symptoms. Anyone exposed to CO should be moved to fresh air immediately.

When starting a portable generator, make sure nothing is plugged into it. You can reduce the potential for damage to your appliances and lighting by turning them off or unplugging them from the wall. After the generator starts, plug them in and turn them on one at a time to make sure you aren't overloading your generator's capacity. Unplug them from the generator before turning it off. Unless the manufacturer recommends otherwise, always turn the generator off and allow it to cool before adding fuel.

If you need help in sizing a generator for your needs, contact MiEnergy.

Scott Flood writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS NOW FOR COOLING SYSTEMS

Ask your local contractor about air-source heat pumps!

- A heat pump provides whole-house heating and cooling and is a super efficient way to save hundreds of dollars a year on energy bills.
- Mini split systems work great in homes with no central venting systems, such as older homes or new additions.
- In 2022, sales of heat pumps exceeded that of gas furnaces for the first time in the U.S.*

Visit www.EnergyStar.gov for more information on approved units and find MiEnergy's \$200/ton rebate and more at www.MiEnergy.coop/rebates

*International Energy Agency.

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MiRecipes

Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the September 2025 newsletter. Deadline is August 15. 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 CAKE DENNIS & MARCIA REPS, UTICA

1 c. flour
¾ c. sugar
½ t. salt
1 t. soda
1 egg
1 t. vanilla
2 T. oil
1 small can mandarin oranges (drained)

Sift flour, sugar, salt and soda. Put in mixing bowl. Make a well in middle and add egg, oranges and oil. Mix about 3 minutes. Pour into greased 8" x 8" pan. Bake at 350° for about 30 minutes.

CHEESY BREAD DON KRIVACHEK, FORT ATKINSON

1 c. mozzarella cheese
1 c. parmesan
1 egg

Beat well together and sprinkle with garlic powder and Italian seasoning. Put on parchment paper on a cookie sheet that is sprayed. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES DIANA NESS, WAUKON

1 stick butter (soft, not melted)
¾ c. brown sugar
¼ c. white sugar
1 egg
1 t. vanilla
2 c. flour (can also use gluten free flour)
½ t. salt
1 t. baking soda
1 c. chocolate chips

Mix the first 5 ingredients with mixer. Add flour, baking soda, and salt. Mix again. Stir in chocolate chips. Using cookie scoop, place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 6-7 minutes in a preheated 350° oven and let sit for 5 minutes to cool before taking off cookie sheet.

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Powerful youth event in D.C.

Government-in-action annual tour with students from across America

Emma Godman of Cresco and Quinn Potter of Winona recently participated in the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., sponsored by MiEnergy.

Each year in June, this weeklong leadership development program provides high school students opportunities to learn about government, the electric cooperative business model and today's pressing issues in the energy industry.

Students met their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate, toured historic sites and ran their very own Snack Cooperative.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local owned electric cooperatives, such as MiEnergy, their statewide trade associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) for 67 years.

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for the Rural Electric Youth Day, sponsored by NRECA, to learn

from public figures and other inspirational speakers.

For more information on how you can participate in MiEnergy's 2026 Youth Tour program, visit MiEnergy.coop/youthtour.



MiEnergy Iowa Youth Tour Representative
Emma Godman



MiEnergy Minnesota Youth Tour
Representative Quinn Potter

out & about in your COMMUNITY

SAFETY PRESENTATIONS – ST. CHARLES

MiEnergy lineworkers Lucas Gravos and Justin Svoboda shared their knowledge of power lines with approximately 30 youth at the Winona County Fairgrounds on June 10. Farm Safety Camp was coordinated by the Winona County 4-H, University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Dairy Initiative.



FOUNDER'S DAY PARADE – CALEDONIA

Employees participated in Caledonia's Founder's Day Parade on June 14. Thanks to Kari Steele, Randall Ashbacher, Chris Horn, Kent Whitcomb and their families for representing MiEnergy.

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING – LA CROSSE

Jenny Scharmer, chair of Dairyland Power Cooperative Board of Directors and director of MiEnergy Cooperative, presided over Dairyland's annual meeting at the La Crosse Center on June 4.



LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE — WASHINGTON, D.C.

Jenny Scharmer, Justin Svoboda and Brian Krambeer attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference in April. The trio met with elected officials from Iowa and Minnesota. Topics of importance to electric cooperatives included the need to meet growing energy needs, permitting reform, advancing smart energy policy and support for programs for electric cooperatives and rural America.

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OFFICE INFORMATION

Open Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Friday by appointment.

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2025 OFFICES CLOSED

SEPT 1 Labor Day

SEPT 9 Employee Development Day

NOV 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday

DEC 16 Employee Development Day

DEC 24-25 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

DEC 31 New Year's Eve, close at 11 a.m.

JAN 1 New Year's Day

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat such as clothes dryers and dishwashers during the evening when the outdoor temperature is lower. Running heat-emitting appliances in the evening will reduce indoor heat gain during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest and ultimately keep your air conditioner from working harder than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

View power outages 24/7

Real-time outage map available for mobile devices and online

Members can view a map of our service territory in Minnesota and Iowa in real-time on your computer, smart phone or tablet. The map is for visual reference only. Please call 800-432-2285 to report an outage or with questions concerning outages. Members can click on their township to get an estimate of the number of members experiencing an outage in that area. Visit www.MiEnergy.coop to view the outage map.



MiEnergy also offers power outage text notifications. Sign up online at www.MiEnergy.coop/outages. Select Power Outage Notification Sign Up and be prepared with your electric account number. 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.

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KEEP RATES STABLE BY DOING THE SUMMER SHIFT

Reduce electric use between 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.

This is the 14th summer that your electric cooperative has promoted a campaign that asks members to reduce energy use during the summer on weekdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

You may be wondering why a company would want people to use less of their product? The simple answer is because we are a cooperative. We are here to serve you with reliable, affordable power. We are not here to make a profit. We promote programs and services that help save you money.

Turning items off or shifting the time of use helps the cooperative manage costs today and into the future. Demand for electricity is highest during the months of June, July and August between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays. When members reduce their energy use during that timeframe it saves the cooperative money on wholesale power costs, leading to less frequent and smaller rate increases for all members.

When we ask you to Do the Summer Shift, there are two approaches: You can conserve by turning things off. For example, dry your clothes outside on laundry lines rather than the electric dryer. Or, you can choose to shift the time you use energy. For example, run the dishwasher cycle before 11 a.m. or after 7 p.m.

The campaign does not include weekends, holidays or overnight use, as the cost of electricity is not at a premium during those times.

Thanks for your participation. It truly helps make a difference.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

1. Delay the start of the dishwasher.
2. Turn up the thermostat a few degrees.
3. Shift the start of laundry.

Application deadline August 15

Twice a year the Operation Round Up (ORU) Trust Board meets to review applications and grant funds for local, worthy causes. The next application deadline is August 15. A list of program guidelines and an application are available online at 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 to sign up.

