



C6-6p

## ADVANTAGE

## Touchstone Energy Community Award

### Mission 61: the transformative power of compassion

Addressing hardship in rural areas requires a multifaceted approach. Because of its dedication to providing a haven for individuals facing crises of all ages, Mission 61 was selected as ECE's 2023 winner of the Touchstone Energy® Community Award, which includes a \$1,000 prize. For the past 12 years, this remarkable organization has been a lifeline for those experiencing adversity, offering not only shelter but also a pathway to rebuilding shattered lives.

"Mission 61 has a diverse range of clients," explains Executive Director Mary Peltz. "We work with those grappling with low-income challenges, mental illness, domestic violence, addiction recovery, and more."

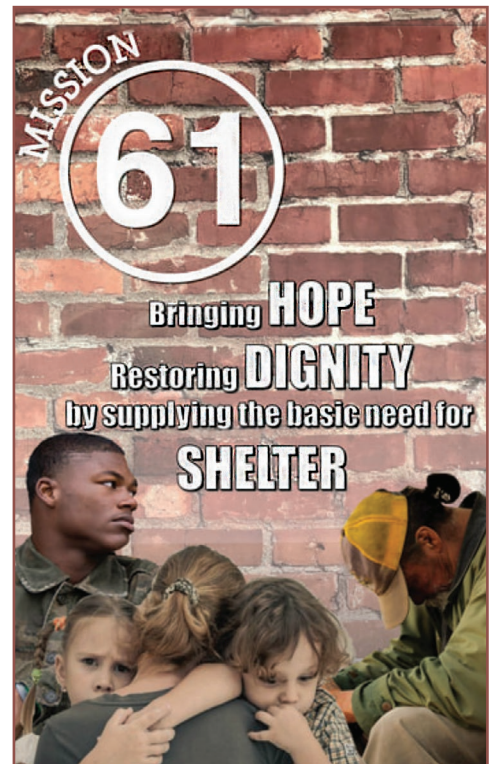
One of the organization's proudest achievements is its commitment to interim housing. Mission 61 can house 65 people at any given time and has prevented approximately 250 individuals from sleeping on the unforgiving streets. The organization operates three houses in Mora, five in Cambridge, one each in Braham and Pease, and two condos in Cambridge.

"Along with transitional housing, we help residents prepare for jobs, find medical help, and get evaluated for mental illness," shares Mary. "We take them through the steps to reacclimate to society, empowering them to rediscover their self-worth."

Collaboration lies at the heart of Mission 61's success. With the help of trusted community partners, the organization can focus on rebuilding and restoring people long devastated by hardship. From newborns to the elderly, the organization has impacted numerous individuals through housing, education, and guidance.

The organization's legacy is not just in the numbers it has served but in countless stories of resilience and transformation. Mary highlights, "Mission 61 serves as a reminder that, even in the face of life's most challenging circumstances, there is hope, healing, and a community ready to embrace those in need."


*ECE presents the Touchstone Energy Community Award annually to a local organization that is making a difference in its community. As the local winner, Mission 61 will be entered in competition for the statewide award as well.*



**Pictured left: Mary Peltz**  
**Above: Housing in Cambridge**







## Struggling to pay your bill?

We're here to help! Please reach out as soon as possible to take advantage of available resources. Call 1-800-254-7944 or visit [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) to learn more about:

- **Budget billing** to stabilize monthly bill amounts
- **SmartHub** to view and better control energy use
- **Auto Pay** to avoid postage costs and potential late fees
- **Rebates** to increase energy efficiency
- **Energy assistance** for those who qualify

# Electric love brightens our communities

This Valentine's Day, your electric cooperative extends a heartfelt expression of appreciation to our members. Like the interconnected circuits that power us all, each community within our service area thrives on the relationships that bind us together.

East Central Energy is always proud to focus on the 7th Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community. Check out some of the things we've been up to (below). We pledge to continue lighting up your lives and powering the heart of this co-op family for many years to come. Happy Valentine's Day to our wonderful members!





