



Photo: Megan Goebel, April Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

April 2022

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75
YEARS

The Power Behind Your Power - Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 11

You've likely noticed Agralite Electric Cooperative's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough—but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 11, I thought I'd share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours and outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know that to become a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, Agralite Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Here at Agralite Electric Cooperative, ten lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year.

Article continues on page 2



LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community.

CONTENTS

Page 1 ► The Power Behind Your Power

Page 2 ► 2022 Photo Calendars, Plan Ahead To Call Before You Dig, Find Your Account Number And Win, Energy Tip

Page 3 ► Manager's Article, New Services and Service Upgrades for 2022, Work Zone Awareness Week

Page 4 ► We Love Trees, Too, Cold Weather Rule

Page 5 ► Director Nominations Now Open for Districts 3 & 4, Sample Petition for Candidacy, Can You Dig It?

Page 6 ► Board Meeting Minutes, Energy Explorers Quiz

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

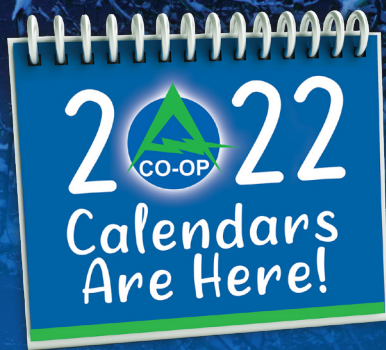
320 US-12, Benson, MN
(320) 843-4150
1-800-950-8375
www.agralite.coop

 Like us on Facebook



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.



Pick up your calendar featuring member photos at the Agralite office!

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



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 Richard Huebner for finding his account number in the February newsletter!

Energy Saving Tip:



When streaming content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than a tablet or laptop.

Streaming with devices that earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25% to 30% less energy than standard equipment.

Source: Department of Energy

The Power Behind Your Power *Continued*

To do this, they maintain approximately 2,500 miles of power lines across four counties. In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire. 572001 Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away.

Line crews now use laptops, tablets, drones and other technologies to map outages, survey damage and troubleshoot problems. Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our community.

Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. Afterall, lineworkers are the power behind your power.

Please join us as we recognize them on April 11, and follow ["#ThankALineworker"](#) on social media to see how others are recognizing lineworkers.

Plan Ahead To Call Before You Dig

Digging without locating underground utilities could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages, or cause severe electrical shock. This is true regardless of how much area your project will cover or whether you consider the job to be large or small. To help stay safe, make use of the national underground utility locating service for free by calling 8-1-1.

The 8-1-1 "Call Before You Dig" number will route you to your local utility locating service. Make sure to tell the operator where and when you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint.

[There are different colors of paint and flags that mark the underground utilities, and each color is universal to what utility is buried.](#)

Red	Electric	Yellow	Gas/Petroleum Pipeline
Orange	Communications, Telephone/ CATV	Purple	Reclaimed Water
Blue	Potable Water	White	Premark site of intended excavation
Green	Sewer/Drainage		

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 8-1-1, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utilities can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are before ever putting a shovel in the ground.

It is important to understand that 8-1-1 locators do not locate privately installed facilities. If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator. Examples of private utilities include underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.

Once all of your underground utilities have been located, it is time to start digging, but be sure to wear all of the proper protective gear before putting the shovel into the earth.

For more information about 8-1-1 and digging safety, visit [Call811.com](#) and [SafeElectricity.org](#).

Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

In November, President Biden signed a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package into law. What impact does this have for Agralite Electric and other cooperatives? NRECA secured a number of important wins for electric co-ops in the package. As a result, the new law includes significant investment and funding opportunities for electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. Much work still needs to take place before federal agencies begin funding infrastructure projects across the nation. The Department of Energy, USDA, FCC and other agencies will now work to outline and begin implementing these programs. The timeline for when and how federal agencies work to outline these programs will vary from agency to agency but is expected to take months. As these programs are created by federal agencies, this document provides a snapshot of the relevant funding opportunities for co-ops. Over \$65 billion dollars has been earmarked to help bring high-speed broadband to underserved rural areas of the country. In our area, Federated Telephone Cooperative and Farmers Mutual Telephone have brought high speed broadband to much of the Agralite service area over the past several years.

