



Photo: David Tollefson, August Calendar Photo Contest Winner

## Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

August 2022

EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75  
YEARS

### Landscaping For Reliability

*Clear lines lead to a safe and reliable electric system*

Keeping the area around power lines clear is critical to maintaining a safe, reliable electric system. Every year, Agralite Electric Cooperative inspects its lines by ground. We are looking for trees that are growing too near — or could grow too near — a power line, equipment needing repair or replacement, easement encroachments, and anything that might jeopardize safe, reliable electric service.

#### Why Is This Important?

Maintaining a clear right of way is important to ensure safe, reliable operation of transmission lines. Trees that are dead, weak or leaning all have the potential to contact a power line, which can break the electrical current and disrupt service to surrounding homes and businesses. Sometimes tree crews must clear branches or limbs from the area before repairs can be made.

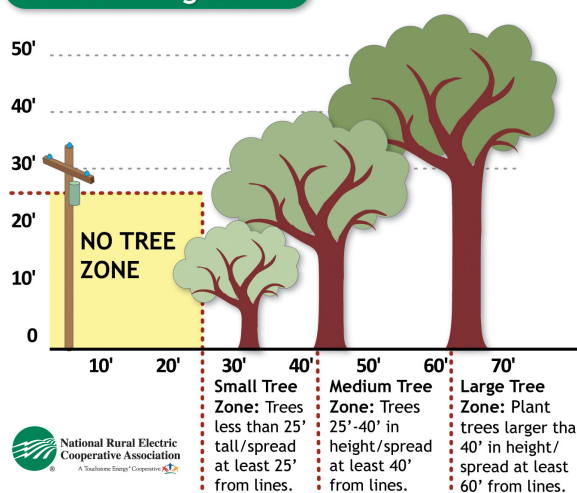
Every minute spent clearing a tree or branch off a power line is a minute in delay of restoring power. It's often those trees that were left near the power line that can blow into the lines during a storm and cause the most damage. That damage has an economic impact on the co-op and on rates to members. When trees or other objects are close to a power line, an "arc flash" can occur. An arc flash is a short circuit through the air that can flash over from an energized conductor (like a power line) to trees, people or other objects. Arc flashes produce intense heat and light, and can cause serious or fatal injuries, widespread power outages and/or fires.

#### What Can You Do?

If there are power lines on your property, avoid planting trees that could grow into them. Plants you can have below and near lines include perennial flowers, vegetable gardens, pollinator habitats with native flowers and grasses, or low-growing shrubs.

Keep in mind you should never plant in the right of way of a power line. If an emergency were to occur, our employees use that corridor to make repairs. *If you aren't sure what is allowed, you can always give us a call at 320-843-4150.*

#### Tree Planting Guide



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**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



**Closed Labor Day**  
**September 5**



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.

### Congratulations

to Ronald Binsfeld for finding his account number in the June newsletter!

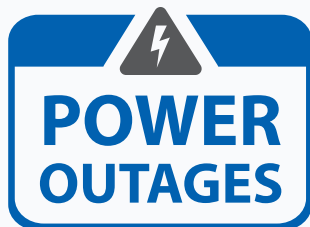
### Energy Saving Tip:



**An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.**

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



**Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887**

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

July Energy Payment  
is due August 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.



### Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

The Agralite Electric Cooperative annual meeting is over for another year! I would like to thank many of you for coming out to listen to reports about your electric cooperative. As you heard, the cooperative had a great year in 2021 with strong sales and margins for the year. 1397100 I would like to extend my thanks to Kathy Weckwerth for providing the entertainment and to the West Central Cattlemen's Association for preparing a fantastic meal for us. Thank you to Valu Ford of Morris for displaying the new Ford Lightning electric pickup and to the University of Minnesota Morris for displaying the electric Polaris Ranger and the electric bikes.

