

Photo: Mandi Naig, February Calendar Photo Contest Winner

NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Rate Adjustment Coming In April *by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

Last fall, we shared that one of our wholesale power suppliers, Basin Electric, notified us of significant rate increases expected in 2026 and 2027. These changes translate to more than a 9% increase in wholesale power costs in 2026, with a similar increase projected for 2027. These higher costs are being driven by several factors, including changes in the wholesale power market, new generation and transmission projects, aging infrastructure, increased reliability requirements, and stricter financial standards. In response, Agralite has worked closely with our rate consultant to update our cost-of-service study. This study helps ensure our rates fairly reflect the cost of providing reliable electric service each day while keeping your cooperative financially strong for the long term. We also take a hard look at our budgets and financial forecast to ensure that we are able to keep expenses down while maintaining our maintenance programs to ensure the quality of service that is expected.

After reviewing the results, the Board of Directors carefully considered whether to implement the necessary rate adjustments in one step or two, given the size of the increases being passed through from our power supplier. Following an extensive review, analysis, and discussion, the Board determined that a two-step rate adjustment is the most responsible approach. 1343200 Deferred revenue will be used to help soften the impact to members. The overall rate adjustment is approximately 8% and will take effect in April 2026.

For details specific to your service type, see below, visit our website or contact our office during regular business hours. Thank you for your continued engagement and support of your cooperative.

AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL SERVICE RATES

As of April 1, 2026

General Single Phase		Large Power	
Service Charge	\$52.00	Service Charge	\$105.00
Energy Charge/kWh	12.60¢	Demand Charge/kW	\$13.00
General Multiphase		Energy Charge/kWh	5.68¢
Service Charge	\$74.00	Large Power Service	
Energy Charge/kWh	12.60¢	Service Charge	\$120.00
		Coincident Demand Charge/kW	\$26.84
		Distribution Demand Charge/kW	\$6.75
		Energy Charge/kWh	4.95¢

General Service Rates continue on page 2

EMPOWERING
communities
with innovative
and sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER
85
YEARS

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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:
8:00AM – 4:30PM

Closed Feb. 16th
(Presidents' 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 Douglas Nelson, Riley Biesterfeld, and Wally Kill for finding their account numbers in the December newsletter.

Energy Saving Tip:



Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system.

Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. 1501200 Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating. These signs can indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper air flow helps your system work less and save energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.



Call Day or Night 1.888.884.3887

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

February Energy Payment
is due March 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover, and Mastercard.

AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL SERVICE RATES Continued

As of April 1, 2026

Irrigation

Service Charge 3-ph. (May - Sept.)	\$165.00
Service Charge 1-ph. (May - Sept.)	\$123.00
Uncontrolled Demand Charge/kW	\$28.30
Controlled Demand Charge/kW	\$10.50
Energy Charge/kWh	7.00¢
Energy Charge/kWh (non-summer)	12.60¢

Cycled Air Conditioning

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug/all other months	9.00¢/7.25¢
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Interruptible Heat/Peak Shave Water Heater

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug, (only heat)	12.60¢
kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug, (AC, water heater)	9.00¢
kWh, all other months	7.25¢

Interruptible Generation

Coincident kW	\$24.48
Demand Penalty/kW/control	\$5.00
Single Phase Service Charge	\$52.00
Energy Charge/kWh	8.02¢
>300 kVA 3-Phrase Service Charge	\$125.00
Monthly Demand/kW	\$7.50
Energy Charge/kWh	\$4.60¢

Storage Water Heaters & Storage Heat

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug	8.00¢
kWh, all other months	6.75¢

Electric Vehicle Storage Service

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug	8.00¢
kWh, all other months	6.75¢

Security Lights

Metered	\$8.36
Unmetered - 75 Watt LED	\$11.64

Electric Vehicle Interruptible Service

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug	9.00¢
kWh, all other months	7.25¢

Service Charge for Load Management

\$2.50

All rates subject to adjustment based on wholesale power costs.

