

your **Connexus Connection**

For Connexus Energy Members

Winter 2022 Edition

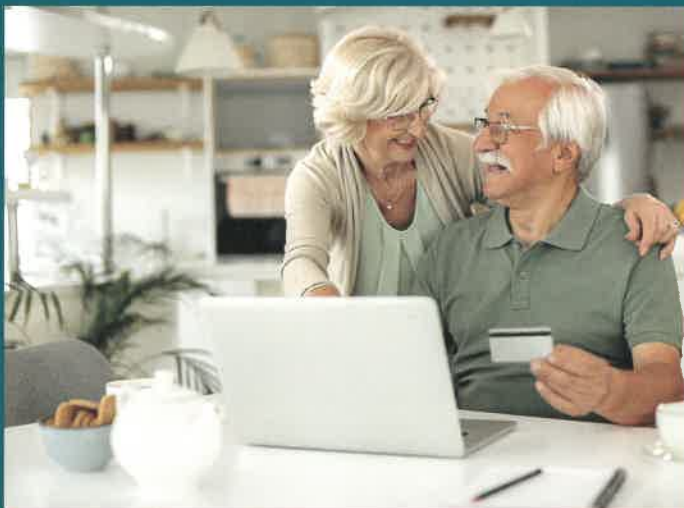
Controlling Costs, Caring for Community

**A FIFTH YEAR OF NO
RATE INCREASE**

Voting at your cooperative

SolarWise honey has a new look





PAYING ONLINE NOW EASIER

New online payment tools include the elimination of credit card processing fees for residential members.

CONTACT US

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*Connexus Energy is an equal opportunity/
affirmative action employer.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fran Bator, Chair (East Bethel)

Mark Ethen, Vice Chair (Blaine)

Gordon Westerlind, Secretary/Treasurer
(Big Lake)

Michael Cady, Assistant

Secretary/Treasurer (Blaine)

Kenneth Fiereck (Clear Lake)

Donald Holl (Forest Lake)

Shelly Peterson (Nowthen)

Peter Wojciechowski (Ham Lake)



Reliable



Affordable



Safe

We are Connexus Energy.

your most powerful membership®



Connexus Energy is offsetting 100% of the energy used for printing this newsletter with renewable energy credits.

CEO sparks

Greg Ridderbusch, President & CEO

Five Years of No Rate Increase:

affordability you can count on all year long

When our call center received its second, third, and fourth call after a TV news segment about rising electricity costs our team was ready. We were still in the thick of budgeting for 2022 as questions about our 2022 rates were being asked by members.

In early December, as with each year, the Connexus Energy Board representing our member owners heard the details of how inflation, investment, strategic initiatives, member conservation, and market prices would affect the 2022 budget.

The good news, with the efforts of employees, members, and a bit of growth, 2022 will be Connexus Energy's fifth consecutive year of no rate increase.

While several of Minnesota's largest electric utilities are proposing to raise their rates and increase bills, Connexus Energy is happy to be an outlier. Connexus' mix of modern electric grid technologies, the hard work of our staff, and a well-designed and maintained system empowers us to provide nationally competitive reliability at an affordable cost.

Looking forward, we are reaching deeper to find additional efficiencies, looking in detail at our wholesale power supply. A unanimous vote by Connexus Energy's board directed staff to pursue competitive wholesale power savings, flexibility, and local control. Negotiations with Great River Energy, our current wholesale power provider, are ongoing and being pursued while maintaining the reliability and safety of our service to you and our commitment to cooperative values. As reported in our last several annual meetings, our wholesale power costs have been the highest of all electric cooperatives in Minnesota for the past decade.

Last fall, we were pleasantly surprised with recognition by our business peers at the Anoka Chamber of Commerce with the 2021 Service Business of the Year Award. Chamber CEO Pete Turok observed that "Affordable, reliable energy is the lifeblood of our communities and creates advantages that spur economic growth."

Swimming against a stream of rising costs for five consecutive years is an achievement we're proud of at Connexus. It takes hard work from our employees, and courageous choices by your elected Board members. The energy transition that is presently occurring is an exciting time and Connexus Energy's approach is always grounded by your expectation of affordable, reliable, safe, and increasing sustainable electricity.



Controlling costs caring for community

Training hundreds new farmers each year, KaZuoa Berry manages her budget down to the dollar. The program she leads, an emerging farmer conference and incubator training program at Big River Farm near Marine on St. Croix, teaches entrepreneurship to experienced farmers and farming to experienced entrepreneurs.



KaZuoa Berry of Big River Farms leads the organization's program training new farmers.

In talking about the importance of prudent financial management and energy use, Anoka County Administrator Rhonda Sivarajah notes that "County government is that invisible layer of government and we provide services and impact people's lives from birth to death."

Anoka County services include management of a park system that now draws more than 4 million visits annually, as well as the library system, and more than 400 miles of roadway. Reducing costs from energy usage is critical to successfully providing such a diversity of important services.

"Sustainable funding models for this work are hard to come by," says Berry. "When propane heating costs suddenly explode it has a huge impact on our ability to serve the community. We're glad to be working with Connexus to identify strategies to take control of our heating costs."

"We're here to help all our members make informed decisions regarding their short- and long-term energy costs," said Connexus Energy's Jen Sweeney, who advises Anoka County and other large energy consumers. "Electric technologies are constantly getting better in performance as well as price. Fuel switching from propane to electricity is increasingly popular among our members. Another key strategy we recommend to control costs is energy efficiency."

Anoka County is several years into the process of switching its buildings and infrastructure to use modern LED lights that will result in significant savings.