One topic I discussed during the annual meeting was "Grid Reliability". Over the past few weeks, there has been a lot of discussion in the media about the threat of potential blackouts on the power grid, similar to what Texas saw during winter storm Uri. CBS News' headline read "Facing a sizzling summer, large parts of the US risk blackouts, government agency warns", the Wall Street Journal reads "America's Power Grid is Increasingly Unreliable", Energy Wire reported "Grid monitor warns of US blackouts in 'sobering report'". Are we in for black out this summer? I will state it this way, it is possible but I do not believe it is very probable.

Just as Agralite is a member of Great River Energy, GRE is a member of a regional system operator consisting of utilities across the Midwest called MISO. MISO works to dispatch the most economical generation resources across its footprint to serve the needs of consumers. During normal operating conditions there are adequate generation resources to serve the needs with a 15% reserve margin.

So, what can go wrong? Weather events, like we experienced in May can impact transmission lines that transport electricity from generating stations to the consumers. Transmission lines can be out of service for maintenance or reconstruction, some of these projects can take months or even years to complete. A power plant can experience problems, fuel supplies to the plants, or routine maintenance of the plants. Supply chain issues is another problem that many industries are dealing with in securing new and replacement parts. The supply chain issue could impact the restoration time when a disaster strikes. So yes, like every other sector, the electrical sector is susceptible to extreme conditions and events.

So, what do we do? The regional system operators, in our case MISO, have plans in place to help reduce the risk. They have a series of alerts that help reduce the likelihood of blackouts occurring. These alerts range from holding off on maintenance, to conservation alerts, voluntary load shedding and load curtailment, to maximum generation alerts. During these critical times MISO will curtail exports to other regions and also maximize imports into the region from other system operators. MISO will ask generators to increase output from the generating units above the economical output levels of the units. In turn, GRE and Agralite will contribute with our demand management programs being used to reduce system loading. As a last resort, there are procedures in place to shed load on a rotating basis to maintain grid stability. This would be done to prevent a total grid collapse which could take days to restore. As I said earlier, these are possible but I do not believe very probable!



## Manager's Article *Continued*

Maybe the more important question to ask is why are we at this point? Why in today's world of technologies and the modernization of the electrical grid are we talking potential blackouts? A portion can be attributed to an increase in forecasted demand. This is due to a growth in electrical demand and forecasted hot temperatures this coming summer. Also contributing to this is the increased dependence on intermittent generating resources. If you go back in time 20 years, the electrical generation mix was coal, natural gas, nuclear, renewables, and petroleum. Of these generation sources, approximately 99.8% would be considered dispatchable. Fast forward to 2021, the amount of dispatchable generation has reduced to approximately 88% of total generation. In calculating the percentage of dispatchable generation, I am assuming that in the Renewable category, hydroelectric, biomass, and geothermal would be dispatchable. According to Wikipedia, dispatchable means "Dispatchable generation refers to sources of electricity that can be dispatched on demand at the request of power grid operators, according to market needs."

The chart below shows the percentages of total generation in the United States according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Also, the chart shows a breakdown in the renewable generation by type as a total of total generation.

Total Generation Mix		
	2000	2021
Coal	51.72%	21.85%
Natural Gas	15.81%	38.27%
Nuclear	19.84%	18.91%
Renewables	9.37%	20.07%
Petroleum	3.26%	0.90%

Renewable Generation Mix		
	2000	2021
Hydroelectric	7.25%	6.32%
Biomass	1.60%	1.35%
Geothermal	0.37%	0.39%
Wind	0.15%	9.23%
Solar	0.01%	2.79%

As pressure mounts to shut down carbon emitting generation sources we must recognize that intermittent sources can not be counted on to supply all our needs for electricity today. There is a considerable amount of research being done today to find technologies to store electrical energy. This includes large scale battery storage, compressed air, pumped hydro, and using renewables to produce and store hydrogen as a source of electrical generation. In each of these technologies mentioned, the electricity must first be produced, above and beyond the day-to-day consumer needs and then stored using the different technologies. Until these technologies are developed and proven that energy storage can provide long term energy needs beyond a few hours, intermittent sources of electricity will have to have dispatchable generation as backup. I believe we need to pause on the retirement of dispatchable generation and let technologies develop and prove themselves.



