



Co-op Advantage

Careers in Energy are Thriving

We're celebrating Careers in Energy Week, October 14-18, by highlighting the benefits of working at an electric cooperative. Co-ops are known for putting people first, offering job stability, career development, competitive benefits, and professional advancement.

Stay (and support) local. Since most co-ops serve rural areas, you can enjoy the best of both worlds by living in a small town while receiving competitive wages. A short commute and working where you play? It's a win-win. Plus, working near your home supports the local economy.

Find family. Working with people who understand and promote your ideas is incredibly rewarding. Co-ops are small, tight-knit organizations created by people who live and work in the local community. They know that every decision they make affects their neighbors and friends.

Follow your passion. With so much to learn about the industry, careers in energy provide plenty of opportunities for growth. From renewable breakthroughs to battery storage and energy-saving products, it's easy to find something to be enthusiastic about. Many co-ops also offer tuition reimbursement for continuing education.

Start fresh. You may not have an energy background, and that's okay! Most employees come to "the co-op world" by way of another career. It takes a wide range of skills to keep an electric co-op running smoothly. As a result, there's room for all sorts of talent—from finance, government, and member services, all the way to line work, mapping, and system monitoring. Co-ops are even looking for those with social media and photography skills.



Donna Carley (pictured above)
Contact Specialist, 1 year
Donna responds to member inquiries via phone, chat, and online, helping them with their accounts.

Andy Holzer (pictured below)
Telecommunications Administrator, 18 years
Andy is responsible for hardware and software implementation and support, maintaining our phone system and network programs.



Lana Black (pictured above)
Business Accounts Specialist and Projects Lead, 11 years
Lana builds partnerships with business members, becoming familiar with their energy requirements and needs.

Watch our Facebook page during Careers in Energy Week, where we will be featuring more of our very own employees. To learn more about working in the energy industry, visit getintoenergy.com.



Auto Pay WINNER

Visit our website to learn about Auto Pay. If you would like to be entered in the monthly drawing, sign up for Auto Pay today!

Members who currently participate in Auto Pay will automatically be entered in the drawing.



**Congratulations
Richard and Patricia Lanz
Sandstone, MN**

Avoid the 'boos' with Halloween Safety

Christmas is no longer the only decorative holiday. Halloween has become a time for moody lights, spooky fog machines, and life-size ghouls.



Follow these tips to make your Halloween fun yet safe:

- Cracked, frayed, or bare wires may cause a serious shock or start a fire, so inspect before plugging in.
- Check that decorations are Underwriters Laboratory® (UL) approved and marked for outdoor use.
- Don't overload extension cords or allow them to touch water. Turn off all decorations before leaving home or going to sleep, and consider using a timer.

When decorating outside, remember to look up. Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

**Safe
Electricity.org**

Watt's Cookin'

Congratulations to Harriet Lidke, a member from Braham, MN, for winning the Watt's Cookin' Mexican food contest. Harriet will receive a \$25 energy credit.

MEXICAN LASAGNA

- 1 ½ lb. ground beef
- 1 green pepper (seeded and chopped)
- 1-14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1-15 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- 1 large pkg. flour tortillas
- 1-16 oz. can refried beans
- 3 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1-6 oz. can black olives (chopped)

Sauté ground beef and green pepper until meat is brown. Drain grease. Add tomatoes, tomato sauce and taco seasoning. Simmer for 30 minutes on low. Spread just enough sauce to cover bottom of a 9x13-inch pan then layer ingredients in the following order: Tortillas, all of the refried beans, sauce, half the cheese, tortillas, sauce, remaining cheese, and olives. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes, or until heated through and cheese is bubbly. Serve immediately.

To enter our Watt's Cookin' contest, mail your favorite cabbage recipe to Watt's Cookin', P.O. Box 39, Braham, MN 55006. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number, ECE account number, and be received by Dec. 27, 2019. The winning recipe and the contributor's name and city will be featured in a future edition of the Co-op Advantage. Recipes can also be emailed to info@ecemn.com.

Watt's Cookin' is Changin'

Low participation has led to a tough decision. Starting in 2020, Watt's Cookin' will be featured quarterly rather than monthly. Don't forget, all of our Watt's Cookin' recipes are available on our website.

Teacher Totes: The Cooperative Difference

October is National Cooperative Month, a perfect time to highlight our annual Teacher Totes project. An example of our commitment to community, the project brings our co-op values to life.

Each summer, we shop for school supplies, load them into large storage totes, then deliver them to area schools. The items were donated by ECE in partnership with CoBank, a financial institution that supports the work of cooperatives nationwide through their Sharing Success program.

