

your Connexus Connection

For Connexus Energy Members

Issued October 2024

Maximize Savings

How Connexus members are cutting
energy use and saving money



Your Connexus Energy Board of Directors

Since our founding in 1937, Connexus has been governed by a board of directors elected by our members. These directors represent you and are responsible for establishing rates, setting the cooperative's goals and strategic direction, providing financial oversight, ensuring compliance with federal, state and local laws, and serving as the policy-making body of Connexus.

We want you! Be a nominating committee volunteer

You can take part in the annual board of directors' election process by volunteering for the nominating committee, which interviews and nominates qualified director candidates for the ballot. Members receive a stipend and mileage reimbursement for their service and must be available for in-person meetings at Connexus headquarters in Ramsey on Jan. 13 and Feb. 3, 2025.

The deadline to submit your request to join the nominating committee is 5 p.m. on Nov. 8, 2024. Members are randomly selected to ensure two primary assignments and one alternate per district. Those selected will be notified by Nov. 29.



Scan to learn more about the annual meeting and nominating committee.

[▶ LEARN MORE](#) connexusenergy.com/annualmeeting

SAVE THE DATE 88th Annual Meeting Thursday, April 17, 2025

Connexus headquarters
Business meeting at 4 p.m.

CONTACT US

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Connect with Connexus



Board director application information

Connexus' service area is divided into four director districts, each with two seats, and each seat carries a three-year term. In 2025, elections will be held for seats in two districts:

District 2 – currently represented by Rick Braastad from Ham Lake

District 4 – currently represented by Joe Gruenes from Clear Lake

Director candidate applications will open on Dec. 9, and the application link will be available on the Connexus website. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. on Jan. 17, 2025.

To learn more about eligibility, director roles and responsibilities, the election process, and to view the district map, visit our [Board & Bylaws page](#) online.



Mike Thews • Mark Ethen • Shelly Peterson • Angie Ronayne • Sam Villella • Fran Bator
Rick Braastad • Joe Gruenes

Message to **Our Members**

At Connexus Energy, we're committed to helping our members make smart energy choices.

We offer a range of programs and energy-efficiency rebates for both residential and commercial members.

As we wrap up our summer peak season, we're excited to share that our members helped save over \$2.8 million! Curious how it works?

Our Power Supply Operations (PSO) Team meets weekly during June, July and August to analyze market conditions and potential grid peaks – those times when electricity demand and costs are highest. The PSO Team has one main goal: to save our members money by reducing electricity demand during these peak periods. By monitoring weather, load forecasts and future outlooks, they determine the most likely peak days and hours. During those times, we schedule, communicate and manage our Peak-Time Rebate, Wi-Fi thermostat, commercial generator and other programs to lower demand.

In this newsletter, we're featuring three members who have taken control of their energy usage through a few of our programs, saving both energy and money. We're grateful to them for sharing their stories.

If you're not yet signed up for one of our programs, you can still conserve energy – and lower your electric bills – by following lighting, heating, cooling and equipment tips on our website. Use the Connexus Energy app or log into your account to track your energy usage in real-time, down to 15-minute increments. This data can help you adjust your energy consumption habits.

At Connexus, we continue to make decisions with your best interests in mind.

Sincerely,



Brian Burandt



Yan Paul Martinez

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Brian Burandt' and the second is 'Yan Paul Martinez'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Burandt & Yan Paul Martinez

Interim Co-CEOs



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

Get Paid to **Save Energy**

Ben and Lindsay Fuchs of Nowthen have been part of our Peak-Time Rebate program since it launched in 2018. The program pays members \$1 for each kilowatt-hour they save during peak-time events in June, July and August. These events typically occur on the hottest, most humid summer days.

Ben shared that they precool their home by lowering the thermostat three degrees when he receives a text notification for a peak-time event. This reduces humidity and keeps their house and shop comfortable when he sets their thermostat three to four degrees higher during the event, which typically lasts three hours between 4-9 p.m. Their Wi-Fi thermostat allows Ben to easily manage the temperature from his phone, even when he's not at home. In 2024, Connexus held three peak-time events, and the Fuchs family participated in all of them, earning \$53 in bill credits.