Minnesota Electric Cooperatives: 2026 Legislative Priorities

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session will convene Feb. 17 and constitutionally must adjourn by May 18. After passing the biennial state budget in 2025, lawmakers are expected to focus largely on policy issues and the state's capital investment bill, which funds public infrastructure projects. This session unfolds with legislators keenly aware that all 201 legislative seats and the state's constitutional offices will be on the ballot in November.

This political backdrop is headlined by the recent announcement by incumbent Democratic Gov. Tim Walz that he will not seek reelection. At this point, who will run on the Democratic side is still in limbo. However, there are 11 GOP candidates, including Speaker Lisa Demuth and Rep. Kristin Robbins, who are looking to fill the role. Little legislative progress is expected given the divided dynamics, but as history shows, the Minnesota Legislature often finds ways to surprise.

During this session, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is advocating for policies that ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for all Minnesotans. While the legislative climate may present challenges, we see opportunities to make progress on key issues that benefit rural communities, strengthen the grid and advance innovative energy solutions. This year, two priorities lead our efforts: lifting Minnesota's moratorium on nuclear energy and reforming outdated net metering policies.

Lifting Minnesota's Nuclear Energy Moratorium

For decades, Minnesota has maintained a moratorium on new nuclear energy projects, limiting the state's ability to explore carbon-free and reliable power generation. As electric cooperatives work to meet growing demand and integrate more renewable energy, baseload power from advanced nuclear technologies offers immense potential. Nuclear energy plays a key role in the clean energy transition. Unlike wind or solar, it provides constant, reliable power regardless of weather conditions or time of day. With advancing technologies like small modular reactors (SMRs), nuclear energy can complement renewables while reducing carbon emissions.

Minnesota Electric Cooperatives: 2026 Legislative Priorities *Continued*

Removing the moratorium doesn't commit Minnesota to nuclear projects today, but it opens the door to important conversations about ensuring a balanced energy mix for the future. 1703400 MREA is co-leading efforts, through the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance, to lift the moratorium alongside more than 40 partners, including utilities, labor unions, environmental groups, and county governments. This coalition is bringing together members from across the political spectrum, and we're optimistic 2026 can be the year Minnesota reopens the nuclear discussion.

Learn more at: mnnuclearenergyalliance.org.

Reforming Net Metering

Reforming Minnesota's outdated net metering policies is another top priority. While net metering has encouraged the growth of distributed generation like rooftop solar, the current framework unfairly shifts costs to non-solar members. Electric cooperatives fully support renewable energy, but policies must ensure fair and equitable treatment for all cooperative members, whether or not they generate their own power. MREA is working toward reforms that balance affordability with encouraging renewable energy growth. By aligning incentives with the true costs and benefits of distributed energy resources, we can foster continued innovation without overburdening those who can least afford it.

Additional Areas of Focus

While lifting the nuclear moratorium and reforming net metering are MREA's top priorities, several other issues remain important:

- **Wildfire Mitigation:** Rural utilities and cooperatives are key players in reducing wildfire risks. MREA is working with stakeholders to coordinate strategies that protect communities and critical infrastructure.
- **Utility Worker Protection:** Existing laws mostly protect utility workers, but increasing public awareness remains a priority. We want to extend the cooperative culture of safety across our state.
- **Energy Affordability:** Co-ops prioritize keeping electricity affordable and will continue defending against mandates that raise costs and undermine reliable, balanced energy solutions.

A Trusted Voice for Rural Energy

MREA is dedicated to standing up for electric cooperatives and promoting policies that safeguard affordability, reliability and local control. Whether through testimony, outreach or collaboration, we will work to ensure the cooperative difference is front and center in Minnesota's energy discussions. From lifting the nuclear moratorium to reforming net metering, 2026 offers a chance to shape a stronger, more sustainable energy future. Together, we can ensure that energy policies serve all communities fairly and equitably.



