



Photo: Janelle Skarsten, July Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

July 2023

2023 Legislation Will Impact Everyone Who Uses Electricity by Jenny Stryhn

The 2023 legislative session, which began in January and concluded on May 22, was one of the most consequential in history for Minnesota's 1.7 million cooperative members. Record investments, key policy changes, and a landmark 100% carbon-free by 2040 mandate all made this legislative session one with big long-term impacts on everyone using electricity in the state.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) represents Minnesota's 44 distribution cooperatives and six generation & transmissions cooperatives who collectively serve over 1.7 million Minnesotans. They are the voice for non-profit electric cooperative member-owners at the Capitol and have been deeply engaged with lawmakers, so Minnesota cooperative member owners have their voice heard.

They worked tirelessly to shape the session's outcomes. Here is an overview of a few items affecting electric cooperative members.

100% Carbon-Free by 2040

The first and most impactful bill for electric cooperatives and their member-owners was the historic 100% carbon-free by 2040 bill, which was signed into law in early February. The legislation, passed in record time, is widely regarded as the most significant energy policy ever passed in Minnesota and mandates all electricity sold in the state come from carbon-free sources by the year 2040. The law will increase the challenge of keeping the electric grid reliable under all conditions; significant advancements in technology will be needed to achieve the mandate.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives are leaders in navigating the clean energy transition while keeping electricity reliable and affordable. However, this new law does present significant challenges. As a result, MREA worked with lawmakers to add some common-sense amendments to help protect affordability and reliability. Nonetheless, a lot of investment, innovation, and ingenuity will be necessary to avoid cost increases and potential service disruptions, while meeting the mandate.

State Competitiveness Fund

Investments in Minnesota's electric grid are more crucial than ever, and historic funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) necessitates Minnesota to think big to attract federal dollars. As a result, lawmakers put \$190 million into a newly created State Competitiveness Fund which will be used to attract hundreds of millions of dollars for investments in Minnesota's energy infrastructure. Cooperatives across the state will be using these funds, including an additional \$5.3 million specifically for consumer-owned utilities, for projects to improve affordability and reliability and aid in the energy transition.

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communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75

YEARS

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Agralite Electric Co-op

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



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

2023 Legislation Will Impact Everyone Who Uses Electricity *Continued*

Electrification Rebates and Grants

The State of Minnesota wants to help you buy an electric vehicle. This includes a rebate up to \$2,500 for a new electric vehicle with a sale price below \$55,000 or up to \$600 for a used vehicle under \$25,000.

The rebate is open to individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and governments; those who have already received an EV rebate or tax credit from Minnesota are not eligible.

Those who would like to purchase a highly efficient heat pump to heat and cool their home could receive rebates of up to \$4,000. 555401 The legislature also made grant money available for solar on schools, electric bikes, electric school buses, pre-weatherization work, and more.

Agralite Donates to Local Businesses

Agralite Electric Cooperative donated \$17,000 to Mini Sota Children's Museum. Mini Sota is raising funds for creating a new museum where children of all ages can explore the diverse field of agriculture through interactive exhibits. Agralite is also working on an Energy Corner for the museum. 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 project from CoBank's Sharing Success Program and Basin Electric 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 **Samantha Fowler**
for finding her account number in the May newsletter!

Energy Saving Tip:

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors.



To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for air conditioning or cooling.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen (or the backyard) and find new ways to save energy.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

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

June Energy Payment is due July 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.



Pictured above is Mini Sota's Vice President, Katie Saterbak, and Founder, Ginger Claussen, along with Jenny Stryhn, Agralite's General Manager/CEO

Agralite Electric Cooperative donated \$4,000 to the Benson Family Aquatic Center for their 2nd Slide by 2025 fundraiser and \$4,000 to the Kerkhoven Parks & Recreation for their new playground fundraiser.

Pictured on the right is Shelly Mikkelson, Pool Manager and Committee Chair, and Marissa Chevalier, Agralite's Executive Assistant



Stay Safe While Spending Time Outdoors

As temperatures increase and sunny days abound, it is easy to be footloose and fancy free. As you spend more time outdoors, keep these safety tips in mind to have a great summer.



Pools and Hot Tubs

Before opening your pool or hot tub for the season, ensure there is ground fault circuit interrupter protection on underwater lighting circuits, as well as for lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas.

Have your pool's electrical system inspected. Faulty wiring can cause swimmers to experience electric shock drowning.

Boating and Swimming

When boating or swimming, know that faulty wiring can cause the water to become energized. Never go swimming near boats plugged into shore power or docks with an electrical source. Energized water can cause electric shock drowning.

While Recreating

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, approximately 440 people are struck and killed by lightning each year.