Ben Fuchs lowers his Wi-Fi thermostat three degrees before peak-time events.

The Peak-Time Rebate program saves the Fuchs family money with minimal inconvenience. They appreciate contributing to reducing stress on the electric grid during times of high demand when energy is most expensive to produce. Ben joked that his family sometimes gets annoyed with his insistence on using fewer lights, avoiding electric appliances and not charging their electric vehicles during events, but the extra effort to reduce their energy usage pays off.

Signing up for the Peak-Time Rebate program is free, and there's no penalty for not participating in a peak-time event.

[▶ LEARN MORE connexusenergy.com/PTR](https://connexusenergy.com/PTR)



Precooling helps keep the Fuchs family's home (pictured above) and shop at a comfortable temperature during events.

Generate Your Own **Solar Energy**

Ray and Lisa Carriere installed rooftop solar at their Ramsey home with the goal of becoming carbon neutral and more self-sustainable. After more than a year of operation, they've successfully achieved those goals.

The Carrieres installed 56 400-watt Enphase Energy solar panels on the south- and west-facing portions of their roof, along with four battery groups to store excess energy for later use. A microinverter on their roof converts direct current (DC) from the solar panels and batteries into alternating current (AC) to power their home. Ray uses the Enphase mobile app to manage the system and is taking online courses offered by Enphase to become solar certified to handle repairs himself.

As expected, the Carrieres had plenty of energy in the spring, summer and fall. By February, they reached their 'break-even' point, producing and consuming similar amounts of energy. By March, they were already consuming about half of what they produced.

The Carrieres received a 30% tax credit for their solar installation. They recommend that Connexus members interested in rooftop solar install at least one battery to store energy for use during times of need, which can be especially helpful during unpredictable summer storms. Fortunately, the Carrieres are served by Connexus, which ranks in the top 5% of all utilities for reliability, and their power is delivered through underground lines.

Connexus offers solar members four rate options for purchasing excess energy. By choosing the average retail cooperative energy rate, the Carrieres receive bill credits for the extra solar energy they produce, and they use those credits during the winter when their production is lower.

If you're considering rooftop solar, try our online assessment tool to get an estimate of costs and potential payback.

▶ **LEARN MORE** connexusenergy.com/solarenergy



Lisa and Ray Carriere saw a 50% increase in energy production after removing two trees near their deck.



Solar panels on two rooftop areas provide energy for their home year-round.



Four battery groups in their garage store excess energy, allowing them to discharge it when needed.

SEAL UP YOUR HOME THIS FALL



Air can escape through even the smallest gaps in your ceilings, walls and floors. Here's how to keep it in:

- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows
- Seal air leaks around plumbing, ductwork and electrical wiring
- Install foam gaskets behind wall outlets and switch plates

Incentives for Increased Energy Efficiency and **Cost Savings for Your Business**

Peterson Bros River Valley Farms in Big Lake has been producing and shipping red, yellow, and russet potatoes from late July through late October for more than 60 years. It takes many motors to move freshly harvested potatoes from field trucks through cleaning, grading, sorting and packaging stations, preparing them for sale.

About 15 years ago, Art and Dan Peterson introduced variable-frequency drives (VFDs) to their plant, and they have continued to incorporate more ever since. VFDs control motor operations, determining when they start and stop and adjusting their speed. For the Petersons, VFDs allow them to stagger motor startups, control the speed of conveyor belts, chains and water pumps, and shut everything down during plant-wide breaks. Instead of operating at a constant speed all day, VFDs help reduce energy consumption and prevent motor overuse.

VFDs offer one of the best opportunities for businesses to save on electricity costs. Connexus provides a \$60/HP rebate to commercial members who enhance energy efficiency with VFDs. Peterson Bros River Valley Farms recently received a rebate check for their latest VFD installations. They've also earned rebates for their electric forklifts and LED lighting.

