

Photo: Karen Janachovsky,
December Calendar
Photo Contest Winner

NEWSLETTER

December 2024

EMPOWERING
communities

with innovative
and sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

85
YEARS

May Your Holidays Be Merry And Bright *By Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

As December kicks off, it's hard to believe we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

As your local electric cooperative, our team at Agralite Electric Cooperative cares about your wellbeing. This month, I'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

Safety first.

My family truly enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. Before we deck the halls, I always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. I also double check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use. Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. I test mine on the first of each month, so it's easy to remember. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

'Tis the season for savings.

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can lower your bills.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home.

Article continues on page 2

CONTENTS

PAGE 1 ▶ May Your Holidays Be Merry And Bright

PAGE 2 ▶ May Your Holidays Be Merry And Bright Cont., Building Update, Find Your Account Number And Win, Energy Saving Tip

PAGE 3 ▶ Agralite Donates \$5,000 To The City Of Sunburg Ambulance, Agralite Helps Mini Sota Secure REED Loan, 2025 Basin Scholarship

PAGE 4 ▶ What Is That Green Electrical Box In My Yard?, Cold Weather Rule, Keep Your Holidays Merry And Bright

PAGE 5 ▶ Co-ops In The Classroom, How Capital Credits Work, Deck The Halls Safely

PAGE 6 ▶ Board Meeting Minutes, Holiday Fun Word Search

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 am – 4:30 pm

CLOSED
Dec. 24 & 25, Jan. 1



Touchstone Energy®
Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

Happy Holidays!
MAY YOUR SEASON BE MERRY AND BRIGHT

Mark your calendars!
JOIN US FOR
Cider & Cookies
December 19 & 20

2025
Calendars
Are Here!



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 Jacob Dell & David Dengerud for finding their account numbers in the October newsletter.

Energy Saving Tip:

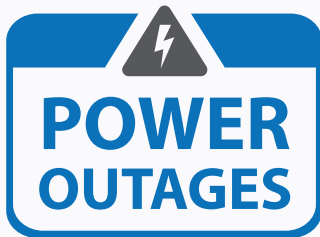


If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products.

This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.



Source: energystar.gov



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.

May Your Holidays Be Merry And Bright *Continued*

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient lighting options available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs. 352200 There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food—not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen.

There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings. I hope you will implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your holiday plans.

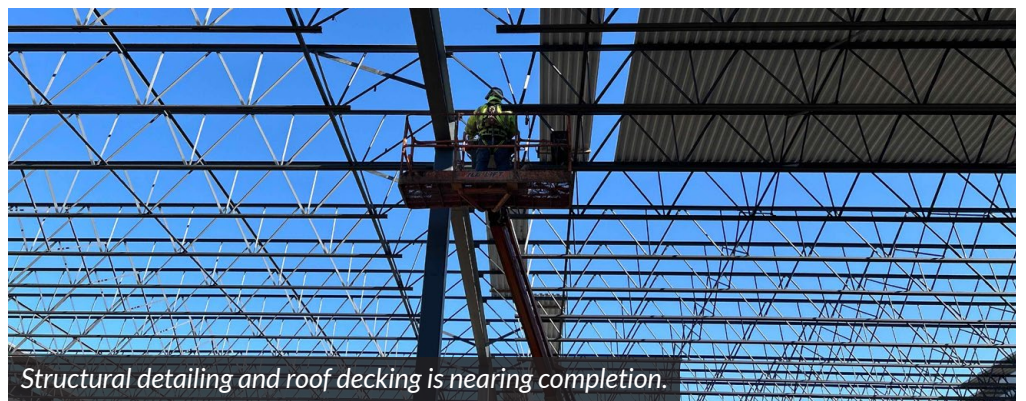
As we wrap up 2024, from all of us at Agralite Electric Cooperative, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright.

Don't forget to join us for cider and cookies at the Cooperative on December 19th and 20th and pick up your 2025 Agralite calendar featuring member photos. Thank you for continued interest in your electric cooperative and the opportunity to serve you!

Building Update



Exterior walls were finished 10/31/24.



Structural detailing and roof decking is nearing completion.



Temporary enclosure installation is complete.

Agralite Donates \$5,000 To The City Of Sunburg Ambulance



Pictured: Agralite's General Manager/CEO Jenny Stryhn, and Member Services Manager, Jonathan Messner; along with Sunburg's Mayor, Mike O'Leary, and four Sunburg Ambulance members

The City of Sunburg is raising funds for the purchase of a Ferno Stretcher and Stair Chair to help EMS move individuals safely and efficiently. 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 for the City of Sunburg from CoBank's Sharing Success Program for a total donation of \$10,000.

Agralite Helps Mini Sota Secure REED Loan

Agralite Electric Cooperative recently worked with the REED Fund to obtain a USDA Rural Economic Development Loan of \$300,000 for the Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum in Benson, MN. The new museum plans to have 12 exhibits representing the wide-ranging work roles and processes within agriculture to ignite interest in children of all ages and foster learning through play, exploration, and problem-solving.

The REED Fund works closely with state and federal agencies, local banks, and other loan funds to finance community and economic development projects. Agralite Electric Cooperative is a member of the REED fund to provide opportunities in the communities we serve!