"We're here to help all our members make informed decisions regarding their short- and long-term energy costs."

“We provide all of the law enforcement for several cities in the county, and also have programs like senior services, and medical and food assistance, to help people if they run into difficult times,” says Sivarajah.

Care for community is one of the seven principles guiding the work of all member-owned nonprofit cooperatives. Whether it is homeowners or farmers, nonprofits or businesses, or town, city, or county government, controlling costs while caring for community is part of Connexus’ mission.



For Anoka County, reducing costs from energy usage is critical to successfully providing valuable social services including home visits for senior citizens.

NO RATE INCREASE

Key dates for your 2022 calendar



JANUARY

No rate increase. Happy New Year!

FEBRUARY

No rate increase. Happy Valentine's Day!

MARCH

No rate increase. Happy first day of Spring!

APRIL

No rate increase. Happy Earth Day!

MAY

¡Feliz Cinco de Mayo! **No aumento en la tarifa.**

JUNE

No rate increase. Happy first day of summer!

JULY

No rate increase. Happy Independence Day!

AUGUST

No rate increase. Celebrate at Bunker Beach!

SEPTEMBER

Leaves turn. Rates stay the same. **No rate increase.**

OCTOBER

All treats, no tricks. **No rate increase.**

NOVEMBER

No rate increase. Happy Thanksgiving!

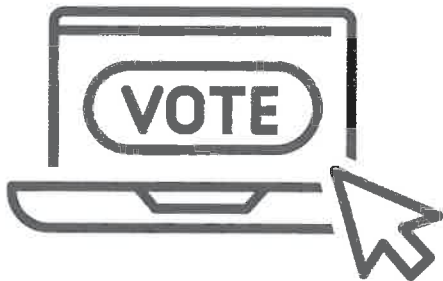
DECEMBER

No rate increase. Merry Christmas and happy holidays!

Our fifth consecutive year of no rate increases.

At Connexus your vote matters

Online and printed ballot options make co-op voting easy



A score of “aye” votes changed the course of history in our community – creating a cooperative to provide reliable, affordable electric service. Eighty-four years later, we have grown to more than 140,000 members providing electric service that is consistently more reliable and affordable than the state’s largest investor-owned utility.

“Connexus sets a good example for Minnesota co-op elections,” said Duane Ninneman, executive director of Greater Minnesota nonprofit, CURE. The organization’s mission is to protect and restore resilient rural landscapes and build vibrant, just, and equitable rural communities.

Connexus Energy's Board of Directors is elected by you and other co-op members to set the policies and is charged with the responsibility to manage the cooperative, subject to the laws of the state of Minnesota, and the bylaws established by the membership.

Information about the Board candidates will be available and online voting will begin at the end of March. Paper ballots will also be mailed to all members (a requirement of Minnesota law that pre-dates online voting) and accommodations for in-person voting will be provided.

Connexus works with Survey & Ballot Systems, a Minnesota-based organization that independently handles elections for more than 200 cooperatives nationwide. In coordination with the election, Survey & Ballot Systems will hold a drawing for a personal one-year supply (12 jars) of honey harvested from our flowering solar farms as well as other prizes.



Happy New Year

**Green energy and energy efficiency are easy-to-make
– and even easier to keep – New Year’s resolutions**

Celebrate today with a plan for a fresh start in 2022 with any of Connexus’ many green energy and convenient energy management programs. Find out more at connexusenergy.com.

Co-op cuisine

HEARTWARMING TOMATO SOUP

From Chris Nye

1/4 cup Olive Oil, separated
1/2 Red Onion, thinly sliced
2 Cloves Garlic, thinly sliced
28 oz Diced Canned Tomato,
preferable San Marzano
2 cups canned Tomato Juice
1 Sprig Fresh Basil

Equipment:

Induction cooktop

Immersion blender

2 qt or larger pot, spatula

Instructions:

1. Over medium heat, cook the red onion and garlic in half of the olive oil. Stir frequently until the onion has softened and become translucent.
2. Add the diced tomato and tomato juice. Season with 1 Tbsp of salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes.
3. After the soup is done cooking, blend with the immersion blender until smooth. Season as needed with salt and pepper. Divide into serving dishes and garnish with torn basil and a drizzle of the remaining olive oil.



Chris Nye of Coon Rapids, an accomplished professional chef, provided the recipe. While you can use whatever cooktop you have, Chris likes both the power and performance of induction cooktops as well as the fast and convenient cleanup.

 **CONNEXUS® ENERGY**

SolarWise™

HONEY

HARVESTED FROM OUR FLOWERING SOLAR FIELDS

\$12

All the proceeds will be donated to Ruff Start Rescue.

Honey is only available for purchase in the Connexus Energy lobby.

*Cash transactions only. Produced in partnership with Bare Honey.



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P-15 P140 00122564
SPRING LAKE PARK CITY OF
OR CURRENT RESIDENT
1301 81ST AVE NE
FRIDLEY MN 55432-2188

Oh Snap!



Connexus toured the National Guard aviation facility at the St. Cloud Airport and is honored to have them as a member and to be a trusted energy partner to one of our state's critical defense facilities.



Renson Obongo (center) and Amy Wallace (right) take in a fun round of Can Jam at the annual Connexus Energy employee picnic.



Electrical engineer Erica Schmidt with her family were a few of the employees and friends dressed and ready to walk the Anoka Halloween Parade route with the decorated Connexus bucket truck.



Connexus Energy was honored with the top prize in a national electric service reliability competition among electric utilities and solution providers.

