



Photo: Mary Nolting, August Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

August 2024

Manager's Article: Power Plant Rules Threaten Grid Reliability

by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager

Earlier this spring, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released four new major regulations for the electric industry, including a much-anticipated rule to cut emissions from power plants—a sweeping move that will aggravate reliability concerns for electric cooperatives and other utilities nationwide.

The power plant rule constrains existing coal and new natural gas plants by requiring them to install carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology that is not yet reliable or commercially available.

These national mandates will have implications for our region. "The path outlined by the EPA is unlawful, unrealistic, and unachievable," said Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "It undermines electric reliability and poses grave consequences for an already stressed electric grid."

The power plant rule will force the early closure of electricity generation sources that are available 24/7 and will also impede the construction of new natural gas plants. 807200 The timing of these sweeping new rules is particularly troubling as electric utilities face a surge in demand for electricity from factors like transportation electrification and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and cryptocurrency.

Under the new rule, existing coal-fired power plants that plan to operate past the start of 2039 must install CCS to capture 90% of emissions by 2032. The rule also requires new natural gas plants that operate more than 40% of the time to install CCS and capture 90% of their carbon emissions by 2032. These standards, and their reliance on unproven CCS technology, will undermine electric reliability.

Agralite Electric Cooperative is committed to doing everything possible to cut carbon emissions and adhere to the new state and federal mandates, but we raise caution and take action when it comes to the reliability and affordability of electric service to our member-owners. Electric cooperatives understand the need to keep the lights on at a cost local families and businesses can afford. Clean energy technologies must be balanced with generation sources that are always available to ensure a reliable electric grid.

Electric cooperatives like Agralite Electric Cooperative deliver power to 42 million Americans. Our top priority is to meet our members' energy needs, and we must have reliable electricity available to do that.



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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

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Summer Office Hours:
7:00 am – 3:30 pm
CLOSED Sept. 2 - 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.

Energy Saving Tip:

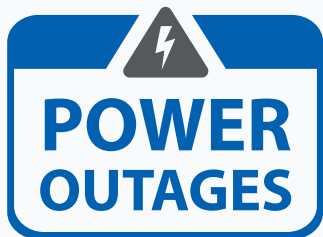


Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use, and inconsistent cooling/heating.

Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight, and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort, and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

Source: energy.gov



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

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

August Energy Payment is due
September 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

Protect Your Home When The Power Goes Out

Power outages can lead to more than just your lights going out. Forcing sensitive electronics to shut down unexpectedly can result in data loss or damage to electrical systems. When power returns, a surge can damage TVs, appliances, and even heating and AC systems. Power outages can be impossible to predict, so be sure to prepare your home with the following devices.



Before or During Power Outages:

Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS)

These devices can protect against all power disturbances. These work by providing battery backup to critical electronics to protect them from sudden shutoffs.

Energy Storage

Energy storage systems consist of batteries that provide backup during service interruptions. These can be used to power critical systems in your home. Energy storage systems can be paired with home solar power to become more energy independent. Utilities may offer incentives for energy storage systems.

Smart Meters

Smart meters allow for greater communication between your home's electrical needs and your energy provider. These can help you reduce energy costs and provide utilities with more information on how much electricity is being used in their service areas.

Generators & Transfer Switches

Generators provide energy during power interruptions. Both portable and standby generators should be used with a transfer switch to prevent unintentional energization of surrounding areas which could cause harm to utility workers or neighbors. Install CO detectors and keep generators at least 20 feet from homes and away from doors and windows.

Recovering From Power Outages:

Surge Protective Devices (SPD):

SPDs protect against voltage spikes that can cause damage to your electronics when full power is restored. 1301800 Whole-home surge protection is required in the 2020 National Electrical Code.

TIPS TO BEAT THE SUMMER PEAK

When we all work together to lower energy use during peak hours, we can lock in lower electricity rates, so everyone saves. Here are a few simple ways to save during peak summer hours.

- 1 Raise the thermostat a few degrees.
- 2 Use ceiling fans (in occupied rooms) to feel cooler.
- 3 Avoid using major appliances.
- 4 Close drapes and blinds to block heat from the sun.
- 5 Turn off and unplug non-essential electronics and lights.



Watch The Clock To Lock In Energy Savings

As temperatures rise and summer activities heat up, a reliable flow of electricity is essential to ensure Agralite Electric Cooperative members stay cool and connected.

