



Photo: Lawrence Godwin, June Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

June 2024

Manager's Article by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager

Agralite Electric Cooperative was selected to receive the Minnesota Governor's Workplace Safety Award.

It is no secret that safety is the top priority at Agralite. In 2023, Agralite showed a dedication to workplace injury prevention, which won us the Bronze Achievement Award! This award shows Agralite's employees' dedication to reaffirm the value of safety in our workplace and to celebrate everyone's hard work and commitment.

This is demonstrated by the importance of safety and health within Agralite by:

- Affirming the importance of advocating and prioritizing safety and health throughout our operations.
- Benchmarking the performance of our safety and health programs.
- Publicly recognizing and celebrating achievements in reducing work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Validating and honoring everyone's hard work, efforts, and commitment to safety at work, home, and on the road.

We appreciate our employees for their hard work and continued safe work practices!



Above: Lisa Tickhill, STAR Energy Services' Safety Compliance Coordinator, and Tom Hoffman, Agralite's Manager of Engineering and Operations

Agralite Issuing \$1.06 Million In Capital Credit Checks

Your Board of Directors has authorized the return of approximately \$1.06 million dollars in capital credits to members who purchased electricity during 2000, 2001, 2018, and 2019. For eligible active members of the cooperative, capital credits of \$20.00 or less will be issued as a credit on your May electric bill, which is sent out the first part of June. You will see this credit as a separate line item on your bill. For members where their capital credit refunds are greater than \$20.00 and current on their electric bill, a check has been issued. Whether we return it to you in the form of a bill credit or a check – you can see the value of membership!

As a cooperative, Agralite allocates capital credits each year. At the end of the fiscal year, the amount of your capital credits allocated for that year is listed on your monthly bill. Capital credits are normally retained by the cooperative for a number of years and used as operating capital. Once the Board of Directors deems appropriate, they approve the refund of these capital credits. As a perk of being a member-owner of Agralite Electric Cooperative, you get money back. After the 2024 capital credit payout this year, Agralite will have returned over \$16 million in capital credits to its members. That's the power of the cooperative membership!

EMPOWERING

communities with innovative, sustainable energy solutions

FOR OVER

80
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



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

CLOSED Thursday, July 4th



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

Leroy Froehlich for finding his account number in the April newsletter.

Energy Saving Tip:

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy?



Ceiling fans create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air conditioning costs. 1276600 Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during summer months and clockwise during winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn them off when you leave the room

Source: energy.gov



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.



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
- 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.



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK! Agralite Surveying Members Beginning In June

This month, Agralite will be conducting a member survey. We are partnering with a cooperative-affiliated research firm that has years of experience measuring member satisfaction levels and how co-ops score on the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

The survey will take place via email during the month of June. Please be aware that you may be one of several members who are randomly selected to participate in the survey. If you get an email about a survey from us, it's legitimate.

If you are randomly selected, we would greatly appreciate your time to share your opinions about the Cooperative. Your information and your responses will remain confidential. By participating in the survey, you will help us identify where we are serving you well and where we might need to improve.

We know your time is valuable, so rest assured we will use the results to make decisions on matters that are important to the future of your Cooperative and that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.

Congratulations

2024 Scholarship Recipients



Lily Ostlie
Benson High School
\$2,000 & \$1,000 Basin Scholarship



Cody Klepel
Ortonville High School
\$2,000 Electrician Scholarship



John Kleindl
Chokio Alberta Public School
\$2,000 Electrician Scholarship



Dylan Alexander
Minnewaska Area High School
\$2,000



Kaleb Heins
Morris Area High School
\$2,000



Amber Rosemeier
KMS Public School
\$2,000



Lauren Schmidt
University of South Dakota
\$2,000



Titus Bjerketvedt
Hancock Public School
\$2,000



Sara Evenson
Northern State University
\$2,000



Mallory Joos
Hancock Public School
\$2,000



Agralite Donates To Area Backpack Programs

Here at Agralite, we are always proud of what our Operation Round Up program does for our four-county region. In May, Operation Round Up donated to area Backpack programs in Appleton, Benson, Morris, and Ortonville.

The Board of Directors at Agralite created a board policy to contribute unclaimed capital credit dollars to Agralite's Operation Round Up. New this year, a portion of those dollars went directly to these programs, totaling \$8,500. These area Backpack programs were set up to provide food for hungry children to take home on the evenings, weekends, and vacations, as well as during the summer months. The Ortonville program provides school supplies to students in need.

If you haven't yet considered signing up for Operation Round Up, it's never too late! On average, Agralite members contribute about \$6 a year. A little goes a long way! Give our office a call to sign up.

More information and Operation Round Up applications can be found online at www.agralite.coop.

