



Photo: Larry Syverson, June Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

June 2022

Agralite Load Management Equipment

Agralite would like to thank you for choosing to use our load management program. We are in the process of updating our load management equipment. Agralite would like our members to make note of the following required care of the new equipment being installed.

*****Agralite equipment must remain on at all times.**

- The submeter and radio receiver needs to be reporting to us daily. If these meters stop reporting for any reason, we assume there is an issue with the meter and will be calling.
- Please do not, for any reason, shut off the submeter.
- If you are leaving for the winter and would like to shut off your water heater, please make sure that doing so does not affect our equipment. If it does, you will need to add a disconnect to shut off just the water heater.

*****If you are unable to leave these meters on, you may be removed from our load management program.**

Please contact the office if you have questions in regards to the load management program.

Photo of Load Management Equipment



Agralite Members: Save The Date!

2022
**ANNUAL
MEETING**

June 30, 2022

Watch for a separate mailing
of Notice of Meeting & Annual
Meeting Report

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75
YEARS

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Agralite Electric Co-op We're member-owned!

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www.agralite.coop

 Like us on Facebook



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 Anthony Ritter for finding his account number in the April newsletter!

Energy Saving Tip:



If you're looking to add smart technology to your home, consider smart plugs. 1363100 Smart plugs are inexpensive and can be used to control lighting and other electronic devices through a smart home app.

With smart plugs, you can conveniently manage lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. By powering off unused devices when you are away, you can save energy (and money!).

Source: energystar.gov



**Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887**

Do not call the office for outages

May Energy Payment
is due June 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

This past week, I attended the NRECA Legislative Rally in Washington DC. Each year, except during the COVID lockdown, electric cooperative leaders from across the country gather in Washington, D.C., to talk with our elected officials about key issues rural electric cooperatives are facing. During this time in the nation's capital, cooperative leaders sit down with our senators, representatives, and congressional staffers to help them understand what a cooperative is and how we differ from investor-owned utilities.



During these meetings, leaders from cooperatives across Minnesota discussed three key issues:

- 1 The first issue discussed was providing direct pay options for cooperatives. As not-for-profit entities, cooperatives can not take advantage of tax credits that private companies and investor-owned utilities utilize for certain projects. The measure would provide direct federal payments for co-ops to develop new energy resources and technologies, putting them on a level playing field with utilities that already receive federal tax breaks for providing power from solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, and for investing in carbon capture projects.

Today, if a cooperative wishes to utilize these tax incentives, they must work with an entity that has a "tax appetite" to develop the project. The cooperative would then enter into a contract to take the output of the project for a period of time with the taxable entity retaining a portion or all of the federal tax incentives for the project. If the cooperatives were successful in securing the direct pay benefit it would help to reduce the cost impact of these projects to the member owners of the cooperative.
- 2 The second issue that we discussed with our elected officials is a plan entitled "The Flexible Financing for Rural America Act", which would allow co-ops to refinance their Rural Utilities Service loans at lower interest rates without prepayment penalties. Today most of the loans cooperatives have through the Rural Utilities Services (RUS) and the Federal Finance Bureau (FFB) can not be refinanced if interest rates would drop. With the low interest rates, electric cooperatives in Minnesota, as of April of this year, could save \$113 million over the life of the outstanding debt.

This bill has 199 Representatives and 30 Senators cosigned on the bill. This bipartisan legislation would provide needed flexibility to rural communities and their electric co-ops. I am very pleased that both of the Minnesota Senators have signed onto the bill with Senator Tina Smith being the lead sponsor of the bill on the Senate side.

3 The third topic of discussion with this group was the \$1.2 trillion dollar Infrastructure Bill that contains dozens of programs of potential interest to electric cooperatives. Some provisions of particular interest are Electric Vehicles, Grid Resiliency and Modernization, Broadband, and Clean Energy.

NRECA is working with Congress and Federal agencies as they develop these programs to distribute funding provided by the law. NRECA has established an Infrastructure Resource Hub to provide information on programs that are available and how they are developing as they move through the agency process. NRECA is also establishing issue consortiums to help organize cooperatives and maximize value for co-op participants. The consortiums allow electric cooperatives to advocate to Federal agencies as part of a larger group, assist in developing proposals, and demonstrate collaborative, relevant experience for these opportunities.

