



Photo: Kendra Thorson, July Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

July 2024

## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

### FOR OVER

# 80 YEARS



## It's All About The Energy: Join Agralite Electric Cooperative For An Energy Tour Bus Trip

Join Us August 21-23: \$175 per person / 25 seats available

We're excited to invite you to join us for our 2024 Energy Tour from August 21-23! This three-day luxury coach tour will take you through North Dakota's coal country, where you'll learn how electric power is generated at a lignite coal plant, how a coal-gasification plant produces natural gas, and visit the North Dakota History Museum.

### The tour includes visits to:

- Basin Electric Powers Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- Great Plains SynFuels Plant 1575700
- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Garrison Dam Hydropower Generation Plant
- The North Dakota History Center
- Lewis & Clark Riverboat Dinner Cruise

This trip promises to be both fun and educational, and we hope you'll join us for this exciting opportunity. [Sign up by August 1st by calling our office at 320-843-4150.](#)

You'll be staying at a hotel in Mandan for two nights. The trip cost is \$175 per person. Most meals are included, except for fast food and coffee stops during the bus trip to and from North Dakota, and any restaurants you may visit during your free time.



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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



**Summer Office Hours:**  
7:00 am – 3:30 pm



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

Allan Rice and Dale Hanson for finding their account numbers in the May newsletter.

### Energy Saving Tip:

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.



Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water and shorten drying time. If your dryer doesn't have an autosense feature to set the drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source: [homesandgardens.com](http://homesandgardens.com)



Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887

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

July Energy Payment is due August 20.\*  
\*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

## Manager's Article by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager

I would like to thank our membership for attending the cooperative's Annual Meeting last month. It was a great success!

During the Annual Meeting, Agralite had a schematic design of the headquarters facility (pictured below) on display to provide a visual representation of the proposed plan. This strategy would involve building on our existing footprint. It would also be subject to an in-depth review of the construction process before the final approval.

The schematic design presented was a result of working together with our staff, the dedicated employee focus group, the Board of Directors, and our architect firm, Mohagen Hansen.

We are striving to craft an optimally cost-effective and efficient workspace for our membership, employees, and our equipment on our existing land footprint in a one-phase design.

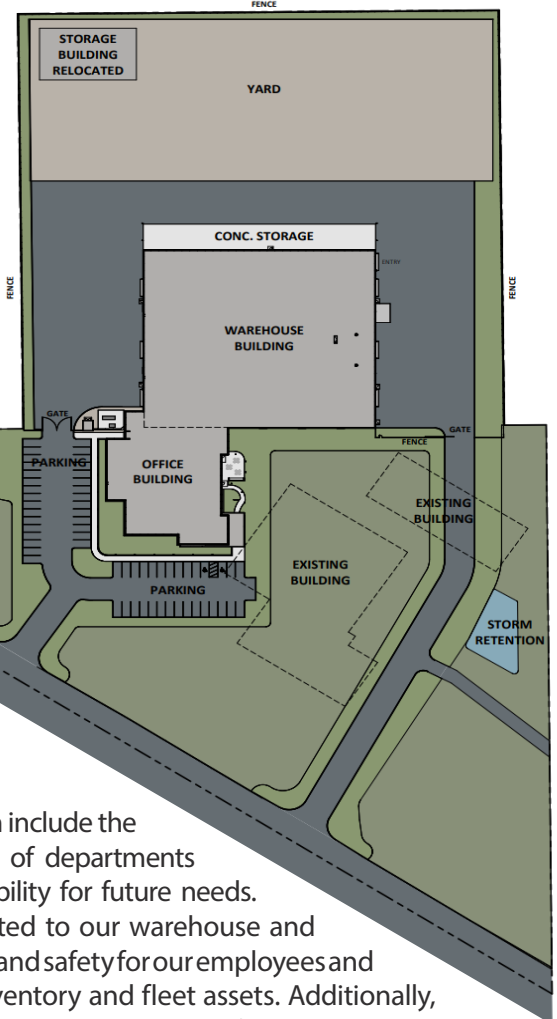
Key considerations in the building design include the seamless flow and strategic placement of departments and offices, while also prioritizing scalability for future needs. Thoughtful attention has been dedicated to our warehouse and garage areas, ensuring easy accessibility and safety for our employees and the public, particularly in managing inventory and fleet assets. Additionally, our new headquarters aims to enhance the experience of our membership by providing a secure environment and a communal space that encourage meaningful interactions with you—our member-owners.



