



Photo: Janice Nohl, December Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

December 2023

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

80 YEARS

Reliable Power for Today—and Tomorrow *by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

Ringing in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the General Manager of Agralite Electric Cooperative, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at Agralite is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate, and utilizing new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it. As we become more electrified each day, building out the electrical grid helps prepare for the future impacts of increased electrical demand. The need to upgrade our transmission grid is a key part of maintaining reliability.

Great River Energy, one of Agralite's wholesale power and transmission suppliers, is proposing to upgrade and construct a 28 mile, 115-kV transmission line between Appleton and Benson, along with other partners. Approximately 20 miles of the proposed route will overtake and replace an existing 41.6 kV transmission line with the new 115-kV transmission line.

Although Agralite is not directly involved in this project, Agralite members will benefit. This project will help address low voltage concerns, increase resiliency and enhance transmission reliability for our membership.

As 2023 comes to a close, from our cooperative family to yours, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Don't forget to join us for cider and cookies at the cooperative on December 19th and 20th and to pick up your 2024 Agralite calendar featuring member photos. As always, thank you for continued interest in your electric cooperative and the opportunity to serve you!

FROM OUR CO-OP FAMILY
TO YOURS, WE WISH YOU A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

PLEASE JOIN US FOR
Cider & Cookies
DECEMBER 19 & 20

2024
Calendars
Are Here!

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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



Office Hours
8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

**CLOSED December 25 & 26;
January 1**



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 Marcel Hoffman for finding his account number in the October newsletter.

Energy Saving Tip:

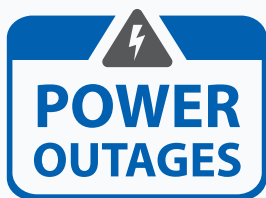


Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home!

Smart thermostats are wi-fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away.

For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR® label.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

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

December Energy Payment is due January 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

New Study Reveals Minnesota Electric Cooperatives Contribute Nearly \$20 Billion to the State's Economy by MREA

(MAPLE GROVE, MINN) – A newly released economic impact analysis reveals the substantial contributions electric cooperatives make to Minnesota's economy. 1152800 Between 2018 and 2022, electric cooperatives injected a staggering \$19.6 billion into Minnesota's economy, fortifying the state's financial landscape and supporting an average of 20,800 jobs each year.

In a new study, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation partnered with Strategen Consulting to unveil the remarkable economic impact of electric cooperatives in Minnesota and across the nation. "This study's findings underscore the indispensable role electric cooperatives play in our state's economic vitality," Darrick Moe, CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, said. "We are proud to power our communities, provide meaningful careers, and give back to our neighborhoods. As consumer-owned non-profits, our focus is on helping bring a brighter, more prosperous future to the places we call home." The nationwide survey analyzed economic data between 2018 and 2022.

The analysis found electric cooperatives support nearly 623,000 jobs in the United States with \$51 billion in pay and benefits each year. Furthermore, electric cooperatives contributed a staggering \$554 billion to U.S. Gross Domestic Product over the five-year period. The study was released in October to coincide with National Cooperative Month, which celebrates the successes of the cooperative governance model. Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948 and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, a Former Minnesota Governor, first recognized the holiday nationally in 1964.

Some highlights of the Minnesota Cooperatives economic impact analysis include:

- \$27.3 Billion in capital investments
- \$377 Million in capital credits paid to member-owners
- \$9.2 Billion in labor income
- \$1.4 Billion in federal taxes
- \$3.8 Billion in state & local taxes

The study also determined that across the nation, electric cooperatives bring about \$75 billion in value annually to their local counties in which they serve. "This economic impact study makes it clear that cooperatives boost the economic prosperity of their local communities, while electrifying the countryside," Moe said.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is a nonprofit trade association serving Minnesota's electric cooperatives. MREA provides legislative and regulatory representation, director and employee education programs, technical training for electric cooperative line workers, and serves as the focal point for cooperation among cooperatives. Minnesota's 44 distribution cooperatives serve about 1.7 million Minnesotans in all 87 counties and operate the largest distribution network in the state with more than 135,000 miles of electric lines.



Pictured: Troy Olson, son of Engineering Assistant Casey Olson, along with Warren Rau, Agralite's Board President

Winter Weather Preparation by Star Energy Services

Winter storms are dangerous. They can bring cold temperatures, power failures, loss of communication services, and icy roads. This can make being outside dangerous; time outside should be limited. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce the risk of car crashes and falls on the ice, you may also face hazards inside your home.