August brings some of the most extreme summer temps, which means people will be spending more time indoors to avoid the heat, and air conditioners will be working overtime. This increased use of electricity will cause spikes in demand, also known as energy peaks. During peak times, Agralite must work closely with our wholesale power provider to ensure a balanced supply of electricity is always available to meet our community's energy needs. The electric grid is essentially a giant network that connects power plants, utility poles, and power lines to homes and businesses across the country, throughout our state, and to our local communities. All parts of the network must work together to ensure the flow of electricity stays balanced 24/7.

When the demand for electricity is higher than usual, power providers must ramp up electricity production—whether from coal, natural gas, wind, solar or other energy sources—and utilities will pay more for electricity produced during the peak. These higher prices, along with the general increase in electricity use, are why you typically see higher bills during the hottest months. In extreme cases, demand can overpower the available supply, causing electricity shortages. 1636700 During these times, utilities are required to implement rolling power outages to reduce the demand for electricity and re-balance the grid.



When our area experiences extreme summer heat and higher demand for electricity, you can help by conserving energy. It's easy—just check the clock and avoid your energy-intensive activities and chores during peak hours. When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, Agralite can lock in lower electricity rates so everyone in our community saves. Conserving during peak times also eases pressure on the grid and helps balance the supply and demand of electricity. There are many ways to lower your home energy use.

Here are a few recommendations to help you save energy (and money) during the summer peak:

- Set your thermostat a few degrees higher. If you have a smart or programmable thermostat, adjust the settings so your cooling system syncs with the off-peak hours.
- Speaking of raising the thermostat, did you know ceiling fans can make you feel 4 degrees cooler? Operate ceiling or oscillating fans in occupied rooms to supplement your air conditioning. Be sure to raise the thermostat while fans are running for maximum energy savings. Remember, fans cool people (not homes), so turn them off when you leave the room.
- Plan energy-intensive activities like laundry and running the dishwasher for off-peak hours. Use automatic timers to run hot tubs, pool pumps, water heaters and other appliances in the same way.
- Unplug electronics when they're not in use or use power strips to manage devices.
- Close drapes and blinds during the afternoon to block unnecessary heat from sunlight.

When we all work together to beat the summer peak, our entire community benefits. Saving energy during peak times reduces your bills, keeps electric rates lower for all, and relieves pressure on the grid.

Agralite Electric Cooperative 2025 Calendar Photo Contest

Back By Popular Demand!

Agralite is seeking local photographs for our 2025 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.

Photo entries are limited to Agralite members and must be submitted by **October 4th, 2024**.

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

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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.

Powering Your Life Safely



While it is important to treat electricity with respect no matter the situation, the electric system is intentionally designed to be safe. Several features of the grid help to operate it safely and keep the public out of harm's way as well.

Designed For Safety

Power lines are located either high in the air or buried underground to keep

people out of harm's way. Fences and signage installed around substations remind the public to stay away from energized equipment, as only qualified personnel are allowed inside. Several safety features are located within substations as well, including disconnect switches to help employees easily see that the equipment they are performing maintenance on is de-energized. Agralite Electric Cooperative also monitors unique conditions, such as extreme weather, on the electric system to be able to isolate equipment that may create a hazardous condition.

Working With Live Lines

At times, employees from Agralite need to work on power lines or equipment while there is still power running through it. Our workers are carefully outfitted with special clothing and tools that do not conduct electricity to keep them safe, such as:

- **Fire-resistant clothing:** Electrical workers wear flame-proof and "arc-rated" clothing on the job.
- **Rubber gloves:** Technicians are equipped with rubber gloves and sleeves that provide a protective layer between themselves and equipment that has electrical current (or the potential) flowing through it.
- **Footwear:** Workers wear specially-rated footwear that is resistant to electrical hazards, compression and more.
- **Eyewear:** Workers wear specially rated eyewear with side shields for extra protection.
- **Hard hats:** Hard hats are rated to protect from electrical hazards as well as impact.
- **Hot sticks:** These insulated sticks are used to safely perform certain maintenance activities on power lines that are "live."

