



Cover Photo: Barb Mulvaney, March Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

March 2021

Three Electrifying Kitchen Appliances That Save Time *And* Energy

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

- 1 Air fryers** are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food—this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.
- 2 Electric griddles** have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once—like a “one-pan” meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.
- 3 Pizza** brings people together, so why not consider a **pizza maker** for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multi-functional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy. To learn about additional ways to save energy at home, visit www.agralite.coop.

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communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75

YEARS

CONTENTS

Page 1 ► **Three Electrifying Kitchen Appliances That Save Time *And* Energy**

Page 2 ► **Manager's Article, Find Your Account Number And Win, Energy Tip**

Page 3 ► **What is Beneficial Electrification?, Cogeneration - Annual Notification To Membership**

Page 4 ► **2021 Agralite Scholarship, Three Easy Ways To Save Energy In The Kitchen, Remember Electrical Safety**

Page 5 ► **Crews Work Quickly, Safely When Storms Knock Down Power Lines, Cold Weather Rule, Paul Reiman Retires After 37 Years**

Page 6 ► **Board Meeting Minutes, Energy Explorers Crossword**

Agralite Electric Co-op

We're member-owned!

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



 Like us on Facebook

We're Closed April 2



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.



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.

Energy Saving Tip:



Don't keep your refrigerator too cold.

The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source: www.energy.gov



Manager's Article by Kory Johnson, General Manager

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Agralite Electric Cooperative, many of you would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our members receive uninterrupted power 24/7. These are the guys that respond in the middle of the night or in a blizzard to restore power when service is interrupted.



"Lineworker" is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they work on or near energized power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. The Agralite line crew represents over 150 years of combined service to the cooperative. How else can you explain the willingness to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That's why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at Agralite, it's important to note that there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-op. Member Service Representatives are always standing by to take your calls and questions. Our Information Technology (IT) experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. These are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn't be able to "bring the light" to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent Agralite, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see these guys in the big bucket trucks working to provide you reliable electric service, give them a wave and a smile as you pass by. 1356800 I hope you'll join me in thanking them for their exceptional service. I also hope you'll remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep.

What is Beneficial Electrification?

If you're like most Americans, you're interested in saving money on energy costs and in doing your part to help the environment. But wouldn't it be great if you could do both? Well, you can! It's through a concept called "beneficial electrification." This utility industry term means the innovations in energy technologies are creating new ways to use electricity instead of on-site fossil fuels, such as propane, natural gas and fuel oil, in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs.

In essence, by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. As Agralite Electric Cooperative and other utilities shift to more options that include renewable energy sources to make existing generation technologies cleaner, electricity will require less fossil fuel per kilowatt-hour of energy produced.

So, here's how this concept impacts you. It means that electric appliances such as your water heater, clothes dryer, oven, and even your lawn care equipment have the potential to become greener. When Agralite Electric Cooperative takes advantage of advances in technology and the market at the generation point (how the electricity is produced), it means those efficiencies are inherently passed along to you, the consumer-member.

Electricity Is Getting Cleaner.

Because large appliances have a typical lifespan of about 10 years, it means that you are able to benefit from the flexibility of the grid in addition to the increased efficiency of the particular appliance. In other words, the high efficiency electric oven you have today could be powered by renewable sources in the near future. This would not be the case with gas appliances where you are essentially locked into the technology of that gas appliance for the 10-year lifespan.

As Agralite Electric Cooperative is able to tap into more renewable options in the future, your electric appliance has the potential to become greener and more energy efficient. The only way you would be able to benefit from this trend is through an electric appliance.

Small Steps To Help The Environment

For consumers and homeowners looking for more environmentally-friendly options, choosing electric appliances, tools, and cars over those powered by fossil fuels is an easy solution. Whether through electric lawn mowers, blowers, and weed whackers (plug-in or rechargeable) or through electric water heaters and other appliances, beneficial electrification is a means to reducing greenhouse gases and helping our environment. It can also translate into a better quality of life. For example, when you can trade the loud rumble of a gas-powered mower or blower for the quiet efficiency of electric versions, you eliminate the exhaust emissions and the unpleasant noise.