The funding package also includes \$10 billion for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. \$7.5 billion of these dollars will be allocated to states who will partner with private entities that can include electric cooperatives to implement the charging network. Also included will be \$2.5 billion to fund zero-emission Electric School Buses. The package also designates \$250 million for physical and cyber security. This would be used to encourage investment to detect, prevent, respond to, and recover in the event of a cyber security attack.

Grid Modernization and Resiliency is one area that is of particular interest to Agralite. The package includes \$5 billion for resiliency grants to supplement existing grid hardening efforts, reduce the risk of power lines causing wildfires and the likelihood/consequences of disruptive weather events. And a key part is that 30 percent is set aside for utilities that sell 4 million MWh or less of electricity per year. Agralite would fall into the category of less than 4 million MWh per year. Also included are dollars for replacement of inefficient transformers, \$3 billion dollars for Smart Grid Investments Grants, \$3.4 billion for wildfire mitigation, \$3.5 billion for Flood Mitigation along with other items. The package also includes significant dollars for Clean Energy. This includes dollars for Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage.

It provides \$3.5 billion for carbon capture large-scale pilot projects and six demonstration projects (two each at coal power plants, natural gas power plants, and non-power industrial plants).

It provides \$400 million for wind energy RD&D and \$320 million for solar energy RD&D at DOE. 1207000 It provides \$5 billion for the SCALE Act, which would enable more CO2 capture by building out storage infrastructure, increasing resources for CO2 storage well permitting, and creating a financing program for CO2 pipelines.

It provides \$500 million in grants to local educational agencies, schools, nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations or community partner for school upgrades, repairs or renovations to reduce energy costs, improve health, install renewable energy technologies, install zero-emission vehicle (EV) infrastructure (for school bus/fleets or general public), and to purchase or lease zero-emissions vehicles.

It authorizes and provides \$125 million for hydroelectric production incentives, while also authorizing and providing \$75 million for hydroelectric improvement incentives.

As you can see, there will be dollars available through this program for modernization of many kinds of infrastructure including possible opportunities for your electric cooperative to take advantage of. Agralite will continue to follow these developments and look for opportunities to improve the reliability and efficiency of our distribution system.



New Services and Service Upgrades for 2022

After a long winter, we are starting to see signs of spring. For the crews at Agralite, that means starting construction. This includes new services and upgrades for irrigation, grain bins and residential services along with our normal line upgrades and maintenance. 1005501 The utility industry supply chain is volatile right now with long lead times. A typical transformer used to take 2 to 3 months for delivery, we are now seeing lead times of 6 to 9 months.

If you are planning construction that requires a new electrical service or upgrading your existing service, I encourage you to contact Agralite sooner than later to work with our engineering and operations department so they can properly plan and schedule material for your electrical needs. [You can contact the office at 1-800-950-8375.](tel:1-800-950-8375)

April 11th-15th

**WORK
ZONE**

AWARENESS WEEK

**Move over and slow
down. Help keep utility
employees safe.**



We Trees, Too.

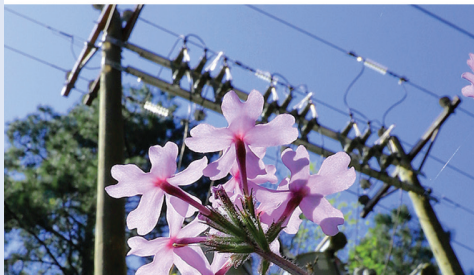
We know everyone in our community enjoys the beauty and shade trees provide. But trees and power lines can be a dangerous mix without regular trimming during the growing season.