Nearly two-thirds of the deaths occurred while enjoying outdoor leisure activities — 33% of the fatalities occurred during water-related activities such as boating, spending time on the beach, and swimming, while 14% happened during sporting activities such as fishing, soccer, and running.

During a Storm

When angry clouds roll in, take them seriously. Have a weather app installed on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, take cover. A watch means that conditions are likely for severe weather to develop; a warning means take action.

When Playing

When flying drones, remote-controlled planes, toys or kites, fly them in a wide-open area free from overhead power lines. If a toy or object gets stuck in an overhead power line, do not try to remove it. Instead, call your electric utility and a crew will address the issue safely.

Ensure that overhead power lines do not run through or over a tree before your child starts to climb. Select trees that are in a wide-open space without overhead power lines nearby.

If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them to never touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it. The same precaution applies to a pet or animal inside the fenced area of a substation.

Releasing Balloons

Although it is not an outdoor recreational activity per se, be careful with metallic balloons. If they are released or accidentally let go and get caught in a power line or other utility equipment, they can cause a major power outage.

Additionally, be careful during a balloon release, regardless of the type of balloon. 1691800 Be sure to release balloons in wide-open areas that are far from overhead power and airports.

For additional electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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

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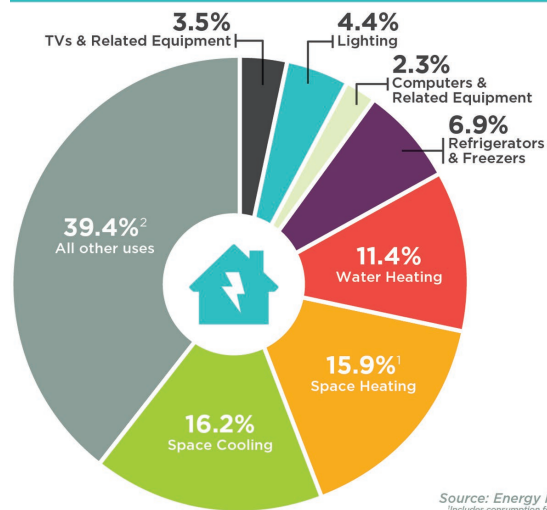
When the Weather is Extreme, Use Energy Wisely

We hear a lot about peak energy demand, but what is it and how does it impact electricity use? As the name implies, peak energy demand occurs when energy consumption is at its highest. In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to the need to heat and cool indoor spaces.

Although it depends on where you live, summertime energy demand increases between mid-to-late afternoon (when outdoor temperatures soar) and evening. In the winter, there are two high-use times of day: early morning and late afternoon/evening. Weekends and holidays are typically considered off peak.

Changing the time of day you use energy can help lower your energy bills and avoid interruptions or service glitches that can occur during peak demand times. To do this, consider running major appliances during off-peak times; smart devices or appliances that have delay start features can help achieve this goal.

How Americans Use Electricity



The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for the largest percentage of electricity consumption in American homes.

Source: Energy Information Administration 2022
Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.
*Includes miscellaneous electronics, clothes washers and dryers, cooking equipment, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.

Do your part to use energy wisely when temperatures are high. In the summer months, help decrease demand by doing the following:

- Turn your thermostat up by two degrees or more.
- Program your thermostat to a higher temperature when no one is home.
- If you do not have one, consider purchasing a smart thermostat.
- Make sure your HVAC system is in good working order.
- Use bathroom and kitchen fans temporarily to remove heat and humidity.
- Turn off stand-alone dehumidifiers.
- Use your countertop toaster/convection oven instead of your oven.
- Use major appliances in the early morning or late evening.
- Program smart devices to run appliances at off-peak times.
- Close window coverings during the hottest part of the day.
- Use minimal lighting.
- Turn off and disconnect electronics that are not in use.



Making small changes to conserve energy can help even-out energy use, save money on your utility bill, and avoid service interruptions caused by high demand.

To learn more about energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

2023 FARMFEST Cut out and bring this coupon to Farmfest for a chance to win a grand prize.

AUG. 1-3
Redwood Falls, Minnesota



Visit Agralite Electric Cooperative, along with other Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, at Farmfest 2023 and enter for a chance to win a grand prize!

FARMFEST 2023 • AUGUST 1 - 3 • REDWOOD FALLS, MN

Bring this coupon to Booth #2301.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

You must be a member of one of the participating electric cooperatives to win.





Get Smart About Home Lighting

Gone are the days when a simple flip of the switch was the only choice for illuminating our homes. While we still have this tried-and-true option, we've entered a new era of innovative and intelligent technologies, which includes smart lighting.

