



Cover Photo: Jone Anderson, August Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

August 2020

## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

## FOR OVER

# 75

## YEARS

### Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

This past June, Agralite notified members of the annual meeting that was scheduled on June 25th, a delay from the original May date due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the meeting did not have the required 50 members in attendance to constitute a quorum. As a result of this, the cooperative will take up the business of approving the required reports and acceptance of the results of the mail-in director elections at next year's annual meeting. I would like to extend a note of appreciation to those members who did come out to hear about their electric cooperative.

Even in light of the challenges that 2020 is bringing us, Agralite is having a decent year. Year to date margins continue to be positive. Overall, member sales are down slightly from the previous year due in part to a slow down in usage of some large industrial loads that the cooperative serves. Early irrigation sales have been strong and this helps to offset a decline in sales to other categories.

Recently, Agralite energized the new Dublin substation that will serve members in the southeast part of Swift county. With the completion of the new Dublin substation this year and the new Swenoda substation last year, the cooperative will begin the process of retiring the old Cashel substation located along Hwy 29 south of Benson. Great River Energy will begin retiring portions of the transmission line that serve the old substation. A couple segments of the transmission line poles will remain that Agralite has installed under build distribution lines. With the completion of these two new substations, additional capacity and back feed capabilities will be provided to the southern part of the Agralite service area.

Do you have any plans for additional grain storage or upgrades to any grain dryers? If you have plans that will change your electrical need, please contact the cooperative at your earliest convenience to allow us time to meet with you to determine what upgrades would be necessary. Also, contacting us early will allow the cooperative to schedule the improvements in a timely fashion.

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**Summer Office Hours:**  
7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Agralite Electric Co-op**  
*We're member-owned!*

320 US-12, Benson, MN  
(320) 843-4150  
1-800-950-8375  
www.agralite.coop



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### Energy Saving Tip:

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode. *Source: energy.gov*



Touchstone Energy®  
Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.



# Agralite Cooperative

## 2021 Calendar Photo Contest

### Back By Popular Demand!

Agralite is seeking local photographs for our 2021 calendar contest. Photos should be of a landscape, natural element, or interesting view from within the Agralite service territory. We want you to share the diversity and wonder of our local landscape.

Photos must be submitted by Agralite members. Photos must be submitted by October 16th, 2020. Digital photos only. You must specify the subject of the photo and where it was taken. Please include contact information - account number, phone number, and address in your submission.

Selected photos will receive a \$15 bill credit. Cover photo will receive a \$30 bill credit. Photos will be selected by Agralite employees. Please limit 5 photo submissions per member - 1 winning photo per member.

Submit Your Photos To:  
[mchevalier@agralite.com](mailto:mchevalier@agralite.com)



### Find your account number and win a \$100 credit!

If your account number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) is one of the [four account numbers](#) hidden in this issue, give our office a call by the end of the month and you will receive a \$100 bill credit. If more than one member finds their account number in a single issue, \$100 will be split equally amongst them.

### Congratulations

To Michael Mills for finding his account number in our July issue!

## Six Ways To Make Your Home Office Energy Efficient

Working from home doesn't have to impact your energy bill. Follow these tips to make your home office more efficient.

Working from home, even on a temporary basis, may increase your energy use. It means that you're spending more time using a computer, lights and other appliances at home instead of in your workplace. By improving the energy efficiency of your home office equipment, you can save on energy costs without hampering your productivity.



- 1 Make sure computers and other office equipment are turned off when they're not in use for an extended period.
- 2 Many electronic devices continue to use standby power even after they're turned off. Connect your office equipment to an advanced power strip, which will automatically shut off power to unused devices.
- 3 Set office equipment, such as printers and scanners, to automatically switch to sleep mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help to extend its useful life.
- 4 Use a laptop computer instead of a desktop. Laptops use less than one-third the energy of a typical desktop computer.
- 5 Adjust the thermostat to the unoccupied setting. This avoids wasting energy by conditioning the entire house while you're occupying only a small portion of it. Consider using a ceiling fan to maintain comfort. You can reverse its direction to clockwise in winter, which pushes warm air down.
- 6 Use task lighting with energy-efficient lamps. A desk lamp uses less energy than whole-room lighting.

When purchasing new office equipment, make sure it's ENERGY STAR®-qualified. ENERGY STAR-certified products use less energy than standard models. 925701 According to the U.S. Department of Energy, if every home office product purchased in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR qualified, Americans would save an estimated \$75 million a year in energy costs.

