



Photo: Hilary Lindor, May Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

May 2022

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75 YEARS



Agralite Donates \$3,200 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 \$3,200 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!

More information and 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!

2022 ANNUAL MEETING

June 30, 2022

CONTENTS

Page 1 ► Agralite Donates \$3,200 To Local Food Shelves During Minnesota FoodShare Month, Operation Roundup, Annual Meeting Save The Date

Page 2 ► Director Nominations Now Open for Districts 3 & 4, Find Your Account Number And Win, Energy Tip

Page 3 ► 2022 Agralite Electric Cooperative Board Nominees Q & A

Page 4 ► 2022 Agralite Electric Cooperative Board Nominees Q & A Cont., Does Your Home Need A Check Up?

Page 5 ► Manager's Article: Prioritize Safety Year-Round, Agralite Issuing \$1.18 Million In Capital Credit Checks

Page 6 ► Board Meeting Minutes, Energy Explorers Activity

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



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 Elsie Kill for finding her account number in the March newsletter!

Energy Saving Tip:



Even in the summer months, adding insulation to your attic can keep your home more comfortable and save energy used by your cooling system.

If your attic insulation is level with or below your floor joists (meaning you can easily see your joists), you should add more. If you can't see any of the joists because the insulation is well above them, you likely have enough insulation. Attic insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots. Make sure the areas along the eaves are adequately covered.

Source: Department of Energy



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.

Director Nominations Now Open for Districts 3 & 4

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 3 and 4.

District 3 includes the townships of: Darnen, Hodges, Horton, Moore, Walden, Blue Mounds, Hoff, and Langhei.

District 4 includes the townships of: Minnewaska, Glenwood, Barsness, Chippewa Falls, Bangor, Rolling Forks, and Gilchrist.

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 June 30, 2022. 1400400

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, May 20th, 2022.

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 June 30, 2022. 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.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



Steve Nelson
District 4 Board Nominee

25271 335th St, Starbuck, MN 56381
Phone: 320-760-8821

1. Please tell Agralite Members a little bit about yourself.

I have lived in Rolling Forks Township all of my life. I graduated from Benson High School. I was married for 31 years to Baan Jean (Eastman) Nelson, who passed away in 2009 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. I have four children and 15 grandchildren. I currently live north of Swift Falls with my fiancé Roxanne Carson and my stepson Logan. 656301 I am a life-long farmer and operate Nelson Farms with my two brothers in rural Benson.

2. Are you active in any community activities?

I have been a life-long member of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Swift Falls. I am a member of the Benson Masonic Lodge #126. I am also a member of the Glenwood Zuhrah Shrine.

3. How long have you been an Agralite Member?

I have been a member of District 4 since 1978.

4. Why do you want to be a Director?

I would like to continue being a director of this effective and innovative cooperative, as we continue to provide safe and reliable electricity to our local homes and businesses. I am also looking forward to staying involved in current legislation, tackling the obstacles the cooperative faces, and being a part of making the important decisions that will make this cooperative sustainable for future generations.

5. What does the role of Director mean to you?

The director role means that I will be a representative for all district members. I will ensure that your concerns and recommendations are voiced to the board.

6. Please characterize what you see as the role of Agralite's board.

The Board needs to continue making affordable and safe electricity available to their members, while making sound decisions regarding the current and future longevity of the cooperative.

7. What aspects of the director's job do you consider the most crucial?

The most critical responsibility is keeping electricity affordable, while also exploring all of our energy options as we plan for the future demand. To always keep an open mind and to work well with other board members and the cooperative members to keep the co-op flourishing.

8. What work experience or other board experience do you have that will help you be an effective Director?

I have served on the Rolling Forks Township board for a total of 27 years, and have been chairman for the last 17 years. I have served as church council president at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church for 9 years. I am also a board member of the Robert Sonsteng Foundation. I was a 4-H leader for the Swift Falls Winners as well. I am honored to serve as a governor on the Star Energy Services board.

9. What challenges do you see for Agralite Electric Cooperative in the future and how does the cooperative meet these challenges?

The cooperative needs to keep energy accessible, safe, and affordable to all our members, while keeping up with government mandates and our members' interest in renewable and clean energy. The board needs to continue exploring all the options available to the cooperative and its members, both now and in the future. One of our greatest challenges is switching to a greater percentage of renewable green energy versus fossil fuel produced energy.



Bennett Zierke
District 3 Board Nominee

27263 State Hwy 9, Hancock, MN 56244
Phone: 320-760-1353
Email: bzierke@agralite.com

1. Please tell Agralite Members a little bit about yourself.

I was born in Blue Earth, Minnesota, and came with my parents to a farm 11 miles south of Chokio in 1957. I began raising pigs at age 15 and farmed until 2003 when we moved to Hancock and began manufacturing livestock equipment, ATV trailers, hydraulic units, and drive over intake guards. I'm married to Wendy Koosmann from Appleton. We have eight children, 13 grandchildren and two more on the way.

2. Are you active in any community activities?

Wendy and I are active in a new church plant in Hancock and I am also involved with the Republican Party of Stevens County.

3. How long have you been an Agralite Member?

As a farmer north of Correll, I was a member for 28 years, and now we have been in Hancock for 18 years.