To stay informed and join the conversation, visit voicesforcooperativepower.com/minnesota.

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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.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Enrolling in autodraft payments with your utility provider can help prevent certain types of utility bill scams. If a scammer contacts you with fake disconnection threats, you can rest easy knowing your bill is paid automatically through a prearranged, secure channel.

Autodraft payments also eliminate the risk of exposing checks and personal banking info through the mail.

If your utility offers autodraft payments, consider enrolling to stay on track and avoid certain scams.

Source: AARP



Thank you for your dedicated years of service to Agralite Electric Cooperative!

Why Is The Demand For Electricity Rising?

Demand for electricity in the U.S. is booming. Recent data shows that power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least 38 gigawatts (enough electricity to power 3,600 homes for one year) between now and 2028. Meeting this new demand will require a combination of new power plants, grid upgrades, and energy storage technology advancements. Here are the key factors that are driving increased demand.

- 1 Increased Electrification:** Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating, and industrial electrification are increasing overall U.S. energy consumption.
- 2 Data Centers:** Driven by explosions in AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.
- 3 Economic Growth:** Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14% to 22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.
- 4 Manufacturing Growth/Onshoring:** New, expanding and “onshored/reshored” manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.



Director Nominations Now Open For Districts 5, 6, And 7

Would you like to serve as a Director on the Agralite Electric Cooperative Board for your district? Agralite Electric Cooperative is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by our membership. 913401 The cooperative's service territory is divided into seven districts with each district represented by a director who resides in that district. Directors elected serve a three-year term.

This year we will have an election for directors for Districts 5, 6, and 7.

District 5 includes the townships of: Camp Lake, Kerkhoven, Kildare, Hayes, Cashel, Dublin, Pillsbury, and Lake Johanna.

District 6 includes the townships of: Tara, Clontarf, Benson, Maryland, Six Mile Grove, Torning, and Swenoda.

District 7 includes the townships of: Stevens, Synnes, Hegbert, Fairfield, Shible, Moyer, Appleton, Edison, West Bank, Artichoke, Upper Akron, and Lower Akron.

Any member meeting the qualifications as specified in the Bylaws of Agralite Electric Cooperative may become a candidate for election to the Board by submitting a written petition for nomination with the signatures of no less than 15 members who are residents of the district for which the election is being held. All voting will be done by mail. Ballots will be mailed to all Agralite voting members on record in these districts before the Annual Meeting. The election takes place at the Annual Meeting on May 27, 2026.

Please call 320-843-4150 or stop by our office if you have questions on the nominating process or about becoming a director, and to pick up a petition for nomination.

Petitions are due to the office no later than 4:30 pm on Friday, April 17th, 2026.

**AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PETITION FOR NOMINATION**

To: Jeff Hufford, Board Secretary

I _____, would like to be a candidate to serve as a director for Agralite Electric Cooperative representing District No. _____. I hereby certify that I meet the requirements set forth in Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Cooperative and I request that my name be placed on the ballot that will be mailed to the members with the notice of the annual meeting of the Cooperative to be held on May 27, 2026. I respectfully file this petition with a minimum of fifteen (15) members of the Cooperative who are residents of District No. _____ and who support my candidacy.

Signature of Candidate

We, the undersigned, certify that we are members of Agralite Electric Cooperative and that we reside in District No. _____. We are familiar with the requirement for serving as a director of the Cooperative and we believe that the above-named candidate meets the requirements to become and/or remain a director of Agralite Electric Cooperative representing District No. _____. By our signatures below we show our support for this Petition for Nomination. We further attest that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the above-named candidate is a member of Agralite Electric Cooperative and is a resident of District No. _____.
(Large faint 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid across the entire section)

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Phone #	Date
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2026 Agralite Scholarships



Starting in 2016, Agralite Electric Cooperative created a post-secondary education scholarship program. This program is open to the four-county region that Agralite provides electric service to: Big Stone, Pope, Stevens, and Swift counties.

