



September 2022

# Co-op Advantage

## EVolving by going electric

With no engine or oil and fewer moving parts, electric vehicles need less maintenance than conventional automobiles. This saves EV owners time and money while being more environmentally friendly.

The eco-friendly aspect was the biggest factor for ECE members Jim and Cheryl Haasis, who drive a 2021 Volkswagen ID.4 EV.

*"We wanted to be proactive to help the environment"*

Because they charge at home during off-peak overnight hours, the Haasis' wake up with a full charge at a fraction of the price of gasoline.

"In the three months we have owned the EV we have saved \$340," explains Jim. "We took the car to Madison and charged only twice: once to eat lunch, after which the car was fully charged, and a second time to walk around after sitting in the car for so long."

Jim encourages other ECE members to consider going electric. "If you charge at home like we do and drive to work and run errands, you'll have no trouble. The infrastructure is growing rapidly nationwide. We're planning a trip to Colorado and don't expect to have any trouble getting a charge. We really like our EV."



## Interested in an EV but need the power of a truck?

Supervisor of Energy Services, Pete Leibel, received his 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning in July. Nicknamed by the Leibels as "Zeus," the all-electric truck has two motors, delivers up to 320 miles per charge, and can tow up to 10,000 pounds.

Pete chuckles as he shows off the empty front engine space (the storage "frunk") but quickly soberes when explaining the importance of trying new technology. "I want to be able to answer members' questions from my own experience," Pete says. "An EV might not be right for everyone, but I'm excited to see what this Lightning can do."



We'll check in with Pete over the next 12 months to hear the pros and cons as he experiences all four seasons with Zeus!

**CHARGE UP**  
your  
journey



Planning for a road trip adventure—while driving electric—has never been easier. A growing network of electric vehicle charging stations offers drivers access to authentic local experiences like kayaking in Lake Superior, exploring various state parks, visiting local breweries, and cruising along the scenic North Shore.

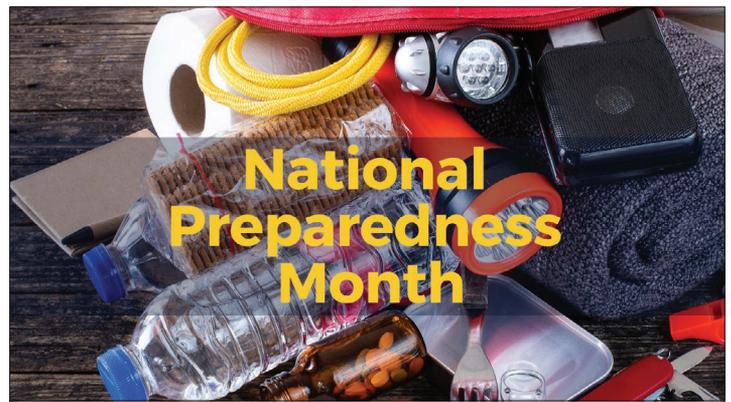
While drivers of traditional cars would need to interrupt their road trip to find a gas station to fill up, EV drivers can combine a pit-stop with an activity or adventure as their battery charges.

“I always tell members to do their research and see if an EV is right for them,” explains Pete Leibel, Energy Services Supervisor. “Electric vehicles are great for road trips because you can explore new possibilities at each stop. Find charging stations by using PlugShare, ChargeHub, or visiting [energywisemn.com/plugintomn](http://energywisemn.com/plugintomn).”

Interstate 35 and Highway 61 serve as an electric corridor of level 2 and fast-charging stations. From the Twin Cities to Grand Marais, you can plan to make stops in Pine City, Sturgeon Lake, Duluth, Two Harbors or Lutsen to charge and enjoy activities including shopping, hiking, and family-owned restaurants.

At most of these stops you’ll find a fast-charging station where you can achieve a full battery within 30 minutes while supporting local restaurants or shops. At other locations, such as Tettegouche State Park and Gooseberry Falls State Park, you can plug into a level 2 charger, which adds 18-28 miles of range per hour, and enjoy a more extended excursion like hiking, fishing, or kayaking. Another notable destination EV charging location includes Duluth, where charging stations across the city take you from the historic Glensheen Mansion to shimmering Canal Park.

If you’ll be driving electric this fall, remember that we’re offering a \$750 rebate to install a level 2 charger on either the time-of-use rate or off-peak storage rate. You can also power your EV with 100% wind energy at no extra cost through our Revolt program. Call 1-800-254-7944 to plug in and head out for adventure!



**National  
Preparedness  
Month**

## The power of preparation

When it comes to power outages and other emergencies, preparation can make a big difference. We maintain a comprehensive emergency response plan (ERP) for major events. This working document is reviewed annually and includes enhanced restoration strategies. It addresses needs like command structure, scheduling, food and lodging, safety management, and more. Along with the ERP, we have employees who serve as “scouts” and are prepared to assess damages, add notes for crews, and accompany outside mutual aid crews after assessments are complete.

