



Cover Photo: Erika Hughes, May Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

May 2021



Agralite Donates \$5,800 To Local Food Shelves During Minnesota FoodShare Month

Here at Agralite, we are always proud of what our Operation Round Up program does for our four-county region. In March, Operation Round Up donated to all four of our local food shelves in Big Stone, Pope, Stevens, and Swift counties.

The Board of Directors at Agralite created a board policy to contribute unclaimed capital credit dollars to Agralite's Operation

Round Up. A portion of those dollars go directly to our local food shelves, totaling \$5,800 for the month of March.

These dollars were delivered during Minnesota FoodShare month. During the March Campaign, donations are matched by Minnesota Food Share. The amount of matched dollars received is based on a percentage of how much was raised in the county. The more dollars raised, the more matching funds received.

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!

Operation Round Up applications can be found on our website: www.agralite.coop.

Operation Round Up

Operation Round Up is an organization through Agralite Electric Cooperative where members' utility bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The "rounded up" amount goes into the Agralite Electric Cooperative Trust that is then allocated to organizations and individuals throughout the year. Do you know an organization that benefits the members of Agralite Electric Cooperative? 1595300 If so, please encourage them to apply. Applications can be found on our website. If you are not contributing to Operation Round Up now and would like to, simply call our office to get signed up.

Applications can be found on our website:
www.agralite.coop



Agralite Members: Save The Date!

2021 ANNUAL MEETING

June 21st, 2021

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75

YEARS

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Agralite Electric Cooperative

We're member-owned!

320 US-12, Benson, MN
(320) 843-4150
1-800-950-8375
www.agralite.coop

 Like us on Facebook



We're Closed May 31



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.

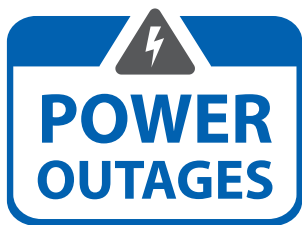
Energy Saving Tip:



Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat.

The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source: www.energy.gov



**Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887**

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

April Energy Payment
is due May 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

Manager's Article by Kory Johnson, General Manager

Spring has sprung and summer is right around the corner. Trees are starting to bud and the grass is starting to green up after some much-needed rain over the past week. However, even as I type, the forecast is saying a slight chance of a flurry of snow today is possible. But as Minnesotans, we have become accustomed to changing weather.

Spring time and summer in Minnesota also make conditions right for dangerous thunderstorms. These potential weather events can cause damages to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Agralite Electric Cooperative crews are ready and standing by to respond 24 hours a day/7 days a week should power outages occur in our service area.

When a storm knocks out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries). 874500
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

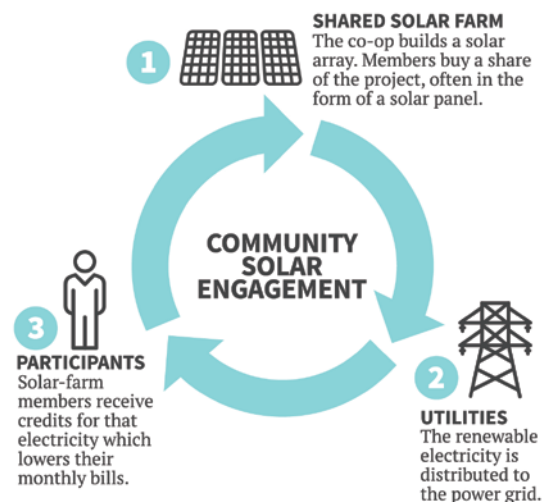
In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely and make sure a qualified electrical contractor installs the generator.

I would suggest you consider installing a standby generator, especially if you have confinement livestock facility or critical electrical loads at your location. If you would be interested in a standby unit, please contact our office for information on these units.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property. I will emphasize again to stay clear of downed power lines as today I read of a girl who died following a contact with a downed electrical line in Florida following severe weather in the state.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer!

HOW COMMUNITY SOLAR WORKS



Source: Shelton Group, Inc.

Practice Safety When DIY-ing

These days many of us are spending more time at home and finding new, creative ways to enhance our living space. Tackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started! Whether you're painting the front door with a fresh hue or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is incredibly satisfying. But many of these projects do not come without risks. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work.



Remember, you should **only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level**. For projects that require extensive electrical work, we strongly recommend you hire a **licensed, qualified electrician for assistance**.

- 1 Start by selecting a designated work area.** The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.
- 2 Personal protective equipment (PPE) is your friend.** We know you're a pro, but investing a few bucks in PPE is essential for most home projects. 1418300 Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, ear plugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. (Ditch the sandals for this!)
- 3 Work slowly and clean as you go.** When you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less desirable results than you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials, tools that aren't in use and any tripping hazards.
- 4 Be cautious with power tools.** Annually, 8% of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:
 - Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock.
 - If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
 - Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
 - Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
 - When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.
 - Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit our website at www.agralite.coop.

