



Co-op Advantage



Bring your “full self” to work

Over the years, many candidates have applied, tested, and interviewed to work at their local electric cooperative. Though the candidate pool in east-central Minnesota and northern Wisconsin is only so diverse, ECE values the diversity that we do have. This includes educational backgrounds, skills, and abilities, as well as religious and cultural differences.

“Currently, ECE is most diverse in terms of generations,” explains Employee Development Coordinator Keri Erickson (pictured right). “With over 160 employees, we’ve been focused on education about navigating generational differences. We’ve discussed everything from the use of exclamation points in a text message to opinions about working from home.”

Since the pandemic, ECE has seen a changing culture of diversity when it comes to life experiences. Keri says, “Our biggest goal is to make sure employees feel comfortable bringing their full self

to work. Show your personality while utilizing your skills in a job you’re passionate about. Being professional doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy coming to work.”



“If we all had the same background, the co-op wouldn’t be nearly as successful. We need different perspectives and attitudes to increase innovation and creative problem-solving.”

Employment at the cooperative is considered regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, status regarding public assistance, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, disability, or protected Veteran status, age, or other legally protected characteristic.

Pollinator Week

June 20–26, 2022

How you can help:

- Plant native plants in your backyard
- Buy from local beekeepers and farms
- Host a pollinator planting day
- Place native bee houses in your yard
- Become a citizen scientist

With over 8,000 miles of vegetation to manage, ECE is helping to preserve and promote pollinator habitat in our rights-of-way. Learn more at eastcentralenergy.com > Newsroom > Pollinator Blog.



Thank you Wes!

After six years, District 6 Director Wes Siemers has decided to resign from ECE’s Board of Directors to spend more time with family. We wish Wes well and thank him for his service to ECE!

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS



With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.

RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

**RARELY
LOSE
POWER**

Recreational Inverter: Up to 2,000 watts

- Lightweight (60 pounds); quiet; easy to store
- Powers fridge, lamp, phone charger, home security system

Mid-sized Inverter: Up to 3,500 watts

- About 150 pounds
- Powers the above + 10K BTU air conditioner

**OCCASIONALLY
LOSE POWER**

(Transfer switch required)

Portable Generators and Large Inverters: Up to 7,500 watts

- About 300 pounds; can connect to home's breaker panel
- Powers the above + dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, and more

**FREQUENTLY
LOSE POWER**

(Transfer switch required)

Home Standby: Up to 20,000 watts

- Permanent install; auto start during outage; can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane
- Powers nearly all home appliances and electronics simultaneously

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create backfeed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community. **Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.**
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Please note: safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports

Heating and cooling from one unit *Air source heat pumps*



Air source heat pumps provide home cooling and supplemental heating with less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces. You can switch between cooling and heating directly from the thermostat, putting you in complete control. These whisper-quiet pumps work their dual magic without an open flame, and they don't create any carbon monoxide.

HEATING: Compared to conventional furnaces, the warmth is distributed more evenly and holds its moisture better, resulting in a more natural, comfortable warmth. The pumps work in tandem with conventional furnaces and automatically select the most ideal balance between the two heating sources, based on your desired indoor temperature. By extracting the existing warmth from the outdoor air and pumping it into your home, you'll be able to run your furnace less. In fact, during the spring and fall, you may not need to run your furnace at all.

COOLING: Air source heat pumps outperform standard central air conditioners by extracting the existing heat from inside your home and pumping it outside. The key to such dramatic efficiency is the ability to transfer more energy. This is accomplished by using advanced technology to extract and relocate ambient heat from the air.

Be sure to check out our website, where you can learn about our current \$1,250 rebates for qualifying air source heat pumps. Visit eastcentralenergy.com > Programs & Rebates > Air Source Heat Pump.

Check out our ESG report!

Part of being a member-owned cooperative is being held accountable. We hold ourselves to a high standard and you should, too. To show that ECE takes our commitment seriously, we chose to create an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) report for 2021.

The environmental section describes our overall ecological initiatives, while the social portion highlights our community support. The report closes with governance, explaining how our board

of directors supports the cooperative's mission and vision. Read the two-page report at eastcentralenergy.com > Your Cooperative > ESG Report.





Just the facts: *Beneficial electrification*

Mounting research suggests that electrifying certain parts of the economy is necessary to achieve ambitious carbon emissions reduction goals. More utilities, including our power supplier Great River Energy, continue incorporating more carbon-free sources of energy into their power supply portfolios. We asked Pete Leibel, Energy Services Supervisor, to explain the concept known as “beneficial electrification.”

What is beneficial electrification?

In short, beneficial electrification focuses on using electricity for things that would otherwise be powered by fossil fuels like natural gas, diesel, propane, fuel oil, or gasoline.

What is the purpose of it?

The purpose of beneficial electrification is to save consumers money over time, benefit the environment and reduce emissions, improve product quality or consumer quality of life, and foster a more robust and resilient electric grid. At least one of those four conditions must be met, without adversely affecting the others, to be considered beneficial.

Isn't all electrification beneficial?

Different stakeholders will have different views, but yes, electrification in general provides many benefits that are well known. Access to electricity is one of the most powerful economic drivers, especially in developing

countries. Here in America, we are now focusing on achieving environmental goals while providing reliable energy.

So should we just electrify everything?

