



Cover Photo: Lisa Slaughter, April Calendar
Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Manager's Report by Kory Johnson

Governance. In the cooperative world, there has been a lot of discussion on cooperative governance. What is governance and how is an electric cooperative governed? According to Business Dictionary, governance is *"the establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members (with the associated accountability), and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization."*

Agralite Electric Cooperative is governed by a 7-member board of directors, each director elected by the members of the district. Each director is elected for a three-year term. The directors follow the laws of the State of Minnesota and also the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of the cooperative. The bylaws define the necessary qualifications of the board member, define the process to have a name placed on the ballot and how the director elections are to be conducted. The bylaws specify that an annual meeting of the membership be held yearly for the purpose of reporting the previous year's fiscal year and to conduct other business as may come before the meeting. The bylaws state the board of directors shall have monthly board meetings. The elected board of the directors of the cooperative set policies by which the cooperative is run. The board hires a Chief Executive Officer to manage the day to day operations of the cooperative following the policies set forth by the board.

I would encourage each of you be actively involved in your cooperative. The process of governance for Agralite begins now. On May 18th, Agralite will hold our annual meeting at the Benson High School. During the meeting, the membership will hear several reports from staff and the board of directors. Also, the membership will hear the results of the 2019 audit and financial reports. This year, the membership will be electing three members to three-year terms on the board of directors. The districts up for election this year are Districts 5, 6, and 7. Please refer to our website for the boundaries of these districts at <http://agralite.coop/content/board-directors>.

Per the bylaws of the cooperative, a member of good standing, residing in the district with a director election taking place, may submit a petition with 15 signatures of members from the district to have their name placed on the ballot. The petitions are due forty days prior to the annual meeting. Per the bylaws of the cooperative, all balloting for the director election is done by mail ballots. Ballots for the election may be mailed to the cooperative or dropped off at the cooperative office and received by close of business day on the date set by the board of directors.

I would encourage you to come out on May 18th and attend the annual meeting of Agralite Electric Cooperative. Become actively involved in your electric cooperative!

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75

YEARS

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We are closed Friday, April
10, for Good Friday.

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

320 US-12, Benson, MN
(320) 843-4150
1-800-950-8375
www.agralite.coop
8:00am - 4:30pm M-F



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 Follow us on Twitter



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

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



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

If you find your account number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) hidden in this issue, give our office a call by the end of the month and you will receive a \$100 bill credit.

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS February 2020

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., February 27, 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 for the month. He attended the War of the Currents presentation at Hancock Elementary put on by The Bakken Museum and Great River Energy. Jonathan discussed the annual Co-Generation Reports, including Average Retail Rate, Avoided Cost Rate, and Summary of DG accounts and the Board accepted them.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of January. She discussed year-end, insurance renewals,

Understanding Demand & Demand Charges: For Commercial, Industrial, and Irrigation Members

What is Demand?

"Demand" is the total amount of electricity being used by a consumer at any one time. Demand varies from hour to hour, day to day, and season to season. This usage, which is expressed in kilowatts (not kilowatt-hours) is called the "demand" on the system. Agralite Electric Cooperative monitors demand over a 15-minute period. The member is charged for the highest 15-minute average recorded on the demand meter. After Agralite reads the meter each month, demand is reset to zero and the meter starts over, recording the highest 15-minute average for the next billing period.

What is Demand Charge?

Demand charge is based on each member's maximum 15-minute demand on the cooperative's distribution system each month. Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW). Members are billed according to kW of demand for their rate.

To illustrate how demand charge can affect an electric bill, let's look at two simple examples:

Example 1:

Running a 20 kW load continuously for 50 hours would result in usage of 1,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) and accrue a demand charge of 20 kW.

$$20 \text{ kW} \times 50 \text{ hours} = 1,000 \text{ kWh}$$

$$\text{Demand} = 20 \text{ kW}$$

Example 2:

Running a 2 kW load for 500 hours would also result in usage of 1,000 kWh but would only accrue a demand of 2 kW.

$$2 \text{ kW} \times 500 \text{ hours} = 1,000 \text{ kWh}$$

$$\text{Demand} = 2 \text{ kW}$$

Both examples use the exact same amount of energy (1,000 kWh) and perform the same amount of work. However, the resulting bill will be very different.

and capital credits. Jenny brought forth Work Order #488 and the Board approved it.