Agralite has sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to multiple qualified contractors for firm qualifications and proposed cost estimates based on the design development documentation from our architect. We will review the qualified responses and conduct in-depth interviews to ensure we build using the most responsible and economical means possible.

As always, we will continue to provide updates to you, our member-owners, on this project in future issues of the Agralite Newsletter and on our website. We have a dedicated tab on our website where you can review past communications, frequently asked questions, and a timeline of proposed events.

If you have any questions, please call our office during normal business hours. We appreciate your support and continued interest in your electric cooperative.





## Agralite Electric Cooperative Celebrates 85 Years

Agralite Electric Cooperative held its 85th Annual Meeting on June 4, 2024, at the Benson High School. A steak supper was grilled by the West Central Cattlemen's Association, followed by the business meeting.

The Board President, Warren Rau, reported on the new headquarters facility and renewable and carbon-free energy.

The financial report was presented by Agralite's new CFO, Stephanie Wroblewski. She reported that the cooperative's financial position remains strong, with net margins of \$3,383,747 for 2023.

Agralite's CEO, Jenny Stryhn, presented her report, which covered several important topics including an update on the new headquarters facility, introducing Agralite employees and scholarship recipients, and upcoming community events.

Director seats in Districts 1 and 2 were up for election. Incumbents Kathy Draeger (District 1) and Jeff Hufford (District 2) were re-elected.

The meeting concluded with a door prize drawing for bill credits.

*Thank you to all our members that attended our 85th Annual Meeting!*

## Operation Round Up: Turn Your Coins Into Change



Operation Round Up allows members to make a positive impact in their community with just a small contribution. The program allows members and subscribers to round up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar. The extra change may not seem like much, but when combined with the contributions of others, it can add up to a significant amount of money that can make a real difference in the lives of others. As not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives are committed to improving the quality of life for their members and their communities. Operation Round Up is one way that cooperatives can fulfill this commitment by supporting local organizations and initiatives.

The nine-member Board of Trustees meets periodically throughout the year to review applications and award grants. Do you know of a worthy organization that benefits the members of Agralite Electric Cooperative that is in need of funds? If so, please encourage that organization to apply. Applications can be found on our website and returned to our office. On behalf of the Operation Round Up Board and the numerous grant recipients, thank you to the membership for their continued support of this program.

*If you would like to participate in this program, please give our office a call at 320-843-4150.*



### 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](mailto:mchevalier@agralite.com)

**Service ANNIVERSARY** **10 YEARS**

*Chris Carruth*  
Agralite Lineman

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

REDUCE YOUR ENERGY USAGE TO HELP

# BEAT THE PEAK

- ✓ Turn off and unplug any unnecessary lights or electronics.
- ✓ Wait to run the dishwasher or do laundry until late in the evening.
- ✓ Use curtains and blinds to keep the sun out.
- ✓ Set your thermostat a few degrees higher.

Safe Electricity.org®

## Safety Tip

All thunderstorms contain lightning. If a thunderstorm approaches when you are swimming or near water, get out of the water and stay away from the beach. If you are golfing, put down your clubs, get away from metal golf carts, take off your golf shoes and get inside as quickly as possible.



Safe Electricity.org®

## The Power of Smart Home Technologies

Smart home technologies are transforming how we live, making our homes more comfortable, convenient, and energy efficient than ever before. Smart home technologies are devices that communicate with each other to automate everyday tasks and functions around the home, like heating and cooling, lighting, and security. In addition to convenience, smart technologies enable consumers to manage and monitor their energy consumption through device scheduling and control.

