



Photo: Terri Barrett, May Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

May 2023

## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER

# 75 YEARS

### Join Agralite For Our 2023 Energy Tour, June 20–22

Enjoy a three-day luxury coach tour to North Dakota's coal country June 20 – 22, 2023. See how electric power is generated at a lignite coal plant and how a coal-gasification plant produces natural gas, tour a fish hatchery, and visit the North Dakota History Museum.

*This fun and educational trip includes a tour of these facilities:*

- Basin Electric Power's Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Great Plains SynFuels Plant
- Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery
- The North Dakota History Center

This is a two-night stay at a hotel in Bismarck. Cost is \$175 per person. Most meals are included in this trip with the exception of fast food and coffee stops during the bus trip to-and-back from North Dakota and any restaurants you may visit during your free time. Children 10 and older are welcome when accompanied by an adult.

Call our office at 320-843-4150 to reserve your seat and for additional information.  
[Deadline to sign up is June 1, 2023 or when our 25 seats are filled.](#)



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



Like us on Facebook



Touchstone Energy®  
Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

# Twins FREE! YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

**SATURDAY, JULY 1 / BENSON, MN**  
OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!

**FIELD:**

Benson Baseball Field  
1400 Montana Ave  
Benson, MN 56215

**HOST:**

Agralite Electric  
Cooperative

**TIME:**

1:00 - 3:00 PM

**REGISTER:**

[PLAYBALLMN.COM](http://PLAYBALLMN.COM)



**COMMUNITY FUND**





## 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

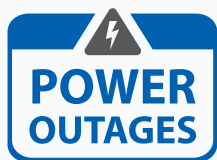
to John Salls, John Staton Sr., and Charles Halvorson for finding their account numbers in our March issue.

## Energy Saving Tip:



The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For best accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes, and exterior doors.

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near the thermostat. It can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in places that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of your home. Don't place furniture in front of the thermostat. It can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings. [Source: 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: Avoid Overloading Your Home's Electrical System

by Jenny Stryhn

We're often told to not overload our schedules or our plates, but what about our home's electrical system? Turns out it is not a good idea, since doing so can cause damage and put your family at risk. Overloading the circuits in our home is sometimes not as obvious as cramming too many events on our calendar or overfilling our ice cream bowl (although it can be!). An overload simply means that you have too many things running on one or more electrical circuits or pathways in your home and there is more demand than supply. When this happens, it can cause a minor inconvenience like damage to an appliance or a major one like a power outage or a fire.

To prevent overloading circuits, consider the following tips offered by Agralite Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity:

- Although tempting, don't plug too many things in by using extension cords, power strips and multi-outlet converters. Overdoing it can overload and overheat a circuit.
- Be on the lookout for loose connections or damaged or corroded wires, which can also cause an overload or fire.
- If you continually upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances, and electronics, your home's circuits may not be able to handle the increased load. 900100
- Do not plug in multiple devices or appliances into an outlet at the same time, exceeding the outlet's capacity. Do not use extension cords with major appliances.

Consult an electrician if you notice the following:

- Warm or discolored outlets or outlet cover plates
- Flickering, dimming or blinking lights or any other strange lighting behavior
- Items in your home frequently cause a mild shock
- Other strange happenings like a burning odor that has no source or unusual sounds coming from outlets
- Fuses that blow or trip frequently

Do what you can to avoid overloading the circuits in your home. Although the majority of a home's electrical system is out of sight, out of mind, don't take overload symptoms lightly and consult an electrician with concerns.

The month of May is recognized as Electrical Safety month. At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we understand the importance of this in our day-to-day business. Safety is more than just a term to us, it's our number one priority to keep our employees safe, as well as the communities in which we serve. For additional electrical safety tips, please contact Agralite Electric Cooperative, or visit [SafeElectricity.org](#).

As always, thank you for your continued interest in your electric cooperative.

**Service ANNIVERSARY**  
**Derek** **5 YEARS**

**Derek Hittle**  
*Locator*

Thank you for your dedicated years of service to Agralite Electric Cooperative!

# 2023 Annual Meeting



**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 22, 2023**

## Director Nominations Now Open For Districts 5, 6, & 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, Norway Lake, Louriston, and Lake Johanna.

**District 6 includes the townships of:** Tara, Clontarf, Benson, Marysland, Six Mile Grove, Torning, Swenoda, and Mandt.

**District 7 includes the townships of:** Hegbert, Fairfield, Shible, Moyer, Appleton, Edison, West Bank, Artichoke, Upper Akron, Lower Akron, Stevens, Synnes, and Kragero.

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 22, 2023. 688802

*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 12th, 2023.**

### 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.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## May is Military Appreciation Month



We hope you'll join us in recognizing the sacrifices veterans have made for our great country—and the many contributions they continue to make to our wonderful community.