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.

Energy Scams Unmasked

Consumers with water, gas, and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams. Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. 538902 With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods. Agralite Electric Cooperative wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information. This article shares some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Recent Utility Scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves—either physically or digitally—as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails, and even

Article continues on page 4



Solar Scams

Make sure to contact Agralite Electric Cooperative before you sign any commitments to invest in solar energy for your home. 1703000

We're starting to have more members call in and ask about solar. Unfortunately, some of these calls come too late.

There is a difference between solar companies, and we've seen enough to know there are good ones and bad ones. Don't let high pressure sales tactics trick you into committing to a long-term mortgage on a solar installation before visiting with your power supplier.

There are rules and regulations you'll need to consider before interconnecting to the power grid. If you have questions, please give our office a call to learn more.

Energy Scams Unmasked *Continued*

in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common. For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage—and what's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages, or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is—it's likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

Spotting A Scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam. Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately. Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam. You've probably noticed that many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors, and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What Agralite Will (And Won't) Do

Agralite will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notices or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects. Agralite will never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in-person, by mail, pay by phone, scheduled payments, SmartHub, and the drop box outside our office.

Avoiding Scams

Whether in-person, over the phone or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be an Agralite employee requesting banking or other personal information. If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, just give us a quick call at 320-843-4150 so we can assist. Agralite wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.



High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



Twins COMMUNITY FUND YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

BENSON, MN FREE TO ATTEND! OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!



DATE:

SUNDAY
JUNE 30

TIME:

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

FIELD:

CHIEFS FIELD
1400 MONTANA AVE
BENSON, MN 56215

HOST:

AGRALITE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE

REGISTER FOR FREE: PLAYBALLMN.COM



Minnesota Twins Community Fund Youth Baseball Clinic

The Minnesota Twins will conduct a free youth baseball clinic in Benson, MN, on Sunday, June 30, 2024. The clinic will take place at the Benson Baseball Field in Benson, MN, and will run from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Presented by Great River Energy, Play Ball!, Minnesota youth clinics are for boys and girls ages 6-12. Participants are required to register for this free clinic at www.playballmn.com. Minnesota Twins youth instructors will provide all the necessary equipment for the clinic; however, players should bring their gloves. Parents are encouraged to stay and play as well! The Minnesota Twins Youth Clinics are available to participants and communities free of charge; funding is provided by the Twins Community Fund and Great River Energy.



“For more than 60 years, Twins youth clinics have provided baseball instruction to young players in communities throughout Twins Territory,” said Kristin Rortvedt, Executive Director of the Twins Community Fund. “We’re proud to continue this tradition for a new generation of ballplayers.” Created in 1961 by longtime Twins scout Angelo Giuliani, the clinic program serves to promote baseball and softball to boys and girls throughout the region. Since the beginning of the program, more than 800,000 youth have participated in a Twins youth clinic. For a complete 2024 Minnesota Twins Community Fund Youth Clinics schedule, visit www.playballmn.com.

Governed by a public board of directors, the Twins Community Fund was chartered as an independent public charity in 1991 with the mission to enrich local and regional communities by providing resources for the healthy development of children and families through an association with baseball, softball, and the Minnesota Twins. The Twins Community Fund and its grant programs are supported in part by Target, US Bank, Treasure Island, and Nike.

Join Us For Family-Friendly Fun with the Twins!

Parents/families are encouraged to stay to play with their children alongside the Twins clinicians!

The Benson Baseball Association will be hosting a hot dog fundraiser meal after the clinic.



Heat Pumps Offer Benefits For Consumers And The Environment

Many companies and homeowners are looking to reduce their use of fossil fuels by looking for new ways to use electricity to help them achieve their goals. The strategy to replace direct fossil fuel use with electricity to reduce overall emissions and energy costs is called “beneficial electrification.” It’s made possible as utilities, including Agralite Electric Cooperative, work to continue more carbon-free sources of energy into their power supply portfolios.

Beneficial electrification is available across the residential and commercial sectors, including making the switch to an electric vehicle or an electric heating system—as long as the end-user and environment both benefit from the change. One home appliance that provides the opportunity to reduce fossil fuel use and replace it with electricity is the heating system. Heat pumps have become increasingly popular as the technology advances to support heating in colder climates. 1520100

Like an air conditioner, a heat pump can cool your home. What makes them unique is that they can also provide heat. Unlike other electric heating options, air source heat pumps (ASHPs) do not use electricity to create heat but instead use it to move heat from outdoor air and transfer it indoors. With today’s ASHP technology, this process of moving heat is extremely energy efficient even when it’s cold outside. According to Rewiring America, a nonprofit advocacy group, heat pumps can achieve more than 300% efficiency, while even the most efficient gas-powered furnaces fall short of 100% efficiency. It is common for homeowners who install an ASHP to save hundreds of dollars per year.

