High school seniors: Apply now for a $500 co-op scholarship

Youth Tour contest open to sophomores and juniors
Win a trip to Washington, D.C!

Do we owe you or someone you know?

See what’s new for energy rebates in 2020
Year-end legislation success

Every year our cooperative joins thousands of other electric cooperative employees and directors across the United States to visit our congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss important legislation impacting our nation’s rural electric cooperatives. We maintain regular communication with our elected officials, including staff at their local state offices. This year we have had several issues that appeared to get the attention needed for approval of the House or the Senate. Yet, our continued communications and correspondence paid off with passage of the final budget agreement that was negotiated in early December with all of our key issues included in the final legislation.

The RURAL Act will fix the unintended consequences stemming from changes made in the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act that jeopardized the tax-exempt status of those co-ops that accepted Federal and State grants for things like disaster recovery, broadband and economic development support. For example, without legislative action, co-ops that would accept FEMA assistance during a disaster to get the lights back on or that would receive a broadband grant to support economic development after a disaster would be subject to the four percent tax. Unfortunately, the tax extensions for solar facilities, offshore wind facilities or standalone batteries and storage did not make the final legislation, but our advocacy on those issues will continue. We look forward to sharing our success upon completion of our recovery efforts.

The legislation also included a three-year extension for production tax credits for wind generation facilities if construction begins in the year 2020 and production tax credits of the biodiesel and alternative fuel tax credits. Unfortunately, the tax extensions for solar facilities, offshore wind facilities or standalone batteries and storage did not make the final legislation, but our advocacy on those issues will continue. We look forward to sharing our success upon completion of our recovery efforts.

The final priority to be included in the legislation was the SECURE Act that will lower the amount of premiums paid by our co-ops across the United States for cooperative benefit plans. As our aging workforce retires, we need to continue the next generation of employees to support our electric cooperative’s continued success and this provision will keep more of our employees’ retirement benefits where they belong: in their retirement accounts! As we begin to close the books for our 2019 year, I’m pleased to report the continued financial success of our electric cooperative. It was a great year for MiEnergy, and I look forward to sharing our success upon completion of our annual independent audit and at our electric cooperative’s annual meeting in April.

Happy New Year to each of you and thank you for your continued cooperative support. As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.

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 >News & Education >MiNews to sign up.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

Win a trip to Washington, D.C.

Co-op offers free student trips in June

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 our 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 a member 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 for this honor, you must complete the online exam by March 1, 2020. The answers can be found on MiEnergy’s website www.MiEnergy.coop and the National Youth Tour website at www.youthtour.coop.

IOWA MEMBERS:

Students with the top five scores will be interviewed by a panel of judges on March 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rushford office. It is mandatory that the student attend this event and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend as well.

MINNESOTA MEMBERS:

Students with the top five scores will be interviewed by a panel of judges on March 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rushford office. It is mandatory that the student attend this event and parents/guardians are encouraged to attend as well.

MiEnergy is pleased to offer community service scholarships to the sons and daughters of co-op members as delegates on the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour. The scholarship awards $30,000 in total to MiEnergy members.

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SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

1. The student must be a high school senior, graduating in 2020.
2. The student must continue their education after high school at an accredited technical school, college or university.
3. The student must be the son, daughter or legal dependent of an active MiEnergy member with an active electric account. (Children of MiEnergy Cooperative employees and directors are not eligible).
4. The student must demonstrate community service, according to scholarship instructions.
5. The student must have at least a “B” grade point average.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding the scholarship program please contact Annie Hoiland, ahoiland@MiEnergy.coop or call (800) 432-2285.

MiEnergy is funded with unclaimed capital credit funds that would otherwise be forfeited to the State. Unclaimed capital credits are paid as dividends to eligible MiEnergy members while purchasing electricity from the cooperative. Unclaimed funds are from past members who the cooperative cannot locate. MiEnergy will utilize our Member Advisory Committee in the selection process of the scholarship awards.

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TRIM DRYER VENT
• Level of difficulty: easy
• Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, weather stripping, tape and masking tape.
• Estimated Cost: $25 to $50 depending on the model and the length you purchase.

SEAL AIR LEAKS
• Level of difficulty: moderate
• Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, strips, putty knife, paper towels.
• Estimated Cost: $25 to $50 depending on the number of leaks you have.

Credit notice
In October 2019, MiEnergy distributed $2,175,258 in patronage capital credits to more than 40,000 members of the cooperative. Current members received credits and former members received their refunds as a check. The MiEnergy Cooperative office located at 24049 Highway 9, Cresco, IA 52136 is holding unclaimed patronage dividend checks for the persons listed as follow. The owner may claim this property by contacting us at the address listed below: 1-800-322-2825 or email Kim Larson at klarsong@MiEnergy.coop. Below is the second half of the list first printed in the December issue. For a complete list can be found at www.MiEnergy.coop.

