



Photo: Char Lehne, August Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

August 2023

## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

## FOR OVER

# 80 YEARS

### Energy Tour

Nineteen of Agralite’s members enjoyed a three-day luxury coach tour to North Dakota’s coal country June 20–22. They saw how electric power is generated at a lignite coal plant, learned how a coal-gasification plant produces natural gas, toured a fish hatchery, and visited the North Dakota History Museum.



This fun and educational trip included a tour of these facilities:

- Basin Electric Power’s Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Great Plains Synfuels Plant
- Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery
- The North Dakota History Center



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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

 Like us on Facebook



Summer Office Hours:  
7:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

CLOSED September 4th  
for Labor Day



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 Gerald Kill

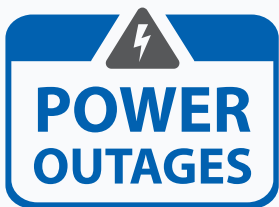
for finding his account number in the June newsletter!

### Energy Saving Tip:

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler?



To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counter-clockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn fans off when you leave the room. *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 Jenny Stryhn

I was recently asked what impacts electricity prices. The conversation progressed on about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's issue of the Agralite Newsletter.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Agralite can manage, some of them you can impact, and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly residential electric bill: a service charge, and an energy consumption/kWh charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly service charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor, and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Agralite's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations, and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment.

For example, the cost for a 25 kva pad mount transformer went from \$1,182 in 2020 to \$2,520 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 52 weeks. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note, the service charge is the same for everyone per rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start. During the hot summer months, increasing the temperature in your home a few degrees can make a difference. Agralite also offers several special rates to those members who participate in our load management programs. By participating in load management, you not only get a lower rate for yourself, but you also help the entire cooperative by controlling wholesale power costs.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact Agralite and shows that we are doing everything possible to keep internal costs down. 1031200

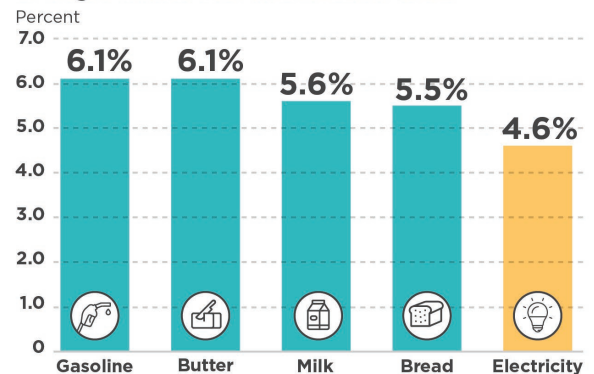
As mentioned in previous months, the cooperative just completed an in-depth cost of service study. While we are still doing our due diligence, based on current projections, a tweak in rates may be needed in the next year.

As always, thank you for your continued interest in your electric cooperative and please contact us if you have questions.

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



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

# Congratulations 2023 Scholarship Recipients



**Layne Henrich**  
Ortonville High School  
\$2,500 Lineworker Scholarship



**Julia Carlson**  
KMS Public School  
\$2,500



**Ryan Tolifson**  
Benson High School  
\$1,000 Basin Scholarship



**Logan Metzger**  
Hancock Public School  
\$1,000 Basin Scholarship



**Olivia Nelson**  
Ortonville High School  
\$1,000



**Arnold Jibben**  
MN Connections Academy  
\$1,000



**Kiara Schilling**  
SDSU  
\$500



**Jared Koehl**  
Hancock Public School  
\$500



**Madison Staples**  
Morris Area High School  
\$500



## Agralite Cooperative

### 2024 Calendar Photo Contest

#### Back By Popular Demand!

Agralite is seeking local photographs for our 2024 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 6th, 2023**. Digital photos only. You must specify the subject of the photo and where it was taken. Please include your contact information, account number, phone number, and address in your submission.

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:  
[mchevalier@agralite.com](mailto:mchevalier@agralite.com)

*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).

## 4 KEY FACTORS That Impact Energy Bills

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



### Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuels used to generate electricity fluctuates, which is why you see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



### Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly service charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance and additional costs necessary to provide electric service.



### Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



### Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.





# Twins YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC



The Minnesota Twins Youth Baseball Clinic was a home run! Thank you to the 94 boys and girls who came out to build their skills on the field. We're proud of all the young athletes who embraced teamwork, learning, and the spirit of the game! Also, thank you to the parents who volunteered to help make it possible!