**Veterans, including Agralite's Meter Tech, Jon Dale, and Lineman, Ryan Hanson, we salute you!**



***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).



**Orvin Gronseth** *District 5 Board Nominee*

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

I've been an Agralite Cooperative member since 1966. After Kerkhoven High School, I volunteered in the U.S. Navy to become a sailor electrician, spending 2 ½ years at the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii submarine base. In 1966, my wife Donna and I purchased a Gronseth Family Farm, which has been in our family now since 1870, 153 years. 1686700

**2. Are you active in any community activities?**

I now serve on 5 Board of Directors, 3 of which are non-profit charitable organizations which I'm most proud of.

**3. How long have you been an Agralite Member?**

Since 1966.

**4. Why do you want to be a Director?**

To continue as a Director of my Board which oversees and maintains Agralite's margin of profit as a cooperative. This is our obligation to our membership.

**5. Characterize what you see as the role of Agralite's board.**

Continue to lead and grow as one of the many successful co-ops in our community and area wide.

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

Learning and keeping up to these fast-moving times, especially technology.

**7. What does the role of Director mean to you?**

All of the above in #4.

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

I've been in the electrical business in some way most of my life, been self-employed since age 28 as an electrical contractor, farmer, and rancher. I'm still farming in 2023. It's become a habit, I guess. I've served as President of two boards and Treasurer of two other boards.

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

I see some of the mandates put forward by our politicians, may be hard to follow, but we try to work out the best decisions possible. Costs of operation continue to be a challenge, and price increases are nearly every year on goods and material. We at Agralite have been fortunate to increase sales of power annually to help hold down rate increases. The mandates to shut down our coal fired baseload wholesale power supply units are of great concern to us and future generations of consumers. The use of all electric vehicles in the future is indeed a big challenge also.



**Andrea Thomson** *District 6 Board Nominee*

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

I returned to Benson in 1997 with my husband and 4 children. We have been members of Agralite Electric Co-op for 26 years. We raised our children in

this community and are now empty nesters. I am currently a financial advisor for Edward Jones. We enjoy entertaining friends and family, cooking, motorcycling, boating, traveling and spending time with our children and 6 grandchildren.

**2. Are you active in any community activities?**

It has been an honor to serve on the Agralite Board of Directors for the past 9 years. I would like the opportunity to continue to serve and help make a difference in our community today and for future generations.

**3. Why do you want to be a Director?**

The decisions made today will impact the coop for many years to come. Being a part of that process is important to me. Creating a roadmap to provide Safe, Reliable & Affordable Power for our members is the most important thing we do to keep our community strong and productive.

**4. Characterize what you see as the role of Agralite's board.**

The most crucial part of my directorship is representing our members. Making discussions that keep our members best interest in mind.

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

My role as a director on the Agralite Board is to receive important information and facts on topics that will impact the co-op. We have meaningful discussions about co-op affairs that need board approval.

**6. What aspects of the director's job do you consider the most crucial? What work experience or other board experience do you have that will help you be an effective Director?**

I have been in the financial industry for 19 years. It is important to be fiscally responsible and strong. We have a responsibility to our members to have a fiscally strong co-op and be prepared for the future.

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

The business of power is becoming more challenging as the focus is on generating our electricity from renewable sources. The demand for more power is growing as so many of our daily activities are converting to electricity. The rural electric Co-ops continue to strategize and plan to navigate this new energy environment to uphold our commitment to providing 'Safe, Reliable & Affordable Power' to our members.



**Warren Rau** District 7 Board Nominee

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

My wife, Elaine, and I live in Hegbert Township, Swift County on the farm we purchased from my father in 1974. We retired from farming in 2018 and continue to live on the family farm. We

have a son and daughter-in-law and two grandchildren all living in Savage, MN.

**2. Are you active in any community activities?**

I feel that I am. We are active members of Zion Lutheran Church in Appleton. I am a Director on the Appleton Area Health Foundation Board. I have been a member of the Appleton Ambulance for over 30 years and recently retired from the position of Clerk on the Hegbert Town Board.

**3. How long have you been an Agralite Member?**

All my life.

**4. Why do you want to be a Director?**

I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet and work with many great people in a constantly growing and changing industry. At this point in life, I feel I can bring a fair amount of understanding and knowledge to the board.

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

Working for the overall benefit of all our members, gaining their trust and keeping it. We represent their ownership in our coop.

**6. Characterize what you see as the role of Agralite's board.**

Maintaining a strong and healthy coop in order to continue to serve our membership with safe and reliable electricity and as reasonably priced as possible.

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

Pretty much as I stated in question 5 and 6.

**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.

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

As mentioned earlier, community involvement and also the opportunity I have had to serve on the statewide Rural Electric Association Board representing nine electrical coops for the past seven years.

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

As I mentioned earlier, this is a constantly changing industry. The current State and Federal mandates are pushing everyone toward renewables. Our goal must continue to be supplying safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our membership.



**Agralite Donates \$2,000 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 \$2,000 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](http://www.agralite.coop)



Picture above: In our latest Operation Round Up meeting on April 13, the Board approved \$8,900 in donations.



## 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 2023


Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., March 30, 2023. All members of the Board were present except Director Draeger who joined by Zoom. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #540, Work Order #541, Work Order #542, and