How we're doing our part to help the environment

As the overall energy sector continues to evolve, Agralite Electric Cooperative is striving to take advantage of the advances in technology and the opportunities of the market as they become available. This means Agralite Electric Cooperative can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable, and affordable power to our community.

We also promote energy efficiency through programs like our Energy Wise programs and Renewable Energy Credit Program. In addition, through our SmartHub app, we offer our members the convenience and ability to manage and monitor their energy use. To save you money, we also offer rebates for appliances, heat pumps, and lighting to name a few.

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. 555700 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.



2021 Agralite Scholarship - *Qualify? Please Apply!*

Attention college students! Agralite Electric Cooperative will again this year award scholarships to area students enrolled in secondary education. This year, the cooperative will award two \$2,500 scholarships, two \$1,000 scholarships, and three \$500 scholarships. The cooperative reserves one of the \$2,500 scholarships for an individual pursuing a degree as an electric line worker or an electrician. The application for the Agralite scholarships is available on our website or at the office.

[The application is due into the Agralite office by April 16th, 2021.](#)

Scholarship applications can be found on the Agralite website at <https://agralite.coop/content/scholarships>.

Three Easy Ways To Save Energy In The Kitchen

		
1	2	3
When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances.	Unplug gadgets and appliances that consume energy even when they're not in use.	Only run full loads when using the dishwasher.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14!
Set your clocks forward by one hour.



REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY

As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting:



TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.



DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to the ground and be electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.



Crews Work Quickly, Safely When Storms Knock Down Power Lines

When the lights go out, Agralite Electric Cooperative crews spring to action. We work with Great River Energy, our wholesale electric supplier, to restore power quickly and safely. Severe Weather Awareness Week, April 12-16, is a good time to refresh your knowledge on what to do if your power goes out and how your power is restored.

Some outages are very brief, but when severe weather leaves widespread damage, outages can last longer. At the same time homeowners start gathering flashlights, crews of line technicians are dispatched to restore power as quickly as possible.



To prepare for a power outage:

- Create an emergency kit with food, supplies and flashlights
- Have a place to store food safely
- Know how to check breakers and fuses during a power outage
- Test your generator if you have one available

Learn more about preparing for a power outage at Great River Energy's YouTube page or at <https://bit.ly/2KxclwV>.

When cooperatives get to work restoring power, safety is always the top priority. Crews give immediate attention to dangerous situations, such as downed power lines on roadways or streets. Typically, local police or fire station personnel are called to secure the area until electric cooperative employees can restore power.

It's important to stay away from downed power lines, and to treat all downed power lines as though they are energized. If you run over a downed power line, stay in your vehicle and call 911. If you can't stay in your vehicle, jump with both feet together and shuffle away from the downed power line.

Electric cooperatives regularly update emergency response plans to prepare for outages. Employees train for major events and understand their role in the power restoration process. Electric co-ops also subscribe to mutual aid agreements, which allows them to get assistance from neighboring utilities when major power outages occur.

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

Happy Retirement
Paul 34 YEARS

In October, we said congratulations and good luck to another longtime employee at Agralite, Paul Reiman. Paul has been a Crew Foreman with the cooperative for 34 years. We will miss Paul and wish him all the best in the next phase of his life.

Thank you, Paul, for outstanding service and dedication over the last 34 years!



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

Do not call the office for outages

February Energy Payment
is due March 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

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.

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

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS January 2021

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., January 28, 2021. All members of the Board were present via Zoom. 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 demand for 2020. He discussed the Brigg's generator program and Community Solar. There was a total of 30,504 KWH's produced on the community solar array in 2020. 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 preliminary margins for the month of December. She discussed margin allocation credits, the Paycheck Protection Program, and year-end items. They have begun gathering information for the Power Systems Engineering cost of service study. Jenny brought forth Work Order #504 and Work Order #505 and the Board approved them.

