THANK YOU!
To our local business owners and their employees, we appreciate you!

Lakeville’s Hampton Inn employee, Leighandra T., deep cleans a guest room during the COVID-19 pandemic in early December. The hotel follows Hilton’s CleanStay program partnered with Lysol® to ensure their facilities are properly sanitized before guests check in.

(Pages 2-4)
Commitment to Community. Local business owners are hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and while many are struggling financially, there is a silver lining — an increased sense of community. In times of crisis, small businesses depend on their community to rally behind them. Similarly, those same businesses remind us how important they are to the economic and social fabric of our society.

In an effort to support small businesses during this time, local chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus and other community organizations are working tirelessly to provide resources to neighborhood establishments. They are sharing information and providing education on COVID-19 safety guidelines and mandates, and connecting small businesses with supply chains to access hand sanitizer and PPE. Our community is using social media to network for neighboring mom-and-pop shops and providing innovative solutions for marketing online. Dakota Electric is proud to be a longtime member of these organizations and is dedicated to partnering with those who support our small business members.

Difficult situations inspire inventive solutions. Many local businesses have made clever pivots to service customers without human contact. While restaurants and bars offer online ordering and curbside service, some neighborhood businesses engage the public directly. Eagan Arms Public House owners, Lee Tomlin and Tracie Munce, opened their Eagan restaurant in February 2020. To ensure their success during the pandemic, they began hosting virtual food tasting events on Zoom and created Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner packages for curbside service. However, even with creative solutions, the pandemic still poses problems for them and other entrepreneurs (Page 4).

When you shop local, your dollars stay in the community. Local businesses return a total of 52% of their revenue to the local economy, compared to 14% of national chain retailers according to the Institute of Local Self-Reliance. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education and Economic Development notes that small businesses account for 47% of jobs in Minnesota. Supporting our neighbors by buying local builds a cooperative relationship and helps the whole business community prosper.

As we move past the holiday season, consider shopping local if you have the financial means. Thank you for serving our community. We’re all in this together!
Bring joy to your favorite local business by following these tips:

**Buy local; go directly to the source.** Shopping through third-party sites and apps typically reduces the net profit for the merchant. Consider going to the vendor’s website or social media accounts to buy directly.

**Be social.** Increase engagement for your favorite local businesses by liking and sharing their social media posts. Write positive reviews and post photos tagging the business. Word-of-mouth marketing on social media can help struggling businesses engage with their community.

**Participate in community events.** Check your local chamber of commerce or convention and visitors bureau for online events and contests they may be sponsoring in support of local businesses. Tip: Stay in the loop by following them on social media!

**Show the love.** With monthly non-negotiable fixed costs, innovation is not always an option for struggling businesses. Make sure the owners and employees of your favorite places know you’re rooting for them.

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**Business resources and free webinars**

To find your local chamber of commerce or convention and visitors bureau, visit: [www.dakotaelectric.com/covid-19/business-resources](http://www.dakotaelectric.com/covid-19/business-resources)

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**Rebates and programs**

To find Dakota Electric rebates and programs, visit: [www.dakotaelectric.com/member-services/programs-rebates/for-your-business/](http://www.dakotaelectric.com/member-services/programs-rebates/for-your-business/)

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1. **47%** Percentage of small business jobs in Minnesota.

2. **526,350** Number of small businesses in Minnesota.

3. **1.3 MILLION** Employees of small businesses in Minnesota.

*Source: Minnesota Department of Education and Economic Development*
Hampton Inn by Hilton®

Hampton Inn opened with 117 guest rooms in October 2019. Manager Karen Peters runs the hotel and works closely with staff to provide guests a safe and comfortable experience.

How has COVID-19 impacted your business? COVID-19 has been very tough for the hospitality industry. Occupancy was immediately reduced and we closed the breakfast, pool, fitness and meeting rooms. Public and team-member areas are cleaned at scheduled intervals, and high-touch areas, like elevators and bathrooms, are sanitized hourly. In addition to our rigorous cleaning standards, we follow the Hilton CleanStay program in partnership with Lysol, which adds disinfecting steps for several surfaces in the room to ensure CDC compliance.

How are you getting creative? Through new networking opportunities! We’re forming new relationships with companies that continue to travel and work through these difficult times.