2025 Basin Scholarship Qualify? Please Apply!

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a wholesale power supplier to Agralite, is again offering this generous scholarship. 990100 Basin Electric's scholarship program began in 1990. 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 14, 2025.

Keep Your Holidays

MERRY & BRIGHT

Don't add stress to your holiday season. Knowing how to properly use and hang lights could prevent injury or fire.



Make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.



Unplug lights or decorations before changing a bulb or other parts.



Do not use cords or plugs that are damaged, frayed or cracked.



Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab.



In addition, consider LED lights when replacing old light strands. LEDs use 80% to 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

Learn More:  Safe Electricity.org®

What Is That Green Electrical Box In My Yard?

A Safety Tip from the Cooperative By MREA



Pad-mount transformers are a common sight in neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas. They play a crucial role in the distribution of electrical power.

A pad-mount transformer is housed in a steel cabinet mounted on a concrete pad at ground level. Unlike overhead transformers that are typically found on utility poles, pad-mount transformers are used in areas where power lines are buried underground. These transformers convert high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage suitable for use in our homes and businesses. The interior compartments of pad-mounted electrical equipment contain high-voltage components that are exceedingly dangerous to touch.

Avoid contact with this equipment. Never touch or enter open, damaged, or unlocked electrical cabinets. Please encourage your family not to play on or around any electrical infrastructure on your property or the places that you visit. Immediately report damaged or open equipment to 911 and the local electric utility.

Pad-mount transformers are an important part of our electrical infrastructure, but they require respect and caution to ensure our families and friends stay safe. Being aware of the potential dangers, communities can help prevent accidents and ensure that these essential devices operate safely and effectively.

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, 2025.

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

Co-ops In The Classroom

In October, Jennifer Gross, with East River Electric Power Cooperative, presented "Co-ops in the Classroom" to students at Hancock and Benson schools. This program teaches students about how electricity works and the importance of safety.


The students had a great time learning about electricity!



Deck the Halls SAFELY


- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use**.
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**.

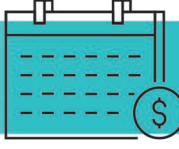


For more **holiday safety tips** visit:

HOW CAPITAL CREDITS WORK

Electric co-ops are not-for-profit and operate at cost. Capital credits are a financial benefit of co-op membership.



1. Members pay their electric bills, and we track their business with us each month.
2. The co-op pays operating expenses throughout the year and allocates any leftover operating revenue as capital credits. 
3. When financial conditions permit, the co-op board votes to retire (pay) capital credits to the members. 
4. We send members their share of capital credits as a bill credit or check. 

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 2024

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., October 31, 2024. All members of the Board were present except Director Hufford. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #571, and September Special Equipment 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 stated that the application for CoBank Sharing Success for the City of Sunburg Ambulance was approved and the donation was presented to members of the Ambulance crew on October 25th. He discussed the generator program and the new headquarters building project. He stated Jen Gross from East River presented Co-ops in the Classroom to Hancock and Benson students on October 10th. He discussed the 2025 Photo Calendar Contest.

Stephanie Wrobleski, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of September. She discussed the Cold Weather Rule that went into effect October 1st. She discussed the budget. 1161800

The financials were given by Stephanie

HOLIDAY FUN WORD SEARCH

Can you find all the words associated with holiday fun in the puzzle below? Use the word bank to check your work.



WORD BANK

Jingle Bells Santa Claus Snowman
Candy Cane Mittens Hot Chocolate



N	H	C	H	P	B	D	H	S	V	G	Z	H	T	M
A	C	C	F	Z	Z	A	T	F	N	V	D	Q	Z	Y
M	H	L	V	Y	M	J	N	P	D	E	T	V	F	S
W	P	W	H	F	W	I	H	K	S	C	T	G	B	K
O	Z	K	D	Z	L	N	O	K	K	H	Q	T	C	F
N	F	I	O	U	R	G	T	F	C	L	P	E	I	L
S	S	V	S	U	A	L	C	A	T	N	A	S	C	M
Z	C	V	P	C	E	E	H	R	P	W	U	A	Z	Z
F	C	F	J	C	H	B	O	G	C	Y	N	G	V	E
G	M	V	X	D	L	E	C	V	N	D	T	S	F	W
Y	A	X	V	N	U	L	O	H	Y	V	C	L	U	A
H	G	V	L	L	X	L	L	C	M	J	M	C	I	U
P	J	Y	F	E	R	S	A	Q	E	Y	G	H	C	A
D	W	O	R	D	T	N	T	Y	H	X	Q	L	E	S
U	W	H	R	U	E	V	E	B	Y	B	F	L	W	R

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE ENERGY EXPLORERS!

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 substation upgrades and stated Carr's Tree Service completed tree clearing for 2024. He reported on the NRECA Executive Leadership Program he participated in. He discussed Riverview's new project and a discussion was held.

Tom gave the safety report.

Board Policies 511-526 were reviewed and approved by the Board.

The 2025 preliminary budgets were discussed by the department heads.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed September sales. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the East River Managers Meeting, the REED meeting, and the GRE Member Managers Meeting. She discussed the new headquarters building project. Director Thomson volunteered to attend the November East River Board Meeting.

An Executive Session was held.

The November board meeting was set for the 27th.

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