Happy Retirement

This past month, we say congratulations and good luck to two longtime employees at Agralite. Our Senior Accountant, Patty James, retired after 29 years with the cooperative. Our Mechanic, Jim Kidd, retired after 23 years with the cooperative. We will miss Patty and Jim and wish them all the best in the next phase of their lives!

Patty James
Senior Accountant



Jim Kidd
Mechanic



Agralite Records 2020 Capital Credit Allocation

As a cooperative, Agralite allocates capital credits each year based on how much electricity each member purchased during the year. At the end of the fiscal year, the amount of your capital credits allocated for that year is listed on your bill, which went out this past month.

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. That's the power of the cooperative membership!

MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH



To stay safe around electricity, start with these **SEVEN** basic tips:



1.

DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.



2.

DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.



3.

HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.



4.

BE CAREFUL AROUND H₂O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.



5.

EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.



6.

TEST YOUR GFCIs

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.



7.

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.

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 March 2021

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., March 25, 2021. All members of the Board were present via Zoom. 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. 1509500 He discussed load management, the polar vortex, and the Brigg's generator program. He stated that the Home Energy Loan Program through NCB is ending due to lack of interest. He discussed The Nest Hancock Building Project.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of February. She discussed meetings she attended. She completed information requests to Power Systems Engineering for the rate study. She stated Patty James, Senior Accountant, is retiring and her last day is 3/26/21. Jenny discussed capital credits and allocations. The Board approved 2020 Capital Credit Allocations and tabled Capital Credit Payouts. Jenny brought forth Work Order #508 and Special Equipment February 2021 and the Board approved them.

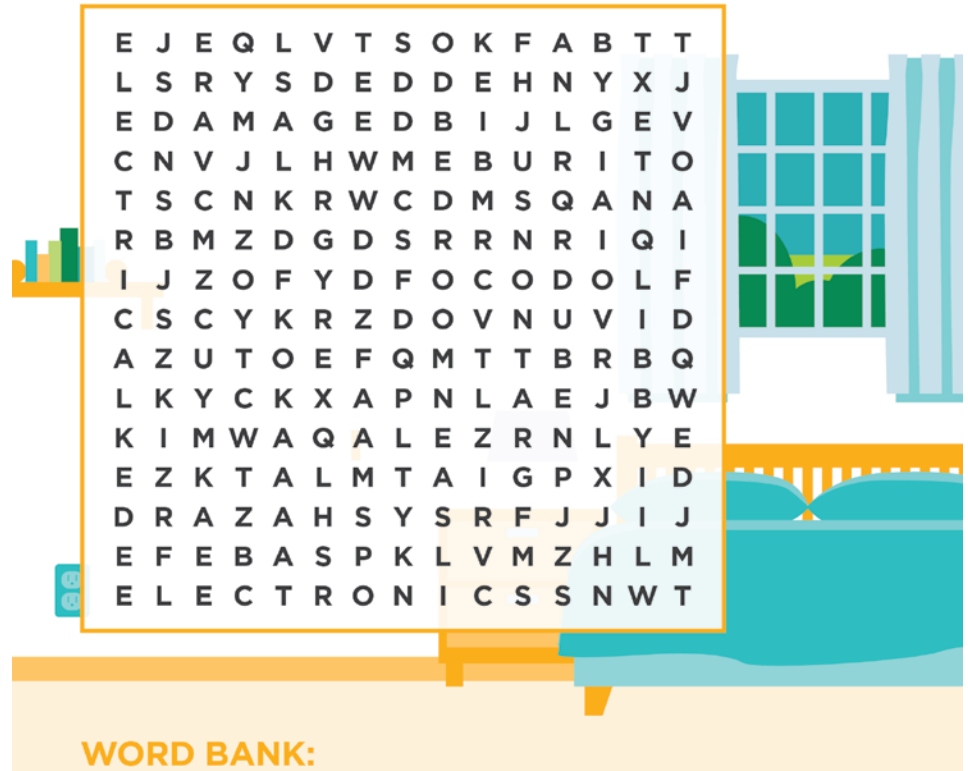
The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects. He has

ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH WORD SEARCH

May is Electrical Safety Month!
Read the safety tips below, then find and circle all the bolded words in the puzzle.





WORD BANK:

- Do not use any electrical **cords** that feel warm to the touch or are **damaged** in any way.
- Remind parents or adults in your home to test **smoke alarms** every month. Alarms should be installed in every **bedroom**, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Do not overload electrical **outlets**. Overloading creates a potential fire **hazard**.
- Keep all **liquids** away from **electronics**, including TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
- Do not run **electrical** cords under rugs or carpet. This creates a **fire risk**.

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been checking on line patrol items and construction projects. The new aerial has been ordered. He stated Jim Kidd, Mechanic, is retiring and his last day is 3/31/21.

Tom gave the safety report.

Director Hufford and Director Nelson reported on the NRECA PowerXchange. Director Gronseth, Director Zierke, and Director Draeger reported on the MREA Annual Meeting.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed meetings he attended. Engan Associates began the formal process of the evaluation of Agralite's facilities and did an extensive walk through of the buildings.

An executive session was held. The April board meeting was set for the 29th.

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