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. He stated that Steve Eix announced his retirement and his last day will be February 28th. Mitch Koosmann has been hired as an apprentice lineman and will start March 9th. He discussed the Dublin Substation and the AMI project. He showed a report of the collectors and routers installed as of 2/21/20. Tom brought forth 2020 Substation Maintenance, 2020 Pole Inspections, 2020 Electrical Testing Services, and 2020 Pad-Mount Inspection & Maintenance contracts for STAR Energy Services and the Board approved them. Tom brought forth 2020 Miscellaneous Underground Construction contract for Integrity Contracting and the Board approved it. Tom brought forth 2020 ROW Clearing and 2020 Foliar Spraying contracts for Carr's Tree Service and the Board approved them.

Tom gave the safety report.

Director Gronseth, Director Hufford, Director Rau, and Director Thomson reported on the East River Energize Forum that they attended. Director Gronseth reported on the GRE Regional Meeting that he attended.

Nick Crank from Eide Bailly joined the meeting to give the 2019 Audit Report and the Board approved it.

The Governance Talk: Fiduciary Duties of a Director video was shown.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed recent meetings that he attended and Great River Energy. He discussed an application for a REED Loan and the Board approved it.

Director Thomson will be the GRE voting delegate at the annual meeting. Director Gronseth will be the CFC voting delegate at the annual meeting. 2 6 6 1 0 6

The March board meeting was set for the 26th. Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

LINEWORKERS KNOW HOW TO GET THE JOB DONE.

LET'S THANK THEM FOR POWERING OUR LIVES.



**Lineworker
Appreciation Day**
April 13, 2020

Remember to #ThankALineworker on April 13!

Lineworkers serve on the frontlines of our nation's energy needs, and on April 13, 2020, Agralite Electric Cooperative, along with other electric cooperatives across the country, will honor the brave men and women who work hard to keep the lights on.

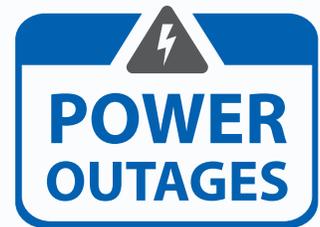
Line crews work around the clock, sometimes in difficult and dangerous conditions, to keep power flowing to our local communities. Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical infrastructure to our electric system, lineworkers are at the heart of our co-op.

When a storm hits, they set aside their personal priorities because Mother

Nature doesn't work around holidays, vacations and birthdays. A service-oriented mentality is one of the many admirable characteristics of an electric lineworker.

Agralite Electric Cooperative is proud to honor the 11 lineworkers that maintain over 2,400 miles of power lines in our service territory.

Agralite Electric Cooperative invites all co-op members to take a moment and thank a lineworker for the important work they do. On April 13, you can use #ThankALineworker on social media to show your support for the brave men and women who power our lives.



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

[Do not call the office for outages](#)

March Energy Payment
is due April 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

2020 Scholarship

Qualify? Please Apply!

2020 Agralite Post-Secondary Education Scholarship Program

Agralite Electric Cooperative post-secondary education scholarship program is now accepting applications. This program is open to the four county region that Agralite provides electric service to: Big Stone, Pope, Stevens, and Swift counties. Agralite Electric Cooperative will award two \$2,500, two \$1,000, and three \$500 scholarships. One of the \$2,500 scholarship awards is intended for individuals interested in becoming an electrical line worker or electrician. These scholarship funds are made available in part from unclaimed capital credits and in part through administration proceeds from The Rural Economic Development Loan program.

Obtain forms and applications from your school counselor, the Agralite Electric Cooperative office, or www.agralite.coop.

The completed application and all other necessary information must be returned to Agralite Electric Cooperative no later than April 17, 2020.

Please call, click or visit Agralite Electric Cooperative for more information today. Applicants who applied for the Basin Electric scholarship may also apply for the Agralite scholarship.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.



NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Energy Saving Tip:



This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants.

Source: energy.gov



LINWORKER GEAR WORD SEARCH



Did you know lineworkers wear special protective gear to keep them safe while working on power lines and other electrical equipment?

Read the descriptions to learn about a lineworker's gear and find the **bolded** words in the puzzle below.

- **Work boots** provide extra protection while lineworkers work with heavy materials that could fall near their feet.
- **Flame-resistant** clothing keeps lineworkers safe from electrical hazards.
- **Insulated gloves** protect lineworkers from electrical shock while working on power lines.
- **Equipment belts** hold several tools that lineworkers need to get the job done.