If you see us out in the community trimming, remember the many benefits it brings:

- Keeps power lines clear of tree limbs
- Helps us restore power outages more quickly
- Keeps crews and members of our community safe
- Reduces unexpected costs for repairs

Trimming improves service reliability for you, the members we serve.



**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.

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.



Digging into an Outdoor Project?



Before you dig, dial 811 or visit www.call811.com to protect underground utilities. Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Contact 811 first and help keep our community safe.

COLD WEATHER RULE & ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOTICE

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 60% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by Agralite Electric Cooperative or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from Agralite Electric Cooperative.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects

Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between October 1 and April 30, Agralite Electric Cooperative must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 60% of the state median income (\$67,764 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2022.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.
- Agralite Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact our billing department to set up a payment plan.

**Prairie 5 CAC 320-269-7976 West Central CAC 800-492-4805
Heartland CAC 320-235-0850**

Director Nominations Now Open for Districts 3 & 4

Would you like to serve as a Director on the Agralite Electric Cooperative Board for your district? Agralite Electric Cooperative is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by our membership. The cooperative’s service territory is divided into seven districts with each district represented by a director who resides in that district. Directors elected serve a three-year term.

This year we will have an election for directors for Districts 3 and 4.

District 3 includes the townships of: Darnen, Hodges, Horton, Moore, Walden, Blue Mounds, Hoff, and Langhei.

District 4 includes the townships of: Minnewaska, Glenwood, Barsness, Chippewa Falls, Bangor, Rolling Forks, and Gilchrist.

Any member meeting the qualifications as specified in the Bylaws of Agralite Electric Cooperative may become a candidate for election to the Board by submitting a written petition for nomination with the signatures of no less than 15 members who are residents of the district for which the election is being held. All voting will be done by mail. Ballots will be mailed to all Agralite voting members on record in these districts before the Annual Meeting. The election takes place at the Annual Meeting on June 30, 2022.

Please call 320-843-4150 or stop by our office if you have questions on the nominating process or about becoming a director, and to pick up a petition for nomination.

Petitions are due to the office no later than 4:30 pm on Friday, May 20th, 2022.

AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PETITION FOR NOMINATION

To: Jeff Hufford, Board Secretary

I _____, would like to be a candidate to serve as a director for Agralite Electric Cooperative representing District No. _____. I hereby certify that I meet the requirements set forth in Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Cooperative and I request that my name be placed on the ballot that will be mailed to the members with the notice of the annual meeting of the Cooperative to be held on June 30, 2022. I respectfully file this petition with a minimum of fifteen (15) members of the Cooperative who are residents of District No. _____ and who support my candidacy.

Signature of Candidate

We, the undersigned, certify that we are members of Agralite Electric Cooperative and that we reside in District No. _____. We are familiar with the requirement for serving as a director of the Cooperative and we believe that the above-named candidate meets the requirements to become and/or remain a director of Agralite Electric Cooperative representing District No. _____. By our signatures below we show our support for this Petition for Nomination. We further attest that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the above-named candidate is a member of Agralite Electric Cooperative and is a resident of District No. _____.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Phone #	Date
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

CAN YOU
DIG IT?



An underground utility line is **damaged once every 9 minutes** because someone didn't call 811.



811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.



Once **all of your utilities** have been located, then you can start your digging project!



Call 811, the "Call Before You Dig Number," at least **2 business days** prior to digging.



Even if you previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it is best to call before starting a new project.



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 February 2022

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., February 24, 2022. 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.

Tom brought forth 2022 Substation Maintenance, 2022 Pole Inspection, and 2022 Pad-Mount Inspection contracts with STAR Energy Services; 2022 Underground Construction contract with Integrity Construction; and 2022 Right of Way Cleaning and 2022 Foliar Spraying contracts with Carr's Tree Service, and the Board approved them all.

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

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the meeting. An executive session was held.