Heat Your Home Safely

If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or space heater, be extremely careful.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions and remember these safety tips:

- Using the stove for a heat source is unsafe. 1169500 Instead, use one or more of the following if the power goes out:
 - Extra blankets, sleeping bags, and warm winter coats
 - Fireplace that is up to code with plenty of dry firewood or a gas log fireplace (do not burn paper)
 - Portable space heaters or kerosene heaters (if legal in your area)
- Use electric space heaters with automatic shut-off switches and non-glowing elements.
 - Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
 - Never cover your space heater.
 - Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
 - If your space heater has a damaged electrical cord or produces sparks, do not use it.
 - Do NOT use an extension cord to plug in a space heater.
 - Make sure that the cord is not a tripping hazard, but do not run it under carpets or rugs.
- Use fireplaces, wood stoves, or other combustion heaters only if they are properly vented to the outside and do not leak gas from the flue or exhaust into the indoor air space.
 - Have your heating system serviced by a qualified technician every year.
 - Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don't substitute.
 - Keep all heat sources, at least 3 feet away from drapes, furniture, or bedding.



Use Generators and Other Appliances Safely

- Locate generators at least 20 feet away from any window, door, or vent and where rain or snow will not reach them.
 - Do not use the generator or appliances if they are wet.
 - Never use generators, gas or charcoal grills, camp stoves, or similar devices inside homes, garages, or near windows. The fumes are deadly.
 - Do not store gasoline indoors where the fumes could ignite.
- Install a battery-operated CO detector to protect yourself from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
- Plug in appliances to the generator using individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.

Conserve Heat

- Some gas-fueled heaters, such as vent-less gas fireplaces, require some ventilation. If you don't need extra ventilation, keep as much heat as possible inside your home.
- Avoid unnecessarily opening doors or windows.
- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Close draperies or cover windows with blankets at night.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/duringstorm/indoorsafety.html>

2024 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. 1569800 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. Agralite will award one \$1,000 scholarship. The scholarship 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.

The completed application and all other necessary information must be returned to Agralite Electric Cooperative

No later than February 21, 2024.

Attention High School Juniors or Seniors of Agralite Electric Cooperative!

APPLY FOR A **TRIP OF A LIFETIME**



JUNE 18 TO 23, 2024
AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

Agralite Electric Cooperative is taking applications for the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. This year, Minnesota will be in D.C. from June 18-23, 2024. Delegates will tour monuments, visit museums, meet with elected officials, learn about the cooperative business model, and make new friends from all over Minnesota and 43 other states!

HOW TO APPLY

- Applicants must be a junior or senior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Agralite Electric Cooperative.
- The deadline to apply is February 21, 2024.



The best part? It's FREE! Everything is covered by Agralite Electric Cooperative!
It truly is the trip of a lifetime.

Check out our website for more information or contact Marissa Chevalier at 320-843-4150 or mchevalier@agralite.com with any additional questions.

LEARN MORE AT AGRALITE.COOP

EMPOWER



AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL SERVICE RATES

As of January 1, 2024

General Single Phase

Service Charge	\$46.00
Energy Charge/kWh	11.60¢

General Multiphase

Service Charge	\$64.00
Energy Charge/kWh	11.60¢

Large Power - LP

Service Charge	\$90.00
Demand Charge/kW	\$10.75
Energy Charge/kWh	5.68¢

Large Power Service – LPS

Service Charge	\$120.00
Demand Charge/kW	\$26.84
Distribution Demand Charge/kW	\$4.25
Energy Charge/kWh	4.6¢

Irrigation

Service Charge 3-ph. (May – Sept.)	\$146.00
Service Charge 1-ph. (May – Sept.)	\$104.00
Uncontrolled Demand Charge/kW	\$28.30
Controlled Demand Charge/kW	\$10.50
Energy Charge/kWh	6.52¢
Energy Charge/kWh (non-summer)	11.60¢

Security Lights

Metered	\$7.50
Unmetered – 75 Watt LED	\$10.44

Interruptible Generation

Coincident kW, Jun-Jul-Aug	\$28.30
Coincident kW, Dec-Jan-Feb	\$19.65
Coincident kW, Others	\$15.15
Demand Penalty/kW/control	\$5.00
<200 kVA Service Charge	\$46.00
Energy Charge/kWh	8.02¢
>200 kVA Service Charge	\$110.00
Monthly Demand/kW	\$6.20
kWh	4.29¢

Service Charge for Load Management

\$2.50

Cycled Air Conditioning

kWh, summer/all other months	7.82¢/6.52¢
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Interruptible Heat/Peak Shave Water Heater

kWh, summer, (only heat)	11.60¢
kWh, summer, (AC, water heater)	7.82¢
kWh, all other months	6.52¢

Storage Water Heaters and Storage Heat

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug	7.32¢
kWh, all other months	6.02¢

All rates subject to adjustment based on wholesale power costs.

January 1st, 2024, Rate Adjustment

As announced this fall, a rate adjustment is scheduled for January 1st, 2024. The various factors contributing to the need for this change include, but are not limited to, wholesale power costs, long-term interest rates, equipment and material costs, and other inflationary changes. 1403400 The rate adjustment ensures Agralite has adequate revenue to cover increased costs and to position itself to provide members with safe, reliable, and affordable power into the future. The adjustment to our rates is listed in the column on the left.

If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call during business hours at 320-843-4150 or visit our website at www.agralite.coop.

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 50% 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 50% of the state median income (\$58,793 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2024.