How can the public support businesses like Hampton Inn? We ask the public to please use safety precautions, wear masks and follow CDC guidelines when they travel. It helps us do our jobs better and ensures the safety of our guests and employees.

Eagan Arms Public House

Lee Tomlin and Tracie Munce opened Eagan Arms in February 2020 as a family-friendly establishment featuring Scottish, Irish and English food. Residing in Eagan, Lee and Tracie wanted to create a place where the surrounding community could gather and enjoy their time together.

How has COVID-19 impacted your business? The first few months were hard. We opened with 35 employees one month before the COVID-19 lockdown. Initially, we scaled back to the two of us, but slowly built up to 12 employees once we had safety protocols in place. We’ve maintained virtual contact with all our employees and kept them involved with our operating plans.

How are you getting creative? By learning to engage with our community in different ways. We’ve created virtual events, amended our takeout menu to focus on family-style meals and worked with a business coach to find innovative solutions. Additionally, through a metro-based business banker, we applied and received funds from the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program.

How can the public support businesses like Eagan Arms Public House? Supporting locally-owned restaurants like Eagan Arms Public House means you support your neighbors. Until indoor dining resumes, we’re open for takeout!
Helping Neighbors® helps those in need

Layoffs, medical emergencies, unexpected repairs — these things could happen to anyone and can leave families struggling to make ends meet. Dakota Electric members who contribute to Helping Neighbors help local families pay utility bills when facing unexpected financial struggles.

Dakota Electric distributes Helping Neighbors funds to the local CAP Agency, Salvation Army and 360 Communities, which provide utility assistance to families experiencing hardship.

Please consider making a donation. Monthly donations can be added to your electric bill or you can make a one-time contribution.

CONTRIBUTE TO HELPING NEIGHBORS:
WWW.DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM > COMMUNITY > HELPING NEIGHBORS

Are you struggling to pay your bill?

Dakota Electric Resources
If you need more time to pay the amount owed on your electric bill, we will work with you to establish a payment plan. You can contact us Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409, or email customerservice@dakotaelectric.com.

Community Resources
Energy Assistance Programs are available if you, your family or someone you know needs energy assistance.

Scott-Carver-Dakota CAP Agency | 651-322-3500
2496 145th St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068

360 Communities | 952-985-5300
501 East Highway 13, Suite 112, Burnsville, MN 55337

Dakota County Economic Assistance | 651-554-5611 | 1 Mendota Road W., Suite 100, West St. Paul, MN 55118

Goodhue County Health & Human Services
651-385-3200 | 426 West Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066

Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. | 507-316-0610 | 1414 North Star Dr., Zumbrota, MN 55992

Rice County Social Services | 507-332-6115
320 3rd St. NW., Faribault, MN 55021

Scott County Human Services | 952-445-7751
200 4th Ave. W., Shakopee, MN 55379

2020 IN REVIEW

We've maintained a healthy workforce and kept key personnel, such as line workers and member service representatives, safe and available to provide our members the excellent service they expect.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A MEMBER

Dakota Electric Association Board Director Janet Lekson passed away on February 29, 2020. Lekson served on the board of directors for 24 years. We appreciate Janet’s many years of service to Dakota Electric!

Many of our valued office employees have worked from home since March of 2020.

Our adopted crew chief, Remi, brought our crews big smiles when he climbed on one of our bucket trucks at his home near New Trier.

The 2020 capital credit checks were mailed on Tuesday, Dec. 15. A total of 43,094 checks were printed and $3.1 million was returned to our members!

MORE THAN $130K DONATED TO THE COMMUNITY IN 2020

MEMBERS SAVED 22 MILLION KWh WITH CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
The most recent information on how the electric generation, transmission and distribution systems work, plus the sources, costs and emissions of fuels used in meeting the needs of Dakota Electric’s members, is available by visiting our website. You may also request a copy of the brochure be mailed to you by calling 651-463-6212.

Great River Energy plans to add 1,100 MW of new wind energy purchases, primarily located in southern Minnesota.

By 2025, Great River Energy’s power supply resources will be more than 95% carbon dioxide free.

Did you know...

**Electric vehicles are highly efficient**, converting around 77% of their power into movement. Gas-powered vehicles only convert 12% to 30%.

Source: NRECA
https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/evtech.shtml
Thank you for your business in 2020. We look forward to serving you in 2021!

24-Hour Emergency Service | Local: 651-463-6201 | Toll-Free: 1-800-430-9722