4. Why do you want to be a Director?

After chasing pigs for 30 years, welding and managing a shop for 18 years, it is a way that I can give back to our community and use the experience and the knowledge that I have as a farmer and a manufacturer to try to make a difference at Agralite.

5. What does the role of Director mean to you?

It means learning as much as possible about the needs of our residential farms, small power and large power members, and together with the other directors work with the manager and staff to give sound direction for our cooperative.

6. Please characterize what you see as the role of Agralite's board?

To ask questions and to take the responsibility of being a watchdog for our members. To encourage the manager and staff, to stay abreast of what's happening amongst our power providers, to stay on top of what is happening in Saint Paul and Washington DC.

7. What aspects of the director's job do you consider the most crucial?

Asking questions and to encourage others that there are no dumb questions. Listening to each other (Manager, staff and directors) and together coming to decisions that keep our cooperative healthy.

8. What work experience or other board experience do you have that will help you be an effective Director?

I believe that my work experience as a farmer and manufacturer and caring for what happens in our communities helps me to make wise decisions that will ensure that our area is a good place to live both now and for the generations to come.

9. What challenges do you see for Agralite Electric Cooperative in the future and how does the cooperative meet these challenges?

This is a difficult question to answer. I am very concerned about the days ahead. I see very little common sense coming out of our nation's capital. Rural America has such a small voice compared to urban communities. Agralite's part in relationships with our state and federal legislators is very important. We have talked a long time about having safe and reliable power. I believe we are doing a good job keeping our power safe, but the reliable part has many challenges. We need to keep challenging our state and federal leaders that are making major decisions affecting our power grid to make these decisions not out of pressure from small interest groups but to make decisions that are sound and sensible and rooted in common sense.

DOES YOUR HOME NEED A CHECKUP?



To ensure your home's electrical system is safe, its wiring should be up to date and any defects corrected.

How do you know if your home needs an electrical inspection?



If your home was last inspected:

- 40 or more years ago, an inspection is overdue. Regardless of when your home was last checked, consult a qualified electrician/licensed contractor if you notice symptoms of a potential hazard, such as dim/flickering lights, unusual sounds, a frequent need to reset fuses or breakers, overheating, odors, loose plugs, damaged insulation on wires or conditions that cause electrical shocks.
- 10 to 40 years ago, an inspection is advised.
- Less than 10 years ago, an inspection should not be necessary unless there are issues.

SOURCE: U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

Manager's Article: Prioritize Safety Year-Round by Kory Johnson

At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives, but we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. As General Manager, it's my responsibility to keep co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Agralite hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices. We also have our Safety Demonstration Trailer at our local county fairs in the summer.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, I'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips:

- 1 Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.
- 2 Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit.
- 3 Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.
- 4 Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you "daisy chain" them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so can overload the cord, creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

I encourage you to talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. 1348201 However, it is equally important to keep our community safe around electricity.

Contact Agralite for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event.

**PLUG
INTO
SAFETY**



ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Make electrical safety a priority
this month, and every month.

Agralite issuing \$1.18 Million in Capital Credit Checks

Your Board of Directors has authorized the return of approximately \$1.18 million dollars in capital credits to members who purchased electricity during the 1990s, 1996, 1997 and 2017. For eligible active members of the cooperative, capital credits of \$20.00 or less will be issued as a credit on the April electric bill that will be mailed out the first part of May. You will see this credit as a separate line item on your bill. For members whose capital credit refunds are greater than \$20.00 and are current on the 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 2022 capital credit payout this year, Agralite will have returned over \$14 million in capital credits to its members. That's the power of cooperative membership! 1062900

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 March 2022

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., March 31, 2022. All members of the Board were present except Director Draeger who joined by 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. He discussed load management and billing peaks. He discussed the Ford Lightning electric pickup truck. He stated that the Contractor Meeting has been set for April 20th at the Benson Golf Club.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of February. She discussed WAPA rates. She discussed capital credits and allocations. The Board approved 2021 Capital Credit allocations, Capital Credit Payout Option 1, and GRE Capital Credit Payout. The checks will be mailed out in April. She discussed township accounts and the Board approved to start assessing a late fee penalty to these accounts that are past due, and to continue the special credit if usage is less than 1,000 kwh in a year. She discussed new Board Policy 306 Standby






SPOT THE ELECTRICAL HAZARD

After you complete this activity, color the items with crayons or colored pencils.

When combined, electricity and common items that seem harmless can create dangerous situations. Look at the items grouped below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create an electrical hazard.

Check your work in the answer key.

1			
	toaster	fork	bagel
2			
	hairdryer	electrical outlet	running water
3			
	drone	power lines	picnic
4			
	swimming pool	floatie	extension cord

Answer Key: 1) fork & toaster 2) hairdryer & water or outlet & water 3) drone & power lines 4) extension cord & pool

Service and Policy 300.3 LPS and the Board approved them.

Jenny brought forth Work Order #523 and Special Equipment February 2022 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, recent outages, and new service requests.

Tom gave the safety report.

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the

meeting. An executive session was held.

The 2022-2025 Construction Work Plan presentation was tabled until the April Board Meeting.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed 2022 energy sales, and the East River and NRECA meetings that he attended.

The April Board meeting was set for the 28th.

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