## Is your meter clear?

When it comes to winter chores, don't forget about your electric meter! Dripping water plus roofs full of snow can cause a safety concern. Giving your meter some breathing room will keep things running smoothly, making sure your bills are on point and your home stays cozy, plus save time and money for yourself and ECE!



### Save money with STORAGE WATER HEATING

**REBATES UP TO \$500  
and SPECIAL LOW RATES**

Call 1-800-254-7944 or visit  
[eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) for details  
and requirements.

## Notice to small power producers and cogenerators

In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production, Chapter 7835, we are required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers which satisfy the conditions of a Qualifying Facility.

We provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An application for interconnection is required for a Qualifying Facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative.

Members interested in further information should call us at 1-800-254-7944 or visit [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com).

## ECE FIBER GOES LIVE!

In December 1936, your cooperative turned the lights on for the first electric member. Nearly eighty-eight years later, our first internet member was hooked up to fiber on December 14, 2023.

This historic event took place in the Dalbo area. Throughout the day, ECE Fiber's broadband department worked closely with contractors and by that evening, speed tests were conducted, and our member was smiling ear-to-ear! After two years of research (and a lot of work behind the scenes), we are happily learning from our experiences and building momentum for the future.

We've said it before and we'll keep saying it: thank you! We're incredibly grateful to everyone that helped make ECE Fiber a reality, including the board of directors, employees across multiple departments, local townships, community organizations, our trusted contractors—and of course our members! Whether you expressed interest online, encouraged a neighbor to sign up, shared a Facebook post, or stopped by an event to ask questions, your grassroots efforts helped the co-op offer new opportunities to your community.

Let's keep moving forward as we work to fulfill our mission and ensure every ECE member has access to high-speed, reliable internet. Visit [ecefiber.com](http://ecefiber.com) to check your address, learn more about our plans and services, and find exciting project updates.



***Pictured above: ECE Broadband Technician, Mike, helps set up our first member with fiber internet.***



PRESIDENT/CEO JUSTIN JAHNZ



**THIS JUST-in**

A unique trend has caught my attention recently – people are opting for fork tattoos! It's not about desserts, though; it's a symbol of the belief that our best days are still ahead of us. You know that feeling when a server tells you to keep your fork after a meal? It's like a signal that something great is on the way!

I've noticed a phenomenon that occurs as some people age: they resign themselves to the idea that their prime has passed, making it tough to stay positive about the future. However, if we choose to embrace the belief that our best days are ahead, optimism becomes effortless.

My wife and I have four kids, and I can't help but be excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for them. Dr. Seuss once said, "Oh, the Places You'll Go! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." It's a reminder of our inherent strength to tackle challenges.

My role at East Central Energy involves working with a fantastic team to shape a promising future for all our communities. If we viewed our best days as behind us, it would be a self-fulfilling

prophecy of failure. Guided by the wisdom of the board and fueled by the strength of our history, ECE is poised to endure indefinitely. Our decisions focus on the needs of our members, both present and future. We owe it to the next generation to believe in continuous improvement.

Whether contemplating personal or organizational futures, we all face a choice of attitudes. We can either succumb to the limitations of time or embrace the spirit that made our country great. Progress is inevitable and indifferent to our biological constraints. By aligning ourselves with progress, we welcome the talents of the future while honoring the history that paved the way for these opportunities.

As the next generation shapes their path, it's our responsibility to help them understand how things came to be. Wishing you a perspective of optimism and endless possibilities as we collectively look forward to the best that is yet to come at East Central Energy!

At your service we remain,



**ECE**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**SAVE THE DATE**  
**April 18, 2024**  
**Braham Event Center**

Keep an eye on our website for details!



Email: [info@ecemn.com](mailto:info@ecemn.com)

**East Central Energy**  
PO Box 39, Braham, MN 55006

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

**1.800.254.7944**

General business calls are answered  
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Emergency and outage calls are  
answered 24 hours a day.

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call 1-800-254-7944 and ask to talk to our Executive Administrator to confirm meeting information. Monthly board meeting minutes 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](http://eastcentralenergy.com)



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