Visit Peterson Bros River Valley Farms during their regular business hours. They love their customers and offer retail sales at their office.

Connexus offers commercial members a wide range of rebates, programs and incentives for increased energy efficiency and cost savings.

▶ **LEARN MORE** connexusenergy.com/businessrebates



Variable-frequency drives (VFDs) throughout the plant control motor operations efficiently.



Five VFDs mounted nearby regulate the quantity and speed of potato inspection.



Christina Jacobson with Art,

Co-op Cuisine

POTATO COMFORT SOUP

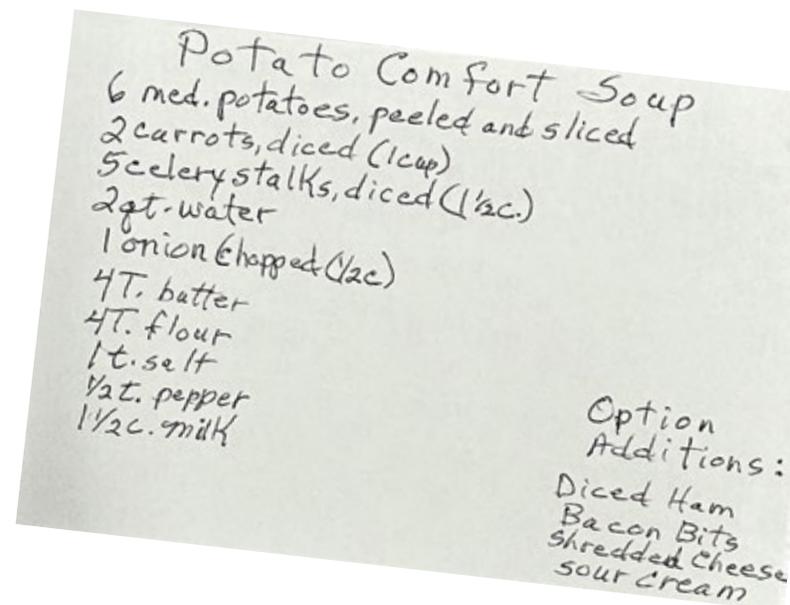
From Beverly Peterson

Yield: 6-8 servings (approximately 2½ quarts)

6 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 carrots, diced (1 cup)
5 celery stalks, diced (1½ cups)
2 quarts water
1 onion, chopped (½ cup)
4 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
1½ cups milk

Optional additions: diced ham, bacon bits, shredded cheese and sour cream

1. In a large kettle, cook potatoes, carrots and celery in water until tender (approximately 20 mins.). Drain and reserve liquid.
2. In the same kettle, sauté onion in melted butter until soft.
3. Stir in flour, salt and pepper.
4. Gradually add milk, stirring constantly until thickened.
5. Gently stir in cooked vegetables.
6. Add one cup or more of reserved cooking liquid until soup is desired consistency.



Dan and Vanessa Peterson.



VFDs also manage water pumps during the cleaning process and control conveyor belts to remove excess water from the potatoes.



Seven interns spent the summer at Connexus, taking on key responsibilities within their assigned departments. They participated in offsite tours to explore different methods of electricity production and collaborated on a cross-departmental research project, presenting how Connexus could benefit from artificial intelligence tools.



Our board of directors' annual system tour included two stops: the new South Dayton substation and a Blaine neighborhood where Connexus is converting aged overhead lines to modern underground facilities, enhancing reliability and resiliency.



This year's Connexus employee picnic featured carnival games, a dunk tank, food trucks, live music and a prize raffle.



Connexus VP Alison Miles stands with Derek Guetter from the ATV Big Air Tour. The professional daredevils praised the speed and quiet performance of their electric motorbikes at the Anoka and Washington County Fairs.



Several rounds of intense storms swept through our service area the week of Aug. 26, toppling countless trees and 100+ utility poles. Nearly 40,000 members experienced power interruptions. Journey lineworker Tom Jensen is pictured completing restoration work near Isanti.