## Knowing What To Do Saved Their Lives

by Carl Henning (CLCP), Safety Coordinator - Safety & Compliance Training Program 2020

When teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power line safety demonstration at their high school, they never dreamed what they had learned would be put to test. Days later, Lee and Ashley were in a car that crashed into a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

"When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on their minds," explains Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program. "We're usually more concerned about whether anyone was injured or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We can forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

If you are in an accident with a utility pole or electrical box (usually painted green), your vehicle may be charged with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. 1642200 Loose wires and other equipment may be in contact with your car or near it—creating a risk for electrocution if you leave the vehicle.

Downed lines and equipment sometimes reveal they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity. This is not always the case but they are just as lethal.

After an accident, stay in the car, and tell others to do the same. If you come upon an accident involving utility poles or equipment, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay away. Call 911 to notify emergency personnel and utility services. Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe to do so.

The safest place to be is almost always inside the car. The only circumstance when you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire—and those instances are rare. If you must exit the vehicle, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to "bunny hop" with your feet together to safety. Doing this will ensure that you are at only one point of contact and will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another, which can be deadly.

Lee and Ashley survived their accident because they had learned what to do. While they waited more than 30 minutes for line crews to arrive and deactivate the power line, Lee and Ashley made sure nobody left the car and warned those who came upon the accident to stay far away.

In accidents with utility poles and equipment, knowledge is crucial in keeping everyone involved safe. Be sure you, your family, and your friends know what to do if they're in accidents with power poles or equipment.

*For more information and to see Lee and Ashley's story, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).*



Ashley Taylor



Lee Whittaker



Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

**Take notice** of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



**Do not** shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



**Know** where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



**Be especially careful** in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible. 1491800



**Do not** place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



**Do not** place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose as an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.



## MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS June 2020

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 2:00 p.m., June 25th, 2020. All members of the Board were present. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, and payment of capital credits of deceased members were approved.

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load management and irrigation. He discussed generator sales, and the community solar program.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of May. She discussed refinancing existing loans, the cushion of credit program, and the 990-tax return. She stated that Agralite hired two new employees, and both will start July 6th. Jenny brought forth Work Order #492, Work Order #493, 2019 990 Tax returns, and Special Equipment WO May 2020 and the Board approved them. 1002701 The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects and outages. He discussed the completion of the Dublin Substation and the AMI project.

Tom gave the safety report.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed the closing of Coal Creek Station and the options available moving forward, the annual meeting, and the Sharing Success program. He also discussed COVID-19 updates.

The July board meeting was set for the 30th.

Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

## POWER RESTORATION FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about the steps of power restoration. Use the word bank if you need help, and check your work in the answer key.

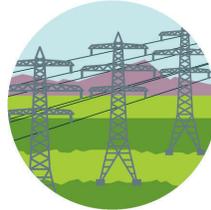


### Word Bank:

distribution  
pads

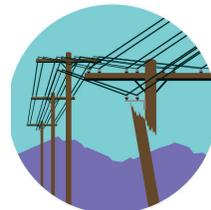
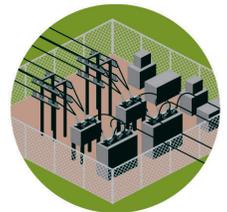
transformer  
substations

transmission



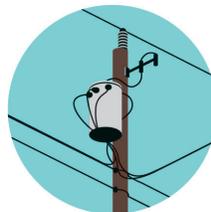
1. High-voltage \_\_\_\_\_ lines are the large towers and cables that supply power to the greatest number of consumer-members. They rarely fail, but if they do, they have to be repaired first.

2. Next, crews inspect distribution \_\_\_\_\_ for damage. They determine if the problem stems from the lines feeding into the equipment itself, or if the problem is further down the line.



3. If the problem still can't be pinpointed, \_\_\_\_\_ power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.

4. If the power outage persists, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on poles or placed on \_\_\_\_\_ for underground electric service.



5. If your home remains without power, the service line between the \_\_\_\_\_ and your home may need repairs.

Answer Key: 1) transmission 2) substations 3) distribution 4) pads 5) transformer

## CURRENT AGRALITE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Draeger, Clinton  
*District 1*

Jeff Hufford, Morris  
*District 2 - Secretary/  
Treasurer*

Bennett Zierke,  
Hancock  
*District 3*

Steve Nelson,  
Starbuck  
*District 4*

Orvin Gronseth,  
Murdock  
*District 5 - President*

Andrea Thomson,  
Benson  
*District 6*

Warren Rau, Appleton  
*District 7 - Vice President*



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Do not call the office for outages

July Energy Payment  
is due August 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover &  
Mastercard.