With just a tap on your phone or a voice command to your virtual assistant (like Alexa or Siri), you can conveniently control many aspects of your home environment. 785100 If you're new to the smart tech world, there are several cost-effective devices you can try as you explore ways to make your home smarter.

An inexpensive place to start is with a smart bulb or plug. Smart LED bulbs allow you to control home lighting remotely through a smartphone app or voice commands. Set schedules to automatically turn lights off or on to help you save energy and boost home security. Smart plugs are another inexpensive way to give electronics and small appliances the smart home treatment. Smart plugs allow you to set schedules to remotely control power to lamps, small appliances and electronics, minimizing standby energy use and maximizing convenience. For example, you can sync the timing of your bedside lamp, alarm, speakers and coffee maker to turn on at the same time each morning. If Alexa or Siri is already part of your household, you can build on your existing "tech ecosystem" by adding a smart hub, like Amazon Echo or Apple HomePod. Voice assistants that are synced to smart devices like bulbs and plugs provide additional options for device management and allow family members to interact with the various devices through voice control rather than individual apps. [Article continues on page 5](#)

## TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SMART HOME TECH

- 1. Define goals.** Determine the areas in your home you want to make smart, like lighting, security and entertainment systems.
- 2. Choose compatible devices.** A smart hub can make integration easier with a central device to control multiple smart technologies.
- 3. Check Wi-Fi strength.** Smart home technologies require a stable internet connection to function properly, so consider factors like router placement and signal strength.
- 4. Prioritize security.** Set strong, unique passwords for your Wi-Fi network, set devices to update automatically and limit personal data collection.

# 2024 FARMFEST

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

**AUG. 6 - 8**  
Redwood Falls,  
Minnesota

Visit Agralite Electric Cooperative, along with other Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, at Farmfest 2024 and enter for a chance to win a grand prize!

FARMFEST 2024 • AUGUST 6 - 8 • 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.



## The Power Of Smart Home Technologies *Continued*

Home heating and cooling account for a significant portion of energy use, so one of the best investments you can make in smart tech is a smart thermostat. While traditional programmable thermostats can be set to your schedule and preferences, a smart thermostat takes this one step further by learning and adjusting to your routine and building a schedule around it. Smart security systems are popular options for homeowners looking for advanced security solutions that incorporate cameras, sensors, and cloud-based video recordings. As with other smart technologies, smart security systems provide convenient, flexible ways to monitor homes (and businesses), giving you peace of mind even when you're away. If you're considering smart tech for your home, start by defining your goals. Is saving energy your top priority, or are you aiming to improve home security? Smart home technologies provide great convenience—but remember, they are internet-connected devices.

That means you'll need a stable Wi-Fi connection to ensure devices are working properly, and you'll need strong passwords for your router and individual devices. Whether you're looking to automate every aspect of your home or simply want to try a device or two, smart technologies have the power to transform your living space into a home where comfort and convenience reign supreme.

## Beyond The Plug: The Local Grid

We live in an increasingly power-dependent world. Every day, we rely on electricity in a variety of ways to help us run our lives. It gives us light, keeps our refrigerator running, and charges our mobile devices.

At a basic level, the electric grid is a interconnected system of wires. It connects the places where energy is produced to where it is used. Great River Energy, a wholesale power supplier to Agralite Electric Cooperative, generates electricity and uses the grid to move it to ensure reliable electric service as well as quick response times when there is an issue on the electric system.

The local grid delivers electricity from distribution substations, like those owned by Agralite Electric Cooperative, to members at the end of the line like you. 1388500 At substations, higher voltages are "stepped down" to lower, more usable levels.

Then it is sent along smaller distribution lines to be delivered safely to neighborhoods and farms. In residential areas, pad-mounted transformers — the big green boxes sitting on the ground in the corner of some properties — make the power safe to use.

That energy then runs along lines to power homes, schools, farms, and businesses. The local grid is one important key to helping deliver the power we rely on every day.

## COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for the power to go out, but if it happens on a sunny day, you might be left wondering why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.

### WEATHER

High winds, snow, and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.