Agralite Electric Cooperative will award eight \$2,000 scholarships. Two of the scholarship awards are intended for individuals interested in becoming an electrical line worker or electrician. These scholarship funds are made available in part from unclaimed capital credits and in part through administration proceeds from The Rural Economic Development Loan program.

Get applications on our website at www.agralite.coop, from your school counselor, or in our office. The completed application and all other necessary information must be returned to Agralite Electric Cooperative no later than April 3, 2026. Applicants who applied for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship may also apply for the Agralite scholarship. Winners will be drawn randomly pending a completed application.

Mail to: Agralite Electric Cooperative, PO Box 228, Benson, MN 56215

Or email to: mchevalier@agralite.com

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, 2026.

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**



2026 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. 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 20, 2026.

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

December 2025

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., December 30, 2025. 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 #591, Work Order #592, and November 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 discussed meetings with key accounts and CVEC. He discussed the 2026 Power Hour events and the dates were set for April 13th and 14th. He discussed the 2026 Annual Meeting and the date was set for May 27th. He discussed Youth Engagement including the 2026 Youth Tour and 2026 Scholarships.

Stephanie Wrobleksi, Manager of Finance/CFO, reported on activities of her department for the month. She discussed margins for the month of November. She discussed patronage received. She brought forth 2025 Write-Offs and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

Understanding The 2026 Basin Rate Increase

Member Q&A

What are the primary drivers behind the rate increase?

Growth in traditional load, commodity price variability, increased planning reserve margins, and continued investments in reliability.

What factors are NOT behind the rate increase?

While large loads (data centers, crypto mining, AI, etc..) are a hot topic across the nation, they are not behind the 2026 rate increase. In collaboration with its membership, Basin Electric developed a Large Load Program designed to insulate our existing members from the costs and risks associated with serving new large electric loads.

How was member input used to make this rate decision?

After months of communication with the members, Basin Electric carefully evaluated feedback from members and market conditions before deciding to implement a multi-year phased approach.

How will this rate increase help ensure reliable electricity for members in the future?

A rate increase helps provide the resources needed to invest in infrastructure, technology, and maintain and upgrade equipment. These investments ensure the system stays strong and reliable, providing members with dependable electricity for their homes and businesses.

What if actual results are better than the budgeted rate increase in '26 or beyond?

Basin Electric has a history of pulling a variety of levers in situations when results are better than expected, including providing bill credits in 2021 and 2022; implementing rate decreases in 2020 and 2023; and adding to the rate stability fund to offset the financial impact of unexpected events that would otherwise result in rate increases.

How has inflation impacted Basin Electric?

Rising costs from inflation have made it more expensive to build and maintain infrastructure. Our current generation fleet has an average cost on our books of approximately \$800/kW, with future costs predicted to be \$2,700/kW. Likewise, our current transmission has an average cost on our books of approximately \$400,000/mile of line, with future costs predicted to be \$2 million/mile of line.

Why are higher margins necessary?

Basin Electric is growing, and part of the money for new projects must come directly from its members. This is similar to the concept of homeowner's equity in that a homeowner is required to provide a certain level of equity in their home to secure a mortgage at acceptable and reasonable interest rates.



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 gave an update on the Hodges and Darnen substations. He gave an update on the GRID grant. He discussed Agralite's afterhours dispatch services.

Tom gave the safety report.

Ross Molina, with Lewis Brisbois, joined the meeting via Teams to discuss cybersecurity.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the REED meeting, East River Managers Meeting, GRE Managers Meeting, Mid-West Electric Consumers Association

Annual Meeting, and the STAR Board Meeting. She discussed the Resolution to Engage into Research and Feasibility Study with Cooperative Innovation Center.

The Board approved updates to Policy 300.3 LPA and Policy 3003. DP.

Jenny Stryhn will be the 2026 NRECA voting delegate and Director Rau will be the alternate.

Director Zierke will be the 2026 MREA voting delegate and Director Rau will be the alternate.

The January board meeting was set for the 29th.

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