S	E	E	X	H	M	D	T	V	H	E	Z	N	P	S
G	E	A	A	U	H	J	N	P	G	I	E	V	T	H
B	P	V	T	K	T	Q	A	J	J	Q	X	L	Z	A
S	G	D	O	G	F	A	T	L	Z	H	E	D	I	R
R	I	Z	F	L	G	G	S	W	H	B	H	G	O	D
F	V	X	Y	Z	G	W	I	X	T	R	W	M	Q	H
V	L	P	A	B	W	D	S	N	D	W	L	K	O	A
D	Y	A	O	X	T	O	E	P	C	Y	Y	H	R	T
O	H	X	Y	Q	R	M	R	T	G	M	G	J	X	S
X	M	T	V	B	P	H	E	K	A	J	U	X	Z	B
P	Y	N	L	I	U	S	M	K	B	L	N	N	T	S
U	T	K	U	E	H	M	A	O	A	O	U	G	O	S
K	O	Q	N	L	Q	W	L	S	T	K	O	S	U	Q
C	E	E	H	T	I	F	F	K	D	C	G	T	N	H
S	A	F	E	T	Y	G	O	G	G	L	E	S	S	I



COLD WEATHER RULE

Minnesota residential cold weather law (MN Statute, Ch 235, sec.216B.097) provides that cooperative utilities cannot disconnect a residential consumer between October 15 and April 15, provided that certain conditions are met. These conditions include:

1. The disconnection would affect the customer's primary heat source; and
2. The customer has declared an inability to pay on forms provided by the coop; and
3. The household income of the customer is less than 50% of the state median income, as documented by the customer to the coop; and you have entered into a payment schedule and are reasonably current with your scheduled payments.

It is important to remember that a customer must meet all of the above conditions in order to be covered by the law.

There are several agencies that provide financial assistance to qualifying households. We urge you to check with them for details on available programs. Contact your local health and human services department, or one of the community action councils listed below:

Prairie 5 CAC 320-269-7976

West Central CAC 800-492-4805

Heartland CAC 320-235-0850



Planning A Yard Project?

Don't Just Dig In.



BEFORE DIGGING...



Notify

Notify the one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request 2-3 days before work begins.



Wait

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.



Confirm

Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.



Dig Carefully

Dig carefully around the marks.

Safe Digging

April is National Safe Digging Month. It reminds us all that as we begin beautifying our yards, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged every nine minutes because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, call 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. The service is free. 1 1 7 1 9 0 0

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even "just" planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines.

The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman, and child in the U.S.

Remember that privately owned underground lines will NOT be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home. If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator.

Cogeneration - Annual Notification to Membership

In compliance with Agralite Electric Cooperative's adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Agralite Electric Cooperative is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility.

Agralite Electric Cooperative is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Agralite Electric Cooperative Board.

You can find all of our Cogeneration information on our website at www.agralite.coop. Interested members should contact Agralite Electric Cooperative, 320 E Hwy 12 PO Box 228, Benson, MN 56215 or call 320-843-4150.



How Will You Celebrate Earth Day?



Earth Day is considered one of the world's largest civic events, and on April 22, we can all be a part of this global movement to help the environment.

There are many ways we as individuals can help the environment, and some are easier than you'd think. Below are a few simple actions you can take now to reduce your energy use.

Audit your light bulbs.

Swapping out any remaining incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency, and it's one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bill.

Maintain your HVAC system.

Replace your home air filters to allow your HVAC system to run more efficiently. Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Changing the filters makes your unit run more efficiently – keeping your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Examine your smart or programmable thermostat.

Make sure it is programmed for the current season and family schedule. This is one of the best tools at your fingertips, however, you can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

Seal windows and doors.

Seal leaks with weather stripping and caulk to keep cool air indoors during warm months and prevent cold air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans, and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and increase efficiency.

While these suggestions may not be glamorous actions worthy of a press release or event, they do make a difference. And we're always here to help if you want more information on how you can save energy. Stop by our office or give us a call.

As we celebrate Earth Day this April, let's continue to work together and make a positive impact on our local community – and our beautiful planet.



Residential Standby Generator Systems

Save Money on Your Energy Usage By Allowing Agralite to Control During Peak Demand Time

- Intelligently powers your whole house
- Automatically starts when the power goes out
- Runs on LP or natural gas
- Sold and maintained by Agralite
- Briggs & Stratton - The Power Experts™



Call us at (320) 843-4150



Operation Round Up

Operation Round Up is an organization through Agralite Electric Cooperative where members' utility bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The "rounded up" amount goes into the Agralite Electric Cooperative Trust that is then allocated to organizations and individuals throughout the year. Do you know an organization that benefits the members of Agralite Electric Cooperative? If so, please encourage them to apply. Applications can be found on our website. If you are not contributing to Operation Round Up now and would like to, simply call our office to get signed up.