### Midwest Farm Energy Conference

Agralite attended the 2022 Midwest Farm Energy Conference June 15-16. 1052500 The conference showcased ways to reduce carbon intensity of agriculture production, the use of green hydrogen and ammonia, agrivoltaics (solar arrays) for grazing cattle, and robotic weed control. It also included a "Ride and Drive" showcasing various electric vehicles and equipment.



### Back By Popular Demand!

Agralite is seeking local photographs for our 2023 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 1st, 2022**. 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. 1520800

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:**  
[jmessner@agralite.com](mailto:jmessner@agralite.com)





**Play it  
safe  
near grain bins.**

**When moving  
equipment, be aware  
of powerlines and  
maintain at least a  
10-foot clearance to  
ensure safety. Follow  
all guidelines set by  
the National  
Electrical Safety  
Code.**

***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).

## **Agralite Donates Funds To The Nest Childcare Center**

Agralite Electric Cooperative donated \$7,500 to The Nest Childcare Center. The Hancock Building Project Committee is raising funds for a large \$3-4 million building that will house a 108-capacity child care center, an event center with an attached commercial kitchen, and offices for lease to local businesses. Agralite used funds received through administration fees made in part by the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDL&G). Agralite also received matching funds of \$7,500 for the project from CoBank's Sharing Success Program. The Sharing Success Program is designed to match the contributions of CoBank customers to the charitable groups they support throughout rural America.



*Pictured is Jonathan Messner, Agralite's Manager of Member Services, along with Hancock Building Project Committee members Brady Koehl and Gloria Zeltwanger*

## **Plug into Minnesota: Charge Up and Head Out for Adventure**

Planning Minnesota road trip adventures while driving electric has never been easier.





A growing network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations offers drivers access to authentic Minnesotan experiences like kayaking in Lake Superior, exploring various state parks and cruising along the scenic North Shore.

While drivers of traditional cars would need to interrupt their road trip to find a gas station to fill up, EV drivers can combine their pit-stops with an activity or adventure as their battery charges.

For families looking to head up north — or those in the north wanting to venture south — Interstate 35 and Highway 61 serve as an electric corridor of Level 2 and fast-charging stations. 1537500 From the Twin Cities to Grand Marais, you can plan to make stops in Pine City, Sturgeon Lake, Duluth, Two Harbors or Lutsen to charge and enjoy activities ranging from a meal to a shopping trip or hike.

At most of these stops you'll find a fast-charging station where you can "fuel" up to a full battery within 30 minutes while supporting local restaurants or shops. At other locations, such as Tettegouche State Park and Gooseberry Falls State Park, you can plug into a Level 2 charger — which adds 18-28 miles of range per hour — and enjoy a more extended excursion like hiking, fishing or kayaking.

***Other notable destination EV charging locations around Minnesota include:***

-  **Alexandria:** Stations are available near restaurants, grocery stores, coffee shops, breweries and lakes.
-  **Albertville:** Spend an hour or half a day shopping at the Albertville Premium Outlets while charging up.
-  **Duluth:** Charging stations across the city can take you from the Glensheen Mansion to Canal Park.
-  **Fergus Falls:** Stations are located near fun, locally owned restaurants and shops within a two-block radius, as well as the Ottertail River which winds through downtown.

So, if you'll be driving electric in Minnesota this summer, get ready to plug in and head out for adventure. 4



**See all Minnesota EV  
charging locations  
at [PlugShare.com](http://PlugShare.com)**





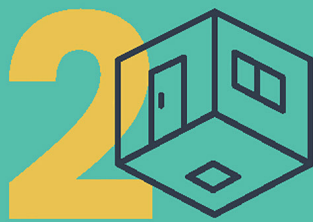
# USING A GENERATOR?

## 8 DANGEROUS MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE



### 1 IN ENCLOSED SPACES

Always use it in a well-ventilated area.



### 2 NEAR WINDOWS OR DOORS

Place it at least 20 feet away from windows and doors.