Electric co-ops offer a perspective that's different from others in the utility sector: the cooperative model and the commitment to serve members at the end of the line. The opportunities made available through the new infrastructure law offer historic opportunities to meet the most important challenges we face. Electric cooperatives will be fiscally responsible partners to make sure these funds are used wisely.

Yes, though Washington, D.C., is different than my last visit, it is still good to sit down face to face with our elected officials and their staff to discuss issues that affect their constituents back home. I would especially like to thank Senator Klobuchar and Senator Smith for taking time from their busy schedules to sit down and talk with us about these important matters.

New Ways to Use Electricity

If you listen carefully, you can hear a quiet transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers.

Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders alike are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. Whether a traditional electric stove or an induction stove top, both are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. 1222700 That's because conventional residential cooking tops typically use gas or resistance heating elements to transfer energy with efficiencies of approximately 32% and 75% respectively (according to ENERGY STAR®). Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also gaining in popularity. Fortune Business Insights attributes the growth and popularity of robotic vacuums like Roomba to a larger market trend of smart home technology and automation (think Alexa directing a Roomba to vacuum).

More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools. For DIYers and those in the building trades, national brands such as Makita, Ryobi and Milwaukee offer electric versions of their most popular products like drills, saws, sanders and other tools. In addition to standard offerings, consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League notes that, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited—electric scooters, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and vehicles."



This past month, we said congratulations and good luck to a longtime Agralite employee. Our Accountant, Kim Kobbemann, retired after 25 years with the cooperative. We will miss Kim and wish her the best in the next phase of her life!

Thank you, Kim, for outstanding service and dedication over the last 25 years!

2022 Residential Rebates

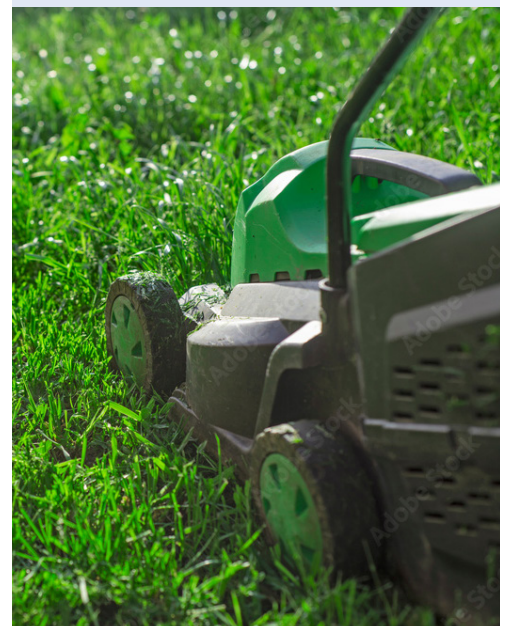
ENERGY STAR® Appliance

\$75 for Refrigerator or Freezer
(must recycle old one)
\$25 Electric Dryer
\$25 for Dehumidifier

Battery-Powered Yard Tools

Lawn Mower: \$50
Snow Blower: \$50
Chainsaw: \$25
Leaf Blower: \$25
Trimmer or Weed Whip: \$25

Check out our website for a full listing of our 2022 rebates:
www.agralite.coop



Five Tips for Hiring an Electrician

A licensed electrician can help with a variety of home projects from lighting upgrades to full renovations. Keep the following tips in mind if you're looking to hire an electrician.



Hire a licensed, qualified electrician for the job.

Look for a master electrician to manage the project. Master electricians have the most experience and will often oversee the work of a journey-level electrician or apprentice.

Make sure the electrician is insured.

Seasoned electricians know the importance of protecting themselves in case of an accident.

Read *all* the reviews.

Hire an electrician that has several positive reviews - not just one or two. Read reviews on different sites, like Nextdoor, Yelp, and HomeAdvisor, and consider asking your neighbors for recommendations.

Determine your budget. Get two quotes.

Knowing your budget upfront helps move the process along. Prices can greatly vary, so get multiple quotes (at least two).

Talk timeline.

Some electricians accidentally overbook projects. If your job is time-sensitive, convey that early on and discuss a realistic timeline with the electrician.

New Ways to Use Electricity *Continued*

Today, the number of electric products available is exploding.

"There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats," says Dennis. "With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market."

A case in point is the increased use of electric-powered tools and equipment, with more national brands offering a wider selection including lawn mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Electric equipment also requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. In addition, electric equipment is quieter so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can; something that wouldn't be possible with gas-powered equipment. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to the robotic vacuum cleaners) will be seen dotting outdoor spaces.

Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increases in renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time. Quite a hat trick—improving efficiency, quality of life, and helping the environment.

The Steps to Restoring Power

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible - until everyone has power.



1. High-Voltage

Transmission Lines

These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.



2. Distribution Substations

Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



3. Main Distribution Lines

Main lines serve essential facilities like hospitals and larger communities.



4. Individual Homes and Businesses

After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.

Safety Tips for Before, During, and After the Storm



Storm season is in full swing. Many summer storms have the potential to produce tornadoes—they can happen anytime, anywhere, and can bring winds over 200 miles per hour.

In April, a video of NBC Washington Chief Meteorologist Doug Kammerer went viral. During a live broadcast, Kammerer called his teenage son to warn him of a tornado that was headed straight for their home. Knowing the kids were likely playing video games and not paying attention to the weather, he told them to head straight to the

basement. Kammerer debated if he should call his family on-air, but he knew it was the right thing to do. Luckily, the kids made it safely through the storm.

As adults, we understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to talk to your family and have a storm plan in place. Here are several tips you can share with your loved ones.

Before the Storm

- Talk to your family about what to do in the event of a severe storm or tornado. Point out the safest location to shelter, like a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: when you hear thunder roar, head indoors.
- Make a storm kit. It doesn't have to be elaborate—having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Try to include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, a First-Aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

During the Storm

- Pay attention to local weather alerts—either on TV, your smartphone or weather radio—and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado **watch** means these **events are possible** and you should be prepared; a **warning** means a **thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area** and it's time to take action.
- If you find yourself in the path of a tornado, head to your safe place to shelter, and protect yourself by covering your head with your arms or materials like blankets and pillows.
- If you're driving during a severe storm or tornado, do not try to outrun it. Pull over and cover your body with a coat or blanket if possible.

After the Storm

- If the power is out, conserve your phone battery as much as possible, limiting calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.
- Stay off the roads if trees, power lines or utility poles are down. Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.
- Wear appropriate gear if you're cleaning up storm debris on your property. 962600 Thick-soled shoes, long pants and work gloves will help protect you from sharp or dangerous debris left behind.

Summer is a time for many fun-filled activities, but the season can also bring severe, dangerous weather. Talk to your loved ones about storm safety so that everyone is prepared and knows exactly what to do when a storm strikes.

Practice Storm Safety



Have a plan in place and make a storm kit.

Listen to local alerts and know where to shelter.

Stay off the roads if trees and power lines are down.

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 - President

Andrea Thomson, Benson

District 6

Warren Rau, Appleton

District 7 - Vice President

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS April 2022

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., April 28, 2022. All members of the Board were present. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, and payment of capital credits of deceased members were approved.

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load management and billing peaks. He discussed the Contractor Meeting that was held April 20th at the Benson Golf Club. He discussed the Agralite scholarships.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of March. She discussed the capital credit checks that are set to be mailed out the beginning of May and updates to Minnesota crisis funds. She stated that Kim Kobbermann announced her retirement and her last day will be May 31st.

Jenny brought forth Work Order #524 and Special Equipment March 2022 and the Board approved them.

The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported

SUMMER STORM SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Summer means fun in the sun! But the season can also bring strong thunderstorms.

Read the storm safety tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle below.



**Energy
Explorers**

Lightning Safety Tips:

- If you hear thunder, that means **lightning** can strike nearby. Go indoors.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last rumble of **thunder** before going back outside.
- During a thunderstorm, stay away from tall, isolated **structures** or trees, which are more susceptible to lightning strikes.
- Avoid standing near **windows** during a thunderstorm.
- Strong summer storms occasionally cause power outages. During an outage, it's best to have an **emergency kit** on hand.



on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects, recent outages, and gave an update on supply chain issues.

Tom gave the safety report.

Tom and Randy Schmidt, Manager of Engineering at STAR Energy Services, presented the 2022-2025 Construction Work Plan and the Board approved it.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed the notice sent to Great River Energy to reduce the cooperative's fixed

purchases from them. He discussed the NRECA Legislative Conference that he attended. He discussed WAPA renewable energy credits.

Director Rau reported on the MREA board meeting.

Jenny Stryhn will be the CRC voting delegate.

The May Board meeting was set for the 26th.

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