This Preparedness Month, consider taking your own practical steps:

1. Assemble items like nonperishable food; one gallon of water per person per day; diapers; batteries; flashlights; prescription medications; first-aid kit; battery-powered radio; and solar phone chargers.
2. Have cash available because during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work. Be sure to keep your car filled with gas.
3. If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don’t live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check on them, or consider having them stay with you.
4. Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather. Microchip your pet and ensure contact information is up to date. Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location. Create an emergency kit for pets with food, bottled water, medications, and other supplies.

At ECE, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

# Can my power be turned off in the winter?

## YES

Disconnection is prohibited only when it affects the primary heat source for the household and as long as ALL four conditions are met:

1. You declare an inability to pay by completing the Inability to Pay Form.
2. You provide proof of last three months total gross household income.
3. Your total gross household income, not individual income, is less than 50% of the state median income, or you are a current recipient of any public assistance with qualifying income requirements, including energy assistance.
4. Your account is current or reasonably on time with a payment plan or you make and keep a mutually acceptable payment plan at any time that considers the financial resources of the household.

*The Cold Weather Rule, in effect from October 1 to April 30 in Minnesota, governs how we handle disconnects; it does not prohibit them. We use the MN guidelines for everyone in our territory. We are prepared to work with you if you are struggling to pay your electric bill. For more information about the Cold Weather Rule, see MN Statute 216B.097.*

**Energy assistance may be available. For a list of assistance providers and to verify income eligibility visit [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) > Residential > Assistance Information.**

## Military service personnel assistance

According to Minnesota law, a utility may not disconnect your service if a member of your household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station.

How can your military household qualify for exemption?

- If your household income is below the state median household income or you are receiving energy assistance, and you have entered into a satisfactory payment plan with ECE and remain current with payments under that plan.
- If your household income is above the state median household income and you have entered into a plan with ECE, establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of your household, and you remain current with payments under that plan.

*We use the MN guidelines for all members, including those in WI. Forms are available from ECE. For more information about military shut-off protection, see MN Statute 325E.028.*

**Have questions about either program? Give us a call at 1-800-254-7944 or visit our website for more information.**

### TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COMMUNITY AWARD NOMINATIONS ARE DUE OCTOBER 19!

One winning organization will receive a **\$1,000 cash prize** and will compete for statewide recognition and an **additional \$2,000**.

Any civic organization or non-profit (big or small!) serving ECE members is eligible to compete for the award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the local community.

Apply at [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) > Community > Community Award or by calling 1-800-254-7944, ext. 8031.

## Sales tax exemption for electric heat

You may be eligible for a sales tax exemption on your electric bill from November through April each year if electricity is the primary source of heat in your permanent principal residence.

If you are a WI resident, you are automatically exempt from sales tax from November through April.

If you are a MN resident and would like to apply for this sales tax exemption, call 1-800-254-7944, visit our website, or pick up an application at our Braham Headquarters.

# ***PLUG IN AND SAVE!***

**\$750 REBATES** available on qualifying EV chargers plus special off-peak charging rates.



Visit our website for details!



*ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



1.800.254.7944  
eastcentralenergy.com



If you're anything like me, you've probably seen more ads for electric vehicles in the last year than ever before. Auto manufacturers have committed to providing more vehicles with batteries and electric motors.

Members considering making the leap to an electric vehicle are understandably looking for assurances that electricity will be a dependable fuel for something as important as transportation.

Our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), is a voluntary member of the Mid-continent Independent System Operator (MISO), which operates the power grid across 15 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. Being a part of MISO keeps electricity affordable by ensuring the lowest-cost generation available is used first.

Over the summer, ECE issued multiple requests for conservation, and I would like to explain why those are important.

The grid experiences its highest demand on the hottest summer days and the coldest winter days. When we all turn on our air conditioners, energy markets begin to rise and wholesale power costs put financial strain on the co-op. Likewise, when power demand ramps up in the late afternoon and evening, the system can become physically strained.

It was a hot summer—with two prolonged heat waves—and the electric system handled it with minimal issues. ECE has been managing our demand through various load control programs for decades. We control air conditioners, water heaters, space heating, and heat pumps in thousands of homes across our service territory. Many businesses reduce their load as well. MISO and GRE have plans in place to avoid catastrophic failures and ensure the system is prepared to meet future needs, like EVs.

Your co-op is committed to bringing value to the entire membership. As we spread our fixed costs over more energy sales, the likelihood of rate increases goes down. Electric vehicles are a new and exciting technology, and we're working to provide members with rates and programs to incentivize charging when energy is more affordable and readily available. We've been here before and we'll rise to the challenge, like we always do...together.

*At your service we remain,*



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](mailto: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. To find the Statement of Non-Discrimination for ECE, go to [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) and select About Us, or call us at 1-800-254-7944.

Website:  
[eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com)



**GASOLINE**

Gasoline-powered cars get an average of **24.7 MPG**



**VS.**



**ELECTRIC**

Electric vehicles can get up to **100 MPGe**



Source: energysage  
MPGe= MPG equivalent of gasoline