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**

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.

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 October 2023

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., October 26, 2023. All members of the Board were present except Director Nelson. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #551, Work Order #552, and Special Equipment for September 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 community involvement.

Ralph Martin, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of September. He discussed patronage allocations received. He reviewed the RUS Audit. Ralph brought forth Resolution Authorizing the Amendment of the Retirement Security Plans and the Board approved.

Jenny discussed updates to Policy 506 Sick Leave and the Board approved the updates.

The financials were given by Ralph 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 discussed the Appleton to Benson 115-kV transmission line project. He gave an update on GRIP grants.

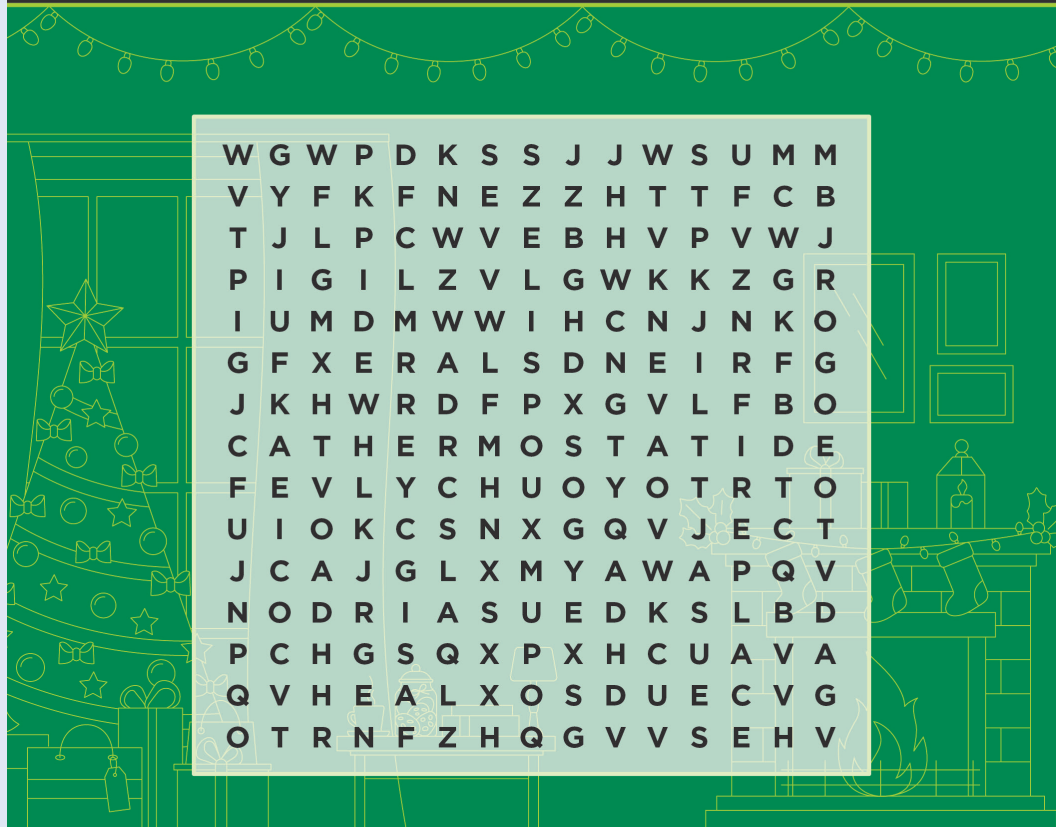
Tom gave the safety report.

Allison Deelstra, CFC Regional Vice

HOLIDAY EFFICIENCY WORD SEARCH

The holidays are a fun, festive time of year! We typically use more electricity during the holiday season.

Read the holiday efficiency tips below, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



- Decorate your tree with energy-saving **LED lights**.
- Control home heating costs with a smart or programmable **thermostat**.
- Save energy by using a **timer** to turn off holiday lights when you're sleeping.
- If you have a **fireplace**, ask an adult to close the damper when a fire is not burning.
- Open blinds and curtains during the day to let **sunlight** in to warm your home.
- Lower the thermostat when you invite **friends** and **family** over.
(The extra people in your home creates additional warmth.)

President, joined the meeting to give a PowerPoint presentation on the 2022 Key Ratio Trend Analysis.

The 2024 preliminary budgets were discussed by the department heads.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the East River MAC meeting she attended. She showed a graph on wholesale power cost rates for 2024. She discussed calls with GRE in regards to energy purchases. She stated that MREA is facilitating MN cooperatives participating in a NRECA international electrification project in Guatemala in 2024, and seven coops will be participating. She discussed the GRE Special

Meeting. She discussed a meeting with Engen and Associates and Breitbach Construction to discuss options with the headquarters facilities. She discussed the GRE open houses for the Appleton to Benson Transmission Line Project.

Jenny discussed the 2024 Update of the 2023 Basin Load Forecast and Resolution and the Board approved it.

An Executive Session was held.

The November board meeting was set for the 30th.

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