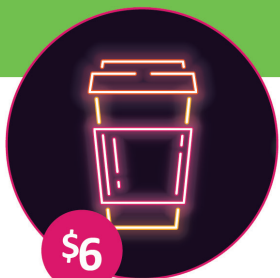
Members Can Help

Agralite members can exercise safety around electricity as well by not overloading outlets with more devices than a circuit can handle and keeping a safe distance from overhead power lines. If you see something on the electric system that does not look safe, please contact Agralite at 320-843-4150.

Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. **That's real value.**



Morning To-Go Latte



Fast-Food Combo Lunch



All-Day Power

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET



Congratulations

to Cory & Shelley Evink of Hancock, who were the winners of our Auto Pay SmartHub promotion.

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For Auto Pay
Through SmartHub

- Make a payment - pay your electric bill online anytime 24/7/365. It's convenient, free, and simple to use.
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- Receive emails regarding your bill
- View current and past billing statements
- Go paperless
- Set up automatic payments

Visit www.agralite.coop and click on Pay Bill to get started!



Twins YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC



The Minnesota Twins Youth Baseball Clinic was a home run! Thank you to the 54 boys and girls who came out to build their skills on the field. 1372000 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!

Unclaimed Capital Credits

Your Board of Directors authorized the return of approximately \$1.06 million dollars in capital credits to members who purchased electricity during 2018, 2019, 2000, and 2001. Agralite is trying to return Capital Credits to former members who are no longer at their last address on file with us. If you know someone who is on this list, please take a moment to let them know or to let us know. Past members listed may claim their capital credit refund by contacting our office at 320-843-4150. This list can also be found on our website at www.agralite.coop. Capital Credits belong to our members and we hope we can return the credits to their owners! Unsure what to do with capital credit checks received from us or don't want to hassle with them? Donating those funds to Operation Round Up is always an option, where you can help the community that you live in.

Unclaimed Capital Credit List

Aadland, Ron - Omaha, NE
 Allanson, John - Minneapolis, MN
 Alsip, Charles - Morris, MN
 Anderson, Todd - Morris, MN
 Ascheman, Alan - Murdock, MN
 Asmus, Stanley - Morris, MN
 Avok, Dena - Benson, MN
 Bahr, Jason - Donnelly, MN
 Bean, Terry - La Crosse, WI
 Bender, Patricia - Centuria, WI
 Borden, Robert - Casper, WY
 Boucher, Donald - Ortonville, MN
 Brendemuehl, Mark - Kerkhoven, MN
 Brown, Kim - Olivia, MN
 Brown, Wade - Glenwood, MN
 Callanan, Cynthia - Silver Lake, MN
 Callies, Randall - Avon, MN
 Carlson, David - Murdock, MN
 Collodora, Randy - Maple Grove, MN
 Cushing, James - Ortonville, MN
 Davidson, Jason - Highlands Ranch, CO
 Dean, Rolfe - Brooten, MN
 Dieter Leonard - Benson, MN
 Dittes, Ruth - Ortonville, MN
 Dokkebakken, Ellen - Fergus Falls, MN
 Dunlap, Douglas - Minneapolis, MN
 Emmert, Robert - Appleton, MN
 Engebretson, WM - Minneapolis, MN
 Erickson, Edwin - Benson, MN
 Fettig, Lorraine - Brooten, MN
 Gausman, David - Alexandria, MN
 Gubernatz, James - Morris, MN

Goff, Luverne - Benson, MN
 Gronseth, M.C. - Benson, MN
 Hale, Larry - Montevideo, MN
 Hansen, Scott - Rice, MN
 Hanson, L C - Sioux Falls, SD
 Hendrickson, Ronald - Duluth MN
 Herring, Earl - Moorhead, MN
 Hockert, Jackie - Morris, MN
 Jaeger, Bradley - Marshall, MN
 Johnson, Jeffrey - Murdock, MN
 Kautzman, Kelly - Hancock, MN
 Kimmes, Ray Jr - Glenwood, MN
 Klenken, Joseph - Benson, MN
 Knutson, Daniel - Glenwood, MN
 Koosman, Andy - Eagle River, AK
 Laumb, John - Milan, MN
 Lee, Harold - Benson, MN
 Leske, Dean - Buffalo Lake, MN
 Leslie, James - Appleton, MN
 Loge, Kirk - Morris, MN
 Lundeen, Gary - Cyrus, MN
 Luptak, Roger - Brooten, MN
 Mayo, Stanley - Wadena, MN
 McKnight, Ryan - Plano, TX
 Melchild, Jo - San Jose, CA
 Meyer, Linda - Correll, MN
 Mid State Telephone Co - Middleton, WI
 Moist, Sylvester - Benson, MN
 Moline, Roger - Benson, MN
 Nelson, David - Farmington, MN
 Nelson, Donald - Benson, MN
 Norstedt, Jim - Clontarf, MN

