

Photo: Janelle Skarsten, March Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# NEWSLETTER

March 2026

**EMPOWERING**  
communities

with innovative  
and sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER

**85**  
YEARS

## Join Us For Our 2026 Power Hour Events

Power Hour events provide members with the opportunity to meet their directors and staff, ask questions and mingle with other co-op members in a casual environment. It is a time to hear what is happening at your local electric cooperative including member programs, work plan projects, and the financial health of the cooperative.

### Upcoming Power Hour Events



**Club 7-75**  
66844 State Hwy 7  
Odessa, MN 56276



**Donnelly Fire Hall**  
106 E 4th St  
Donnelly, MN 56235

Coffee and rolls will be provided. Our 2026 Power Hour events are open to all co-op members. You are welcome to attend either event, even if it does not align with your district or area.

Visit our website or call us at 320-843-4150 if you have any questions regarding these events. We look forward to seeing you there!

## April 1st Rate Adjustment *by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

Last month, we shared that Agralite's Board of Directors approved a rate increase that will be effective April 1st. In the months leading up to this, we have discussed the reason behind why the adjustment is needed, and the need to be transparent in our communication.

Basin Electric, our wholesale power supplier, recently implemented almost a 10% rate increase. Because we purchase our power from them, that increase flows through to our cost of providing electricity. The driving force behind these increases are wholesale power costs. Our new building project, which had been in planning for nearly 10 years, is not the reason for this rate increase. That was a long-term project that was structured separately from power costs. The increase is coming directly from Basin Electric's wholesale power costs, not from local construction or capital projects. 1383600

More than 62% of every dollar paid to your electric cooperative goes towards paying for wholesale power and transmission costs, so when these costs go up, there is a significant impact on electric rates.

Electric utilities nationwide, including Basin Electric, are facing significant changes as demand for electricity continues to grow due to new technologies, and increased electrification across homes, businesses, and agriculture. [Article continues on page 2](#)

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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 April 3 - Good Friday**



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.

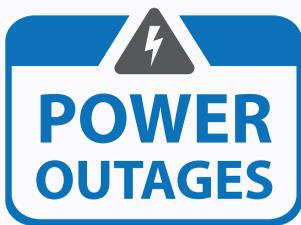
### Congratulations

to Ed Krzescowiak for finding his account number in the January newsletter.

### Energy Saving Tip:



As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.



Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887

Do not call the office for outages

March Energy Payment  
is due April 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover, and Mastercard.

## April 1st Rate Adjustment *Continued*

Meeting this demand requires major investments in new power generation, upgraded transmission lines, and replacement of aging infrastructure. At the same time, utilities must maintain higher reliability reserves to prevent outages during peak use or extreme weather. Strong financial standards are also essential to secure affordable financing and keep long-term energy costs stable.

Unfortunately, we are forecasting another significant wholesale power increase in 2027 due to the significant buildout of electric generation and transmission assets. We understand that any increase impacts our members, and we don't take that lightly. If you have questions about your bill or ways to manage energy costs, we're here to help. To assist members in managing their electric bills, we offer several services including budget billing and load management programs.

As always, if you have questions or concerns regarding this rate adjustment, give us a call during regular business hours at 320-843-4150.

We appreciate your continued interest in your electric cooperative.

### AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL SERVICE RATES

As of April 1, 2026

#### General Single Phase

Service Charge	\$52.00
Energy Charge/kWh	12.60¢

#### General Multiphase

Service Charge	\$74.00
Energy Charge/kWh	12.60¢

#### 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¢

#### 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-Phase Service Charge	\$125.00
Monthly Demand/kW	\$7.50
Energy Charge/kWh	\$4.60¢

#### Security Lights

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

#### Service Charge for Load Management

\$2.50

#### Large Power

Service Charge	\$105.00
Demand Charge/kW	\$13.00
Energy Charge/kWh	5.68¢

#### Large Power Service

Service Charge	\$120.00
Coincident Demand Charge/kW	\$26.84
Distribution Demand Charge/kW	\$6.75
Energy Charge/kWh	4.95¢

#### 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¢

#### 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¢

#### Electric Vehicle Interruptible Service

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

All rates subject to adjustment based on wholesale power costs.

# Understanding The 2026 Rate Increase

In September, the Basin Electric Board of Directors authorized a Class A rate increase of approximately \$6 per megawatt-hour, or 10%, beginning Jan. 1, 2026. We understand and recognize the impact this has on our members and their communities. This decision was not made lightly.

Basin Electric is thoughtfully working to balance our goals of reliability, financial performance, and affordable rates.



## Growth in traditional load

To serve this growth, Basin Electric is investing in new generation and transmission projects, which are at higher costs than our existing fleet.



## Commodity price variability

Fluctuations in commodity prices affect the cost of fuel for Basin Electric and sales revenue at our subsidiaries.



## Increase in planning reserve margins

Southwest Power Pool will require Basin Electric to have higher capacity reserves, increasing capital expenditures, operating costs, and purchase power.



## Investments in reliability

Basin Electric will continue to make investments in system reliability, including upgrading existing facilities and reducing outage cycle times.

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

Join us: June 10-12 / \$200 per person / 24 seats available.