Aaron Clayton, with Eide Bailly, joined the meeting via Zoom to present the 2021 Audit Report and the Board approved it.

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load management. He stated a new all-time billing peak for East River of 727 Mw was set. His department has been busy fielding calls regarding high bill complaints due to below average temperatures through the month of January. He stated that Basin Scholarship applications were due on February 18th and Agralite Scholarship applications are due by April 6th.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LINEWORKERS?

Every April, we celebrate lineworkers and the hard work they do to make sure we have electricity to power our lives.

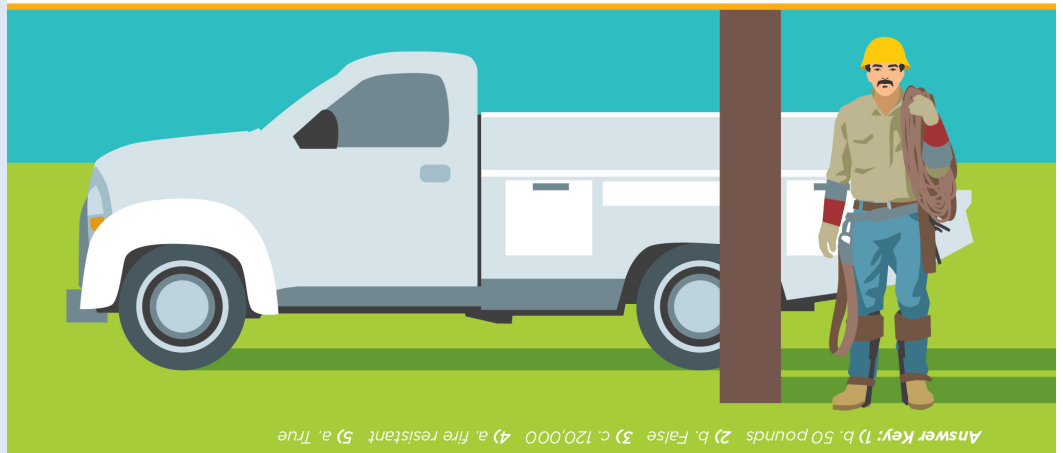
How much do you know about lineworkers?

Take the quiz below to find out!

(Use the answer key to check your work.)



1. Lineworkers have to wear a lot of gear to do their jobs. A lineworker's gear can weigh up to _____.
a. 15 pounds b. 50 pounds c. 80 pounds
2. Lineworkers maintain and repair electrical lines, but they do not install them.
a. True (no installation) b. False (They maintain, repair *and* install lines.)
3. There are approximately _____ lineworkers in the United States.
a. 50,000 b. 90,000 c. 120,000
4. Lineworkers must wear _____ clothing to protect them from a possible electric arc while working.
a. fire resistant b. extra thick c. leather or rubber
5. Lineworkers must wear special conductive boots when climbing a steel structure.
a. True b. False



Answer Key: 1) b. 50 pounds 2) b. False 3) c. 120,000 4) a. fire resistant 5) a. True

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of January. She discussed NRECA's virtual infrastructure bill briefing and the RUS loan draw down. She discussed PreferredOne premiums and a refund for 2021 due to a surplus and the Board approved a refund to current employees. She discussed the Great River Energy Regional Meeting she attended virtually. Jenny brought forth Work Order #521, Work Order #522, and Special Equipment January 2022 and the Board approved them. 629503 The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Kory gave the safety report.

The East River Energize Forum was discussed by Director Gronseth, Director Rau, and

Director Hufford.

The Board reviewed the composition of the seven districts as per the Bylaws and declared the districts as equal.

Director Thomson will be the GRE Annual Meeting voting delegate. Director Rau will be the alternate.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed a meeting with Chad Fries of CVEC to discuss their possible solar project. He discussed potential legislative grants and workman's comp. refunds.

The March Board meeting was set for the 31st. Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.