Smart lighting connects to Wi-Fi and offers an array of cutting-edge functionality and convenience. Let's look at the main benefits of smart lighting options.

Smart lighting is energy efficient. Most smart bulbs utilize LED technology, which is much more efficient than traditional incandescent lighting. Additionally, smart lighting gives you more control over how and when you light your home, ultimately resulting in less energy used for lighting.

Smart lighting provides convenience and control. Most smart bulbs can be controlled from an app on your smartphone or can be paired with your voice assistant, like Amazon Alexa. You can conveniently control lighting settings from anywhere in your home or when you're away. Whether you want to set a schedule for lighting or adjust brightness levels, these smart options offer effortless control from the comfort of, well, anywhere!

Smart options empower you to personalize home lighting. Bright, warm, purple, green--whatever mood you want to create, smart lighting can help. For a more traditional look, try dimmable white bulbs. If you want to create the perfect ambiance for movie night, look for bulbs that can be adjusted for a variety of vibrant colors. The possibilities are endless.

While smart lighting offers convenience and control, keep in mind your wall light switch will need to stay "on" for you to control the smart bulb from your phone or via voice command. 1497700 To use a smart bulb, the wall switch it's connected to must be "on" so the bulb receives power, which enables it to connect to a Wi-Fi network.

If you need additional options to operate the lights, consider a smart light switch. Today's smart switches tend to play nicely with smart bulbs. If you want to control your smart bulbs with a physical switch (in addition to using your phone and voice commands), look for smart switches that include a built-in feature that allows both. Many smart light switches include motion detectors as well.

If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs to your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. Most kits include several bulbs and any additional tools you'll need to get started.

If you're new to smart home tech and looking to start small, try a smart bulb in a high-traffic area of your home. It's also worth noting that smart plugs are a great starter option and allow convenient control of lamps or other lighting fixtures that are plugged in to a wall outlet. Smart plugs are inexpensive and simply plug in to your existing outlet. Electrical items that are connected to the smart plug can be controlled from a smart phone app, just like smart bulbs.

Whether you're looking for more convenience, colorful options, or better ways to manage energy use, smart lighting can provide multiple benefits. Determine which smart lighting features are most important for your needs, then start shopping!

FREE & EASY ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.

16%



1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.

3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° F to 38° F and your freezer at 0° F.



4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.

7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.



8. Unplug appliances you're not using.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council, U.S. Energy Information Administration

Safe Electricity.org®

CURRENT AGRALITE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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District 2 - Secretary/Treasurer

Bennett Zierke, Hancock

District 3

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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 May 2023

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., May 25, 2023. 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, and Special Equipment for April 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 gave updates on the Energy Tour, Mini Sota Museum exhibit, CoBank Sharing Success matching funds, and the MN Twins Youth Baseball Clinic. He discussed generator sales.

Ralph Martin, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of April. He discussed a new service for collections he is working on implementing. He discussed Cash Management services.

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 stated that Derek Hittle, Agralite's locator, announced he will be leaving Agralite and his last day is May 26th. The open position will be posted internally first and then externally. He gave an update on the MREA and NRECA grants he has been working on. Tom brought forth revisions to Policy 300.3 SL Security Lighting Service and the Board approved the revisions.

Tom gave the safety report.

HOW SOLAR PANELS WORK WORD SEARCH



Did you know energy from the sun can be used to create electricity? Read the following information about how solar panels work, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.

Solar panels contain **photovoltaic** cells that convert sunlight into **electricity**.

Sunlight hits the **solar** panels and generates a direct current.

The direct **current** flows to an inverter, which converts it to an alternating current. (This is the kind of electricity we use in our homes.)

The alternating current flows from the **inverter** to the home's breaker box, where it's used to **power** appliances and electrical devices in your home.

If the solar **panels** generate more **electricity** than the home needs, the unused electricity is sent back to the power lines.

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

Director Draeger gave a presentation on Solar Storms.

Lois Croonquist, STAR Energy Services' CEO, joined the meeting and gave a PowerPoint presentation on STAR Energy Services.

An Executive Session was held.

The Board approved a motion to authorize Jenny Stryhn to pursue future energy contract opportunities.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the scholarship recipients and award ceremonies. She discussed recent meetings she attended, Basin deferred revenue, and Basin rates in regards to crypto/large loads. She discussed her

talks with the City of Benson on the proposed Industrial Park. A discussion was held. The Board approved a motion to have Don Wilcox draw up an offer for other land opportunities.

Jenny Stryhn will be the 2023 NCSC voting delegate.

The Board accepted the three Board Petition for Nominations that were received.

The June board meeting was set for the 22nd at 1:30 pm.

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