We're excited to invite you to join us for our 2026 Energy Tour from June 10-12! This three-day luxury coach tour will take you through North Dakota's coal country. We will be touring the lignite coal Freedom Mine and the Antelope Valley Station in Beulah, ND. These energy complexes are owned by Basin Electric Power, a wholesale power provider for Agralite. 1119505 The group will also tour and learn about North Dakota's rich history along the way. The cost for members is \$200 per person and includes motor-coach transportation, 2 nights lodging at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Mandan, ND, a banquet style dinner with a presentation from a representative from Basin Electric Power and guided tours. All meals are provided except for lunch on the return trip home on Friday, June 12th. This is a fun and educational trip for our members to be able to explore and learn more about how energy is generated and what it takes to be able to flip on a light switch at a moment's notice.

The tour includes visits to:

- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Basin Electric Powers Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center/Ft. Mandan in Washburn, ND
- The North Dakota History Center

**This trip promises to be both fun and educational, and we hope you'll join us for this exciting opportunity. Sign up by May 20th by calling our office at 320-843-4150.**

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Scammers and cyber criminals look for weak points to exploit before software companies can fix them. Update software programs on your computer, tablet, and mobile phone as soon as possible when a newer version becomes available.

Software updates often contain critical patches and protections against security threats.

Turn on automatic updates on your security software, internet browser, operating system, and mobile apps.

Source:  
[consumer.ftc.org](http://consumer.ftc.org)



*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).

# Switch and Save

Save Time and Money with Auto Pay and Paperless Billing



## How it works

Members who enroll in Auto Pay and/or Paperless Billing through SmartHub will receive a monthly bill credit of \$.50 for each program you enroll in. If you enroll in both, you will earn a \$1 monthly bill credit. Members that enroll will also be entered into a yearly drawing for a special prize.

Get on-the-go convenience and pay anytime, anywhere, plus added security.

### Auto Pay

Your payment will be automatically deducted from your bank account or card on the 20th of each month.

### Paperless Billing

Members are notified each month by email when their bill is ready. You can view it by clicking on the link in the email or logging into your SmartHub account directly. 1574001

### How to Enroll

To enroll, log into your SmartHub account:

#### Auto Pay

Go to **Bill & Pay** >

**Auto Pay Program** >

**Enroll** > and add either a card or bank account

#### Paperless

Go to **Settings** >

**Paperless Billing** >

Select **Go Paperless**

## Questions?

Please contact the billing department at 320-843-4150 with any questions or if you need help enrolling.

[www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop)

## 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. 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, Marysland, 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. \_\_\_\_\_.

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](http://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](mailto: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:*

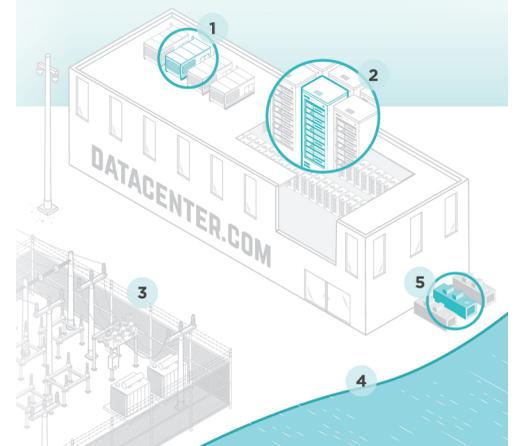
- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.
- Agralite Electric 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

# Big Data, Bigger Demands

Many companies are choosing rural areas for their data centers because of cheaper land, available power, and tax breaks. Data centers require huge amounts of electricity to operate, which presents new opportunities and challenges for electric co-ops.

- 1 HVAC:** Constant cooling is needed to ensure the servers function properly.
- 2 Servers:** Servers run applications and process data 24/7. One server rack can consume enough electricity to power a small home. A large data center can house thousands of server racks.
- 3 Infrastructure:** Data centers often require new electrical infrastructure to meet their power needs.
- 4 Water Source:** Many large data centers are deploying evaporative cooling, which is more efficient than compressor-based systems.
- 5 Backup Power:** On-site generators keep data centers running during power outages and can also be used to help lower demand when electricity use spikes.



## 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

January 2026

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., January 29, 2026. 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 #593, Work Order #594, and December 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 locations for the 2026 Power Hour events. The April 13th event will be held at Club 7-75 and the April 14th event will be held at Donnelly Fire Hall. He discussed Brigg's generator training and fuel credits. He discussed community meetings that have been held in the Multipurpose Room. He discussed the updated 2026 Co-Generation reports and the Board approved them.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, reported on activities of her department for the month. She discussed preliminary margins for the month of December. She discussed year end financials, patronage received, and the 2025 Audit. She brought forth Statement of Work

# Help the Lineworker Spring into Action

Did you know March 20 is the first day of spring? This time of year marks new beginnings and fresh blooms, but it can also bring powerful storms that interrupt electric service.

Help the lineworker find his way through the maze to the bucket truck so he can restore power.



Agreement from Eide Bailly 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 gave an update on the Hodges and Darnen substations. He gave an update on the afterhours dispatch services switch to SRS from CRC.

Tom gave the year end safety report.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the recent cold weather. She

discussed recent meetings she attended including the REED meeting, East River Managers Meeting, GRE Managers Meeting, and the NRECA CEO Conference. She discussed WAPA shortfall capacity and the CVEC Annual Meeting.

Jenny brought forth updated Policy 306 Standby Service and the Board approved it.

Jenny brought forth updated WAPA REC Transfer Contract and the Board approved it. 1703100

An Executive Session was held.

The February board meeting was set for the 26th.

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