## 2023 Residential Rebates

### ENERGY STAR® Appliance

\$75 for Refrigerator or Freezer

(must recycle old one)

\$25 Electric Dryer

\$25 for Dehumidifier

### Battery-Powered Yard Tools

Lawn Mower: \$50

Snow Blower: \$50

Chainsaw: \$25

Leaf Blower: \$25

Trimmer or Weed Whip: \$25

Check out our website for a full listing of our 2023 rebates:

[www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop)



## Make the Most of Your Electric Vehicle's Battery Charge



Electric vehicle (EV) drivers are usually well-versed in how to make the most of their car's battery charge. However, new EV owners or non-EV drivers might be curious about it, too.

### In Town Versus Highway

Do you use your EV to run nearby errands or for a long commute to work? In-town driving usually benefits battery range, since EVs use the braking system to put energy back into the battery. This is called regenerative braking. Coasting toward the stoplight also helps because you can move forward without using power.

### Driving

Although painstakingly obvious, driving drains the battery. Higher speeds require more battery power than lower speeds.

### Rate of Acceleration

EVs are fun because they get up and go, but high (and rapid) acceleration requires more energy than taking off more slowly. Accelerating more slowly helps improve your car's battery range.

### Weather

While all types of conditions affect battery range, frigid temperatures cause the biggest drain. It requires more energy to keep the battery running when it is cold outside.

### Heat/Air-Conditioning

Controlling the comfort inside your EV is the biggest power drain, second to driving it. Warming your EV's cabin takes more energy when it is cold outside. The inverse is also true when you use energy to blast the air conditioner when it is hot outside.

### Weight

The size of your EV, how many passengers are on board, and how much extra stuff you have in your trunk impact battery range. The lighter the car is, the less energy the battery expends. 1317400

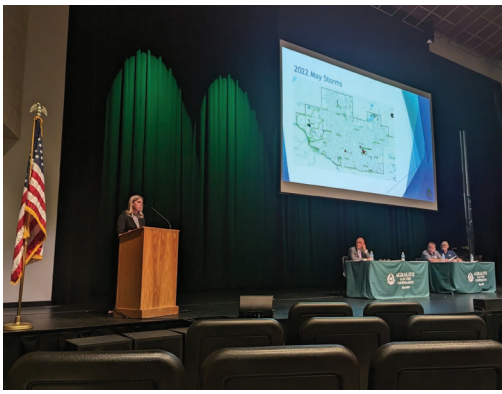
### How Full Is Too Full?

Most EV owners avoid charging a battery to 100%, since fully charging affects battery life.

While some EV owners charge to a maximum of 80% capacity, many EV enthusiasts now recommend charging to 50% full. Taking a long road trip? Some experts believe charging to full capacity now and then is not a major concern.

Source: Kelley Blue Book





## Annual Meeting

Agralite Electric Cooperative held its 84th Annual Meeting on June 22, 2023, at the Benson High School. A steak supper was grilled by the West Central Cattlemen's Association, followed by the Business Meeting. The financial report was presented by Agralite's new CFO, Ralph Martin. He reported that the Cooperative's financial position remains strong, with net margins of \$2,380,671 for 2022. 581900

Agralite's new CEO, Jenny Stryhn, presented her report, which covered several important topics including the May 2022 major storms, the headquarter facilities, supply chain issues, and 100% carbon free by 2040.

Director seats in Districts 5, 6, and 7 were up for election. Incumbents Orvin Gronseth (District 5), Andrea Thomson (District 6), and Warren Rau (District 7) were re-elected. The meeting concluded with a door prize drawing for bill credits.

*Thank you to all our members that attended our 84th Annual Meeting!*

# ELECTRIC VEHICLES

## Let Us Count the Ways (They Work)

Not all electric cars are created equal.  
Here are the four main types of electric cars:



### HEVs

Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) have been on the market the longest. HEVs include a small battery pack that is not charged by plugging it in, but rather the pack is charged by the internal combustion engine or the braking process. HEVs are not powered solely by batteries at any given time.



### BEVs a.k.a. EVs

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) (also known as EVs) do not rely on any gasoline to run and have zero tailpipe emissions. EV operators plug their vehicles into their home electric grid or a public charging station to charge. BEVs also generate electricity from braking, similar to HEVs, and use this as a secondary energy source.