### 3 IN A GARAGE

Even if the door is up, never use a generator in a garage.



### 4 IN THE ELEMENTS

Run it on a dry surface under a canopy-like structure (but not in a carport).



### 5 PLUGGED INTO A WALL OUTLET

This can be deadly to you, family members, neighbors or utility workers.



### 6 WITH THE WRONG EXTENSION CORD

Use a properly rated cord to plug appliances into a generator.



### 7 WITHOUT CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) TESTERS

CO detectors should be on every level of your home (test them monthly).



### 8 IN DISREPAIR

Make sure your generator is well-maintained and in good working order.



LEARN  
MORE  
AT:

**Safe**  
**Electricity.org®**

## 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 June 2022

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 1:00 p.m., June 30, 2022. All members of the Board were present except. 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 billing peaks. He discussed the Brigg's generator program and the annual meeting.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of May. She discussed the May 12th storm and associated costs. She stated that the IRS mileage rate is changing to \$0.625 per mile effective July 1st. She discussed the CFC Forum that she attended. She brought forth revisions to Policy 300.01 Miscellaneous Fees and the Board approved it. She brought forth the 2021 990 Tax Form and the Board approved it.

Jenny brought forth Work Order #526 and Special Equipment May 2022 and the Board approved them.

The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

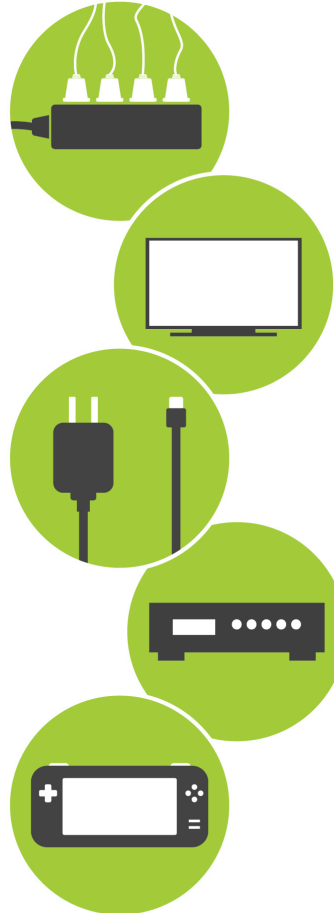
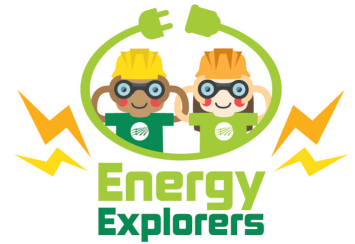
Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the

## ELECTRONICS WORD SCRAMBLE

You can be more energy efficient by turning off unused electronics. Many electronics consume energy even when they're not being used. Unplug them to save energy.

Unscramble the letters below to reveal electronics you can turn off when not in use.

Use the pictures for clues and check your work in the answer key.



1. NEPOH EHGRAC

2. MGAE NOESCLO

3. LCAEB XBO

4. EWROP PRTIS

5. ONSILEETIV

### WORD BANK

Power strip    Television    Game console  
Cable box    Phone charger

ANSWER KEY: 1) PHONE CHARGER 2) GAME CONSOLE 3) CABLE BOX 4) POWER STRIP 5) TELEVISION

month. He discussed line crew projects, the May 12th storm, and the May 30th storm.

Tom gave the safety report.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed East River Class D billing and NERC summer reliability and potential rolling blackouts. He discussed a visit from Representative Paul Anderson.

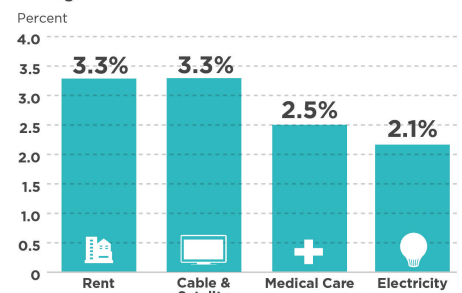
The July board meeting was set for the 28th.

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

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2016-2021



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Consumer Price Index