The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

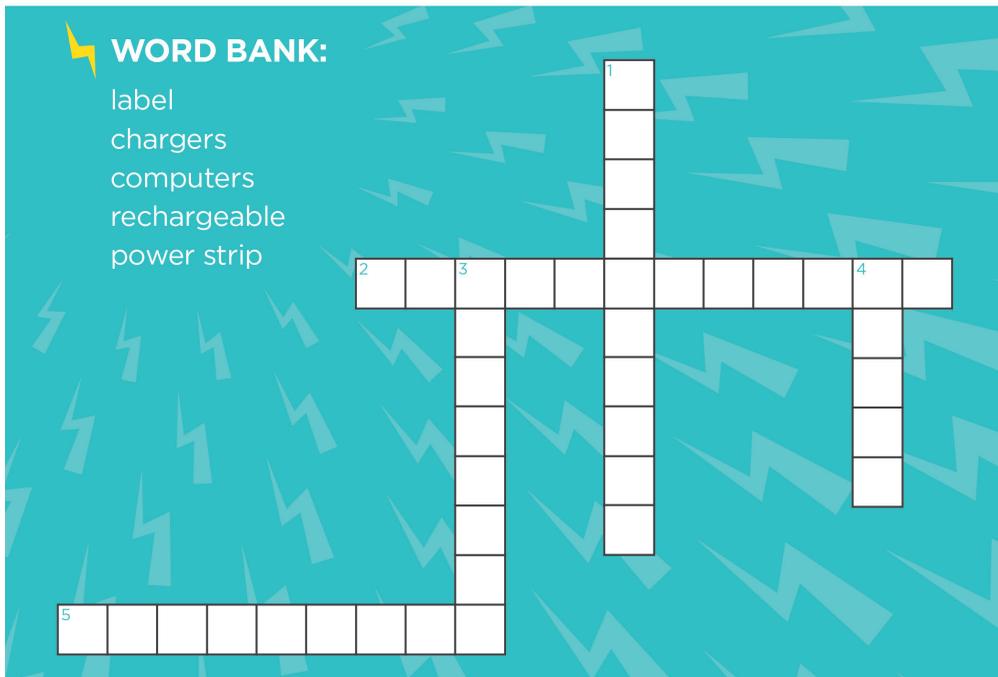
ELECTRONICS EFFICIENCY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Did you know there are ways you can reduce your electronics energy use? Complete the crossword puzzle below to learn about electronics efficiency.

WORD BANK:

label
chargers
computers
rechargeable
power strip



1 DOWN: Use a _____ with an on/off switch when powering multiple electronics to easily manage energy use.

2 ACROSS: For devices that require batteries, use _____ ones, which are more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

3 DOWN: Unplug electronic products, like _____, when you're not using them.

4 DOWN: Electronics that include the ENERGY STAR® _____ are the most energy efficient.

5 ACROSS: Many _____ come with a sleep mode or power management feature, which can save \$30 on annual energy costs.

ANSWER KEY 1. DOWN: POWER STRIP 2. ACROSS: RECHARGEABLE 3. DOWN: CHARGERS 4. DOWN: LABEL 5. ACROSS: COMPUTERS

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

Tom gave the safety report.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed meetings he attended, wholesale power contracts, and WAPA capacity. He discussed the Engan Associates and Breitbach Construction Building Feasibility Study Proposal for Services and the Board approved it.

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the meeting via Zoom.

An executive session was held. 1606500

The 2021 Annual Meeting was discussed. Don Wilcox reviewed proposed revisions to the Bylaws and the Board approved the revisions to present to the membership for approval.

The February board meeting was set for the 25th via Zoom.

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