### PLUG-INS

Plug-in hybrid EVs run on both battery power and gasoline and have much smaller battery packs than BEVs. The all-battery range in these vehicles is typically between five and 30 miles, and then the internal combustion engine is responsible for anything beyond that. Plug-in hybrids reduce emissions for short trips around town; longer trips are powered by gasoline.



### REHs

Range Extender Hybrid EVs (REHs) function the same way as plug-ins, but they have higher battery ranges due to design differences. Examples include the BMW i3 and the discontinued Chevrolet Volt. Some can drive more than 50 miles on a single charge.

Safe **ELECTRICITY.ORG**  
LEARN MORE AT:



# ELECTRICAL SAFETY

**DO:**



Install carbon monoxide and smoke alarms

**DO:**



Ensure AFCIs are installed where needed

**DO:**



Plug appliances directly into the wall

**BE AWARE OF WARNING SIGNS OF AN OVERLOAD OR WIRING PROBLEM:**



If you see lights that flicker or dim, notice discoloration, hear buzzing, feel warm switches/outlets, or smell burning, you should hire a qualified electrician to inspect your system

**NEVER USE DAMAGED CORDS**



Extension cords are temporary solutions and shouldn't be used on large appliances

electrical safety  
FOUNDATION

## 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 2023

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 1:30 p.m., June 22, 2023. 215602 All members of the Board were present except Director Draeger. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #545, and Special Equipment for May were approved.

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load control for the month. He discussed the MN Twins Youth Baseball Clinic and the Energy Tour. He discussed DER Pre-Application requests for large-scale renewables. He discussed the Annual Meeting being held that evening.

Ralph Martin, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of May. He stated that income and loss from equity investments will now be on a GAAP basis rather than a tax basis. He brought forth 2022 900 Tax Form and the Board approved it. He discussed cash management options.



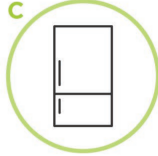
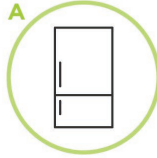
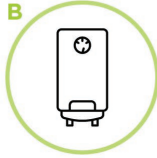

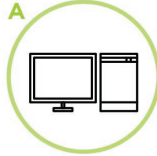
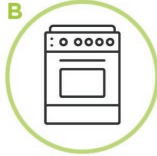

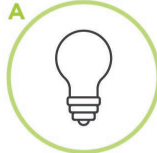
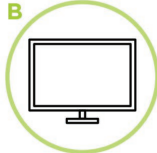

The financials were given by Ralph

## SPOT THE BIGGEST ENERGY USER

We use electricity every day, but we rarely think about the appliances and electronics that consume the most energy. Can you spot the biggest energy users?

Review each grouping below, then circle the one that you think consumes the most energy. Check your work in the answer key.



<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>A)</b> Heating and Cooling Unit</p> <p><b>B)</b> Clothes Washer</p> <p><b>C)</b> Refrigerator</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> 	<p><b>B</b></p> 	<p><b>C</b></p> 
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>A)</b> Refrigerator</p> <p><b>B)</b> Water Heater</p> <p><b>C)</b> Laptop Computer</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> 	<p><b>B</b></p> 	<p><b>C</b></p> 
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>A)</b> Desktop Computer</p> <p><b>B)</b> Electric Oven</p> <p><b>C)</b> TV</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> 	<p><b>B</b></p> 	<p><b>C</b></p> 
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>A)</b> LED Lights</p> <p><b>B)</b> TV</p> <p><b>C)</b> Clothes Dryer</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> 	<p><b>B</b></p> 	<p><b>C</b></p> 

Answer Key: 1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C



### Save Energy!

- Wash clothing in cold water and air-dry when possible.
- Only run full loads in the dishwasher.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use.

with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects and outages for the month. He showed a map of the leaning poles left to straighten after last year's storms.

Tom gave the safety report.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed recent meetings she attended, EPA regulations, WAPA drought adder,

and cyber security. She discussed the GRE managers meeting and the offer to extend the Power Purchase Contract. The Board declined the offer. The headquarters building and potential future land opportunities were discussed.

An Executive Session was held.

The July board meeting was set for the 27th.

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