



Cover Photo: Mary Nolting, November Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

November 2020

## Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

Over the years, you've probably heard or read about Agralite Electric Cooperative's concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart. It's who we are as a co-op.

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made us pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission—to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our Operation Round-Up program, where we take donations from generous members like you who have "rounded up" the amount due on their electric bill to help our most vulnerable neighbors pay their bills. Or assisting the local food pantries, providing funds to the local fire departments and first responders, and many other humanitarian efforts.

We also have a strong commitment to safety—not just for our employees, but for our community as well. We visit schools to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We hold safety demonstrations at community meetings and other gatherings. We have also had our safety demonstration trailer at our local county fairs.

Agralite Electric Cooperative invests in the economic development of the community through an active role in our local Chamber of Commerce. You'll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports, volunteering at charitable events, and volunteering on the fire department. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is—after all, without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on; but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all.

If there's anything we can do to help you—whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discuss payment plan options during these difficult times—please reach out to us at 320-843-4150.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. 499402 And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you.

## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

## FOR OVER

# 75

## YEARS

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## CLOSED:

November 11, 26, & 27

## Agralite Electric Co-op

*We're member-owned!*

320 US-12, Benson, MN  
(320) 843-4150  
1-800-950-8375  
[www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop)



 Like us on Facebook

 Follow us on Twitter



Touchstone Energy®  
Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

## Energy Saving Tip:



Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## 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.

## 2021 Basin Scholarship - Qualify? Please Apply!

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a wholesale power supplier to Agralite, is again offering this generous scholarship. Basin Electric's scholarship program began in 1990. Each year, Agralite solicits scholarship applications throughout our service area.

**How Much Is The Scholarship?** The Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) Scholarship Program will award more than 180 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. The scholarships must be used for educational costs, and the student must enter college in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. Checks will be made payable to the school, and will be distributed to the school by BEPC. Scholarships will be distributed in August.

**Who Is Eligible To Receive The Scholarship?** Dependent children (including adopted or step-children) of member-system consumers and dependent children of member-cooperative employees are eligible. The applicant must also be a U.S. citizen and enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic record, potential to succeed, leadership, and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

**How do I apply?** Obtain forms and applications from your school counselor, the Agralite Electric Cooperative office, or [www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop). 1319500

**The completed application and all other necessary information must be returned to Agralite Electric Cooperative no later than February 19, 2021.**

*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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## 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

## Four Ways To Save Energy In The Kitchen

Ah, the kitchen. It's undeniably one of the most-loved rooms in our homes. It's where we gather with family and friends for our favorite meals and memories. But like most of us, you probably aren't thinking about saving energy when you're planning that perfect dish. *Here are four ways you can save energy in the kitchen with minimal effort:*

- ▶ When possible, cook with smaller appliances. Using smaller kitchen appliances, like slow cookers, toaster ovens, and convection ovens is more energy efficient than using your large stove or oven. According to the Department of Energy, a toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.
- ▶ Unplug appliances that draw phantom energy load. Halloween may be over, but it's possible you have energy vampires in your kitchen – these are the appliances that draw energy even when they're not in use, like coffee makers, microwaves, and toaster ovens. The Department of Energy has estimated that one home's energy vampires left plugged in year-round can add up to \$100-\$200 in wasted energy costs. Unplug them when they're not in use, or better yet, use a power strip for convenient control.
- ▶ Help large appliances work less. There are small ways you can help your larger kitchen appliances run more efficiently. For example, keep range-top burners clean from spills and fallen foods so they'll reflect heat better. 790600 When it's time to put leftovers in the refrigerator, make sure the food is covered and allow it to cool down first. That way, the fridge doesn't have to work harder to cool warm food.
- ▶ Use your dishwasher efficiently. Only run full loads, and avoid using the "rinse hold" function on your machine for just a few dirty dishes; it uses 3-7 gallons of hot water each use. You can also save energy by letting your dishes air dry. If your dishwasher doesn't have an automatic air-dry switch, simply turn it off after the final rinse and prop the door open so the dishes will dry faster.

**Bonus Tip:** The best way to save energy is to not use it. Try a no-bake dessert recipe. Your sweet tooth (and energy bill!) will thank you.

By slightly adjusting a few of your habits in the kitchen, you'll be on your way to energy savings. Contact us to learn about more ways you can save energy and money at home.



**Winter Office Hours**  
8:00am – 4:30pm



**Call Day or Night**  
1.888.884.3887

Do not call the office for outages

October Energy Payment  
is due November 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

## Be A Smart Cookie: Holiday Baking Tips

Illinois Extension Safe Electricity.org

If you're planning to cook feasts or create treats this holiday season, follow these basic safety tips:

### Test Smoke Detectors

Make sure they're working properly



### Watch Your Sleeves

This is not a good time for loose sleeves

### Put a Lid on it

Have lids handy in case of a grease fire



### Old Things Don't Become New

Don't use appliances in disrepair



### Not Child's Play

Keep children and pets away from cooking areas



### Keeping Time

Use a timer when the oven or stove is on

### Stay With it

Don't leave the room if you are broiling, frying or simmering food



### How the Cookie Crumbles

Consider having a fire extinguisher on hand



### Pay Attention

Take a nap **after** the feast

## 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 September 2020

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., October 1, 2020. All members of the Board were present, except Kathy Draeger who joined via phone. 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 of August and the ALM project. He discussed DC fast charging opportunities in our area.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of August. She discussed the 2021 budget and renewals. She discussed COVID-19 precautions and the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program. Jenny brought forth Work Order #497, Work Order #498, Work Order #499, and Special Equipment WO August 2020 and the Board approved them. 1369500 Jenny brought forth a Resolution Authorizing the Amendment of the Retirement Security Plan 24079-001, 24079-002, & 24079-003 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

# ENERGY SAVINGS PLAN FOR THE FAMILY



There are several easy ways you and your family can save energy at home! Print this page, assign each energy-saving task, then place it on your fridge so your family can work together to save energy – and money.

WAY TO SAVE ENERGY	ASSIGNED TO:
Turn off lights in empty rooms.	
Replace any incandescent and/or CFL bulbs with LED bulbs.	
Turn off electronics that aren't in use (TVs, gaming consoles, etc.).	
Unplug phone chargers that aren't in use.	
Turn off ceiling fans in empty rooms.	
Adjust the thermostat when you leave the house. (Set it higher in the summer and lower in the winter.)	
Once a week, make a meal that doesn't require cooking in the kitchen. (Make PB&Js or cook outside.)	
Make sure all doors and windows are closed when the air conditioner or heater is running.	



discussed line crew projects, conversions, and outages. He discussed the AMI project, substation retirements and the CVEC shutdown.

Tom gave the safety report.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed 2021 rates and union contract approvals. He also reviewed discussions with Enervision and other fixed members of GRE. He discussed meetings with GRE, East River, and Basin, and the Midwest Consumers meeting.

Kory discussed the McKenzie lawsuit against Basin and the process moving forward.

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the meeting to discuss the sale of property to the State of Minnesota for the US Highway 12 improvement project and the Board approved it.

The Board approved the four-year union contract for both the outside and inside union.

The October board meeting was set for the 29th. Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.