Squirrels, birds, snakes, and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to an electrical supply.



Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.



Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

## THREE LEVELS OF TRANSMISSION

BIG, STRONG,  
SERVES THE MARKET

### REGIONAL TRANSMISSION

- Transports bulk electricity across the region at high voltages
- Usually supported on tall metal towers
- Often 230-kV and up

MEDIUM SIZED,  
CONNECTS COMMUNITIES

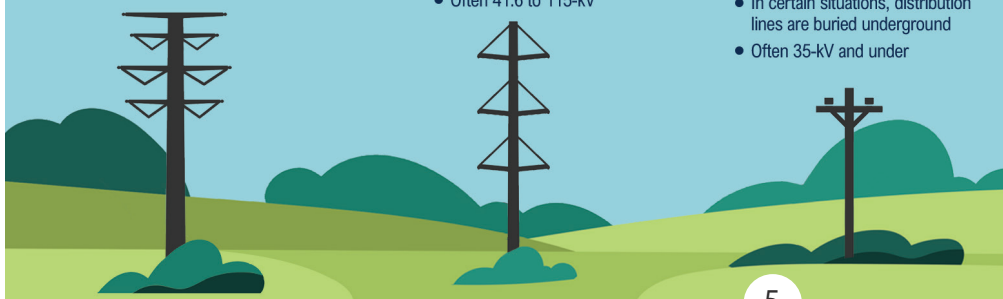
### LOCAL TRANSMISSION

- Transmission lines that deliver electricity to the communities we serve
- Generally supported by wooden poles
- Often 41.6 to 115-kV

SMALLER, CONNECTS HOMES,  
FARMS AND BUSINESSES

### DISTRIBUTION

- Delivers lower-voltage electricity to homes, farms, and businesses over a shorter distance
- Generally supported by wooden poles
- In certain situations, distribution lines are buried underground
- Often 35-kV and under



*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](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](mailto: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 May 2024

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., May 30, 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 #563, and April 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 gave an update on Agralite's Energy Corner part of the Mini Sota Children's Museum. He discussed a member survey that will begin in June, and the 2024 Energy Tour set for August 21-23.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of April. She discussed capital credit retirements and stated those checks were mailed out May 28th. She discussed the Cold Weather Rule ending April 30th, and Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange. She brought forth Resolution Authorizing Use of Safe Deposit Box at BMO Bank and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Stephanie 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 Carr's Tree Service began tree trimming at the beginning of the month in Swift County. He discussed the MN Safety Council Conference that he attended.

# NATIONAL GRILLING MONTH WORD SEARCH

July is National Grilling Month! Can you find all the words associated with grilling in the puzzle below? Use the word bank as a guide.



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



### WORD BANK

- Hamburger
- Spatula
- Hot Dog
- Friends
- Summer
- Apron
- Grill
- Barbeque
- Family
- Tongs

**Cooking outdoors is a fun way to spend time with friends and family! By cooking outside, you can save energy indoors and keep your home cooler.**

Tom gave the safety report.

Board Policies 300.3-300.16 were reviewed and the recommended updates were approved by the Board.

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the meeting to discuss his plans for retirement at the end of the year.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the upcoming Annual Meeting. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the STAR Energy Services board meeting, Mid-West Water and Power Committee, East River Managers Meeting, and the Great River Energy Managers Meeting. She discussed Crypto and Large Load Rates. She stated that West-Con pulled their REED loan application.

Jenny discussed a REDLG loan application request from C-BOG Grain, LLC and the Board

approved Resolution Authorizing Application for Rural Economic Development Loan to C-BOG Grain, LLC.

Director Hufford will be the East River Delegate for District No. 01 Caucus. Brad Donnay will be the alternate.

Jenny will be the 2024 CFC Voting Delegate. The Board discussed the NCSC 2024 Mail Ballot.

Jenny discussed the new headquarters facility. She reviewed a draft package and the schematic designs. Director Rau, Director Gronseth, and Director Hufford will be on the interview committee for selecting a Construction Manager at Risk.

The June board meeting was set for the 27th.

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