Olson, Delane - Milan, MN
 Packer, Hollie - Benson, MN
 Peplin, Linda - Rollings Meadows, IL
 Perry, Alan - Ortonville, MN
 Peterson, Anne - Minneapolis, MN
 Poppler, Tom - Hewitt, MN
 Rinken, Arnold - Glenwood, MN
 Roggatz, Brian - Appleton, MN
 Rood, Edwin - Willmar, MN
 Sachs, Warren - Appleton, MN
 Schneider, Chesley - Sacred Heart, MN
 Serrin, Philipp - Glenwood, MN
 Solbreken, Eleanor - Brooten, MN
 Stadvold, Bernhard - Fergus Falls, MN
 Stahman, Albert - Morris, MN
 Stein, Albert - Big Lake, MN
 Stephans, Dan - Morris, MN
 Struck, H R - Madison, MN
 Thompson, Nicole - Morris, MN
 Thompson, Roger - Morris, MN
 Thompson, Thomas - Willmar, MN
 Underwood, Herman - Rockford, IL
 Vande Streek, Tim - Morris, MN
 Vanwinkle, Harold - Avoca, MN
 Verzani, Lora - Big Stone City, SD
 Walter, Allan - Lino Lakes, MN
 Weeding, Della - Appleton, MN
 Wegscheid, Joel - Wadena, MN
 White, George - Brooten, MN
 Wieseler, Jim - Good Thunder, MN
 Wilson, Adolph - Glenwood, MN

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 - Vice President

Andrea Thomson, Benson
District 6

Warren Rau, Appleton
District 7 - President

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS June 2024

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:40 a.m., June 27, 2024. All members of the Board were present. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #564, and May Special Equipment were approved.

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 discussed maintenance projects at the Akron, Fairfield, and Donnelly substations. He showed pictures of an Ottertail transmission pole on fire due to a lightning strike that created a large outage, and broken poles from farm equipment.

Tom gave the safety report.

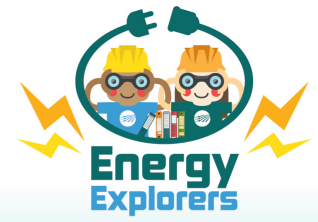
Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load control for the month. He discussed the Annual Meeting and upcoming community events. He discussed distributed energy applications for large wind turbines in Agralite's service territory.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of May. She discussed the Dealing with Difficult Members training that eight employees

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

As you gear up for a new school year, remember to practice electrical safety in the classroom *and* at home. From powering electronic devices to spending time outdoors with friends, always play it safe around electricity.

Read the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle, then double check your answers in the key.



ACROSS:

- Never insert anything other than this into an electrical outlet.
- When outdoors, stay away from these big green boxes that lower electricity voltage.

DOWN:

- Never play around these when you're outside; you can get hurt!
- Don't yank on a _____ when unplugging it. Instead, grab the base and pull from there.
- Always make sure your hands are _____ before plugging anything in.

ANSWER KEY

1. ACROSS: 4. TRANSFORMER
2. DOWN: 2. CORD
3. DOWN: 3. DRY
1. DOWN: 1. POWERLINES
4. ACROSS: 1. PLUG

attended. She stated that the Safe Deposit Box at BMO has been closed. She discussed financing options with CoBank and CFC for the new headquarters facility.

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

Board Policies 301-306 were reviewed and approved by the Board.

Board Policy 128 Use of a Consent Agenda was discussed and approved by the Board.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the Annual Meeting and the Basin rate proceeding case. She discussed recent meetings she attended, including the East River Manager's Meeting and GRE Manager's Meeting. She discussed the GRE Special

Meeting of the Members on August 1st. Jenny discussed the contractor interviews that were held June 26th for the new headquarters facility.

The East River Certificate of Delegates and RESCO Election Ballot were discussed.

A roundtable discussion was held on topics including MREA's new building project, the Ottertail open house meetings for the Big Stone South to Alexandria project, and renewable energy.

The July board meeting was set for the 25th.

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