“We do our best to meet the needs of our members and communities,” noted Desiree Cuda, ECE Communications Coordinator, who administers the Teacher Totes project.

“We’re trying to alleviate the need for teachers to purchase supplies with their own money.”

This year, Teacher Totes were delivered to elementary teachers in Hinckley, Milaca, Rush City, Braham, Ogilvie, and East Central schools. Teachers were on hand to sort and choose what their classrooms needed most. Supplies included backpacks, hand sanitizer, tissues, notebooks, folders, headphones, and for the first time, snacks.

“Thank you for providing our students with school supplies,” said Hinckley Elementary Principal Bonnie Scullard. “I’ve never seen my teachers happier!”



Pre-winter DIY projects that will save energy—and money

Winter weather can have a big impact on your energy bill. Now is the perfect time to tackle a few do-it-yourself projects and increase energy efficiency in your home.

Let’s start with one of the easiest projects: replacing your furnace filter. Hold your filter up to the light; if you can’t see through it, it’s time for a new one. During winter, be sure to check and replace the filter each month. Pleated filters often work best because they are able to trap dirt particles more efficiently.

Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. There are many different types of caulking compounds available, but the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible and won’t shrink or crack.

One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Weather stripping materials vary. Ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if

you’re unsure about the supplies you need. To stop drafts from entering your home, install a door sweep.



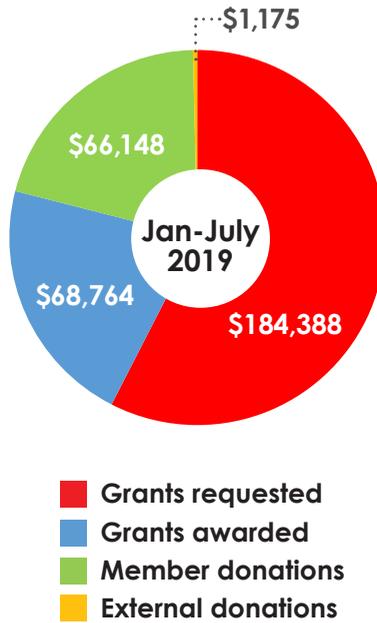
Winter is right around the corner, so be sure to weather-proof your home before the snow flies. Investing in a few supplies now can save you time and money during the coming months.

Make the most of your spare change

Pennies you may not miss can make a huge difference for important groups in our communities.

With 23 percent of our members participating, Operation Round Up (ORU), the charitable trust ECE started in 1997, approves grants each quarter to first responders, food distribution programs, educational opportunities for youth, and more. So far, the three grant cycles of 2019 have received \$184,388 in requests. Thanks to those who participate in ORU, \$68,764 were awarded to area programs.

Just think what we could do if we had more pennies. Join ORU and help make a bigger dent in the needs of our local organizations.



For less than \$1 per month, you can support local organizations by “rounding up” your bill to the next dollar.



ENERGY MATTERS

with ECE President/CEO Steve Shurts

October is Co-op Month Let's Get Social



Social media offers an opportunity for us to interact and communicate with you on your own turf. To stay connected, we have pages on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. We also have a dynamic website and can even chat using SmartHub.

When you “like” our Facebook page, you are able to receive updates about outages, enter exclusive giveaways, find community events, and learn about rebates and promotions. Meanwhile, our LinkedIn page is a great place to view career opportunities, while Twitter allows you to send us short and quick messages. We’re growing our YouTube presence by posting more videos that cover events and projects here at the co-op.

Providing safe, reliable power is our primary objective, but why not share the fun side of your electric cooperative, too?

While you’re online, consider stopping by our website, eastcentralenergy.com. There’s a wealth of information available. From there you can visit SmartHub, our online account management system, which offers a chat feature and outage reporting as well.

Though we still receive a few handwritten letters, we are seeing more and more interaction via our online pages. We’re doing everything we can to ensure you receive the latest information about your cooperative. Please know I read every email, letter or other means of communication that is addressed to me. And I’ll respond!



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

Service Center locations:
Braham, Milaca, and Finlayson
Monday-Friday
Hours vary by service center.

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 Administrator Julie Johnson 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



Holiday office closings

November 28 and 29
December 25



Support Your Community

For less than \$1 per month, you can support local organizations by “rounding up” your bill to the next dollar.

Start making a difference today!
Sign up via SmartHub or call ECE.

ECE 1.800.254.7944
eastcentralenergy.com

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An Operation Round Up® grant helped purchase children's books for the Mora Imagination Library.