[Agralite provides rebates for ASHPs throughout the year. Be sure to check with us prior to purchase to confirm what options are available and to ask any additional questions. A list of our current rebates is also on our website at \[www.agralite.coop\]\(http://www.agralite.coop\).](#)

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 April 2024

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., April 25, 2024. All members of the Board were present. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, and the 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 control for the month. He discussed a previous donation to the Benson Aquatic Center. The board voted to approve the redesignation of funds to the umbrella project. He discussed the scholarship program and asked for volunteers to present at the school scholarship ceremonies.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of March. She discussed capital credit retirement options and the Board approved Option 2 and the Great River Energy capital credit payout. The checks will be mailed out the end of May.

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

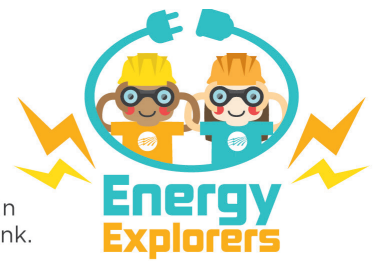
Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects and outages for the month. He stated that Reece Larson was hired for a 1,000-hour lineman position.

WATER SAFETY FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Summer means fun in the sun and spending time in the water to cool off. But remember, electricity and water never mix! Read the safety tips below and fill in the blanks with the correct choice from the word bank.

Psst! Check your work in the answer key.

1. When possible, use _____ operated or rechargeable devices when you're near water sources like a swimming pool.
2. If you hear _____ while swimming, go inside until storms have passed.
3. Never bring _____ devices near a swimming pool or body of water. Devices should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources.
4. All outdoor electrical outlets should be covered and kept _____.
5. Never handle electrical devices if you are _____ from swimming or other water activities.



WORD BANK

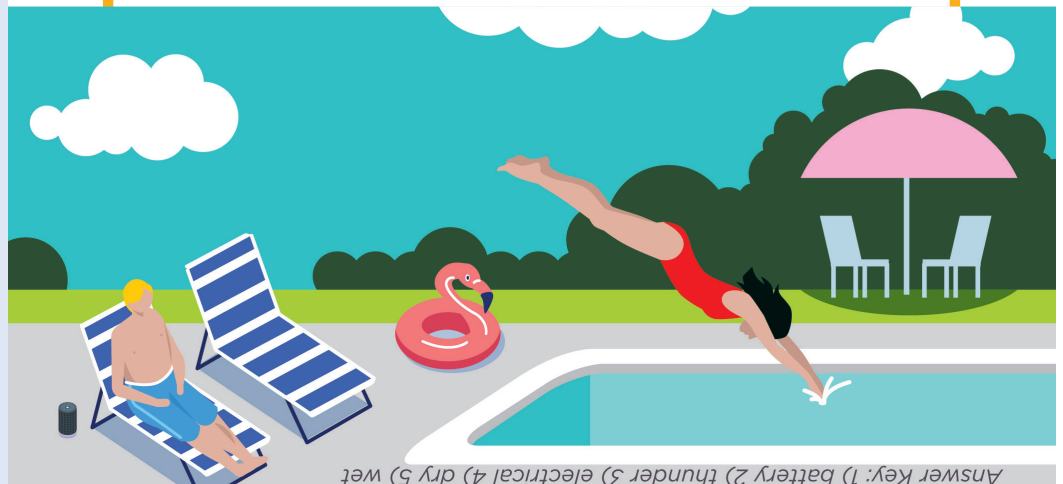
thunder

wet

battery

dry

electrical



Answer key: 1) battery 2) thunder 3) electrical 4) dry 5) wet

He will start in May. The new Hodges substation was discussed.

Tom gave the safety report. He stated that Agralite received the Minnesota Governor's Bronze Tier Workplace Safety Award.

Board Policies 300.0-300.3 were reviewed and the recommended updates were approved by the Board.

Director Thomson will be the voting delegate for the 2024 GRE Annual Meeting. Director Rau will be the alternate.

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

The Board reviewed a letter from David Taffe, who is interested in purchasing the Clinton Farmers Elevator grain bin site. The Board agreed to send

him a REDLG application for further review.

The Board approved the Western Consolidated REED Loan Application.

Eric Foshier, Economic Development Director with REED, joined the meeting to give a PowerPoint presentation on the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed energy sales, the East River Managers meeting she attended, and gave an update on meetings with the architect for the new headquarters building.

The May board meeting was set for the 30th.

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