Great question! Promoting the benefits of electrification is different from suggesting that it is beneficial to “electrify everything.” In fact, some of the best opportunities involve systems that use multiple fuels. For example, an air source heat pump coupled with a gas furnace, can work together to keep your home comfortable all year long.

Questions about beneficial electrification or how you can help? Check out be-league.org or give us a call at 1-800-254-7944. Significant greenhouse gas reductions can be realized by electrifying water and space heating in addition to the electrification of the transportation sector. We are working to manage the integration of flexible end-use technologies and variable generation facilities in ways that lower costs for our members.



Looking back at the last 86 years of ECE’s history, members have been incredibly engaged with their cooperative. Bringing electricity to farms required direct involvement, and throughout the years ECE has celebrated that achievement in auditoriums filled with excited, motivated members.

As those original founding members have passed, the cooperative story has faded. Members are busy! So busy, in fact, that some may not realize they are part owner of the co-op, with voting rights and other benefits that include scholarships, youth experiences, money-saving rebates, and more.

Consider how often you think of ECE. Most likely, it’s when you get your bill or if the power goes out. We work hard to provide excellent communication for both types of interactions, but we

want to do more than respond to inquiries. How can we still be relevant in our communities and take an active role in our members’ lives?

As a not-for-profit entity, we provide a service that allows you to go about daily life—with as few interruptions as possible. Each day you can wake up with a fully charged phone battery and then sip steaming coffee fresh from the pot. After a long day, you can return home and with the flip of a switch, your dining room is lit for a warm meal and laughter. Between those “at home” hours, what do you do? What causes do you champion? Your electric cooperative wants to support you by providing “electricity plus,” meaning we offer value to your lives as more than an energy provider. As a positive force in each community we serve, we want to show up where you are and make a direct impact in your life.

So tell us: what can we help with? What do you need from us? Email info@ecemn.com and share your ideas.

At your service we remain,



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

East Central Energy
P.O. Box 39
Braham, MN 55006

Braham Service Center
Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1.800.254.7944
General business calls are answered from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Email: info@ecemn.com

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call Executive Assistant Wendy Leibel at 763-689-8046 to confirm meeting information. Monthly board meeting highlights and board operating policies can be found on SmartHub.

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, your not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: eastcentralenergy.com



SUMMER ENERGY-SAVINGS WORD SEARCH

When you save energy at home, you're helping your family save money and protecting our environment. Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

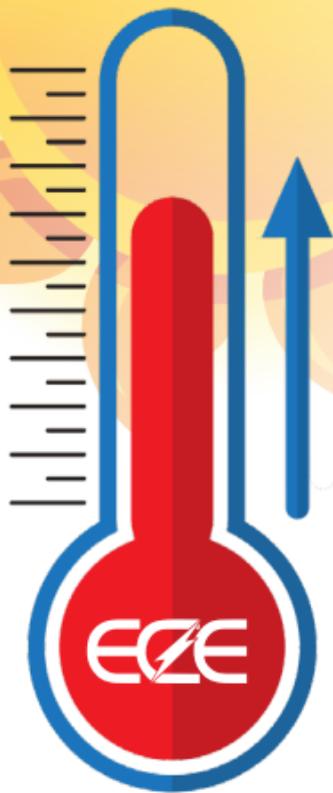
- Close blinds and **CURTAINS** on hot, sunny days to block additional heat from entering your home.
- Turn off lights and **ELECTRONICS**, like TVs and stereos, when you leave a room.
- Turn off the **WATER** while you brush your teeth.
- Only clean full loads of dishes when you run the **DISHWASHER**.
- Cooking with smaller appliances like **SLOW COOKERS** and toaster ovens uses less energy than larger appliances.
- Unplug **PHONE CHARGERS** when they're not in use – they consume energy even when they aren't charging devices.



MEMBER ALERT

When searching the web for East Central Energy, members will find multiple third-party payment websites that appear to offer bill pay services for ECE. Though our information may be listed on their sites, they are in no way affiliated with us. Please be aware that some third-party payment sites also charge a fee for their services, while ECE does not. To ensure you are paying us directly, access our online payment portal through our website. Use SmartHub to manage your account online, or choose Pay Now to make a payment without logging in.





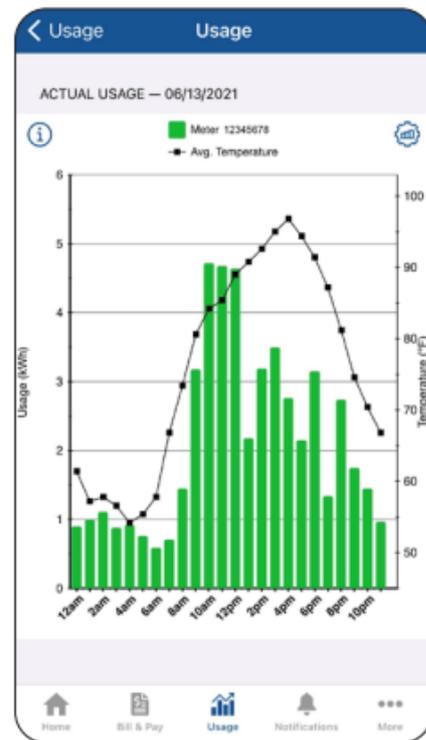
HIGH SUMMER BILLS?

Monitor your energy use with SmartHub

How does the temperature affect your electric use? Easily monitor your trends and more with the free SmartHub app.



ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



1.800.254.7944
eastcentralenergy.com