DIY efficiency projects to tackle in 2020
A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy—and money. You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that’s not always the case. If you’re interested in making your home more efficient but don’t want to break the bank, there are several DIY projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let’s take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

TRIM DRYER VENT

INSULATE ATTIC STAIRS OPENING
A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don’t consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there’s an easy fix.

An insulated box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated box cover or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store for about $60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective. Saving energy has nothing to do with a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900,000 cooperative subscribers to rural electric cooperatives. Electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 55 percent of the nation’s landscape.
Keeping your new pet safe around electricity

A new holiday puppy or kitten can put smiles on faces and provide years of fun and companionship if all involved are prepared and the pet has been planned for and well thought out. There are a variety of considerations to keep in mind—like supplies, veterinary appointments, and schedules. Safe Electricity advises those thinking of adding a pet to their family to take the time to learn how to keep them safe from electricity in the home as well.

One important aspect of pet-proofing is making sure your curious new puppy or kitten does not think that electricity in the home is a chew toy. PetMD, offers these instructions:

• Keep electrical cords tucked away and out of sight of puppies and kittens. If you have difficulty getting your pet to stop chewing on the cord, you can paint it with a bitter tasting deterrent or enclose the cord in a PVC tube or thick plastic sleeve.
• Make sure nightlights and appliances are completely unplugged into wall outlets. There are a variety of considerations to keep in mind—
• Turn the power off if possible. If you cannot turn off the power behind warm computer equipment. Pets need to be kept
• Check your cords for fraying and plugs for cracking, and
• Make sure nightlights and appliances are completely unplugged behind warm computer equipment. Pets need to be kept
• Discharge cats and dogs from curling up for a nap behind warm computer equipment. Pets need to be kept away from all electrical connections.
• If you believe your pet has come into contact with electricity, PetMD, offers these instructions:
  • Do not touch your pet if he/she is rigid, as you may also be shocked.
  • Turn the power off if possible. If you cannot turn off the current, use a wooden broom handle (or other long, non-conductive object) to move the animal a good distance from the source of electricity and any pools of liquid.
  • Check the pet’s pulse and breathing, and give CPR and artificial respiration as needed.
  • If the mouth has been burned, use cold compresses to limit the damage.
  • Take your pet to the vet immediately.

Taking the time to make sure your home is safe for your new puppy or kitten will help ensure your new friend will be around to bring joy into your life for years to come. For more safety information go to SafeElectricity.org.

5 WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

1. IN-PERSON
Come by our Cresco, Houston, or Rushford offices.

2. PHONE
Call us at 1-877-845-6517

3. MAIL
Send via the U.S. Postal Service.

4. ONLINE
Login and/or download the SmartHub app at www.MiEnergy.coop

5. AUTOMATIC
Deduct—have bank account or charge to credit card each month. Visit www.MiEnergy.coop or by calling 1-877-845-6517

Have questions about our payment options? Call 800-432-2285 today!

Winter Peak Alerts

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

SAMPLE PEAK ALERT MESSAGE:

A Peak Alert has been issued due to high demand for electricity on the regional grid. MiEnergy Cooperative is calling for electricity conservation from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. today. Elevated peak demand leads to higher power costs. Help keep your electricity rates stable and affordable by shifting electricity use to 8 p.m. or later.
## 2020 Residential Rebates Summary

### Energy Star Appliances
- Clothes Dryer (Electric) $25
- Clothes Dryer (Heat Pump) $50
- Clothes Washer $25
- Dehumidifier $25
- Dishwasher $25
- Freezer $25
- Induction Range $25
- Refrigerator $25

### Recycling
- Freezer $25
- Refrigerator $25
- Room Air Conditioner $25

### Conservation
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station $200
- Faucet Flow Restrictor $1
- Shower Flow Restrictor $5
- Smart Power Strip/Bar $5

### Lighting
- LED Lamp/Bulb 50¢
- LED Exit Sign $5
- Occupancy Sensor $5

### HVAC
- Air Source Heat Pump & Mini-Split SEER 14, HSPF 8.2 or EER 11... $250/TON
- Geothermal Heat Pump.... $500/TON
- New Furnace with ECM Motor $35

### Water Heaters
- Electric Water Heaters Available for Purchase at Reduced Rates Contact Co-op $300
- Solar Storage Water Heaters W/Electric Auxiliary Tank 75-99 Gallons $125
- 100+ Gallons $300

### Audits/Assessments
- Audit Recommended Improvements See Rebate Form for Details

### Touchstone Energy Home Program
- New Home Must Meet Specific Program/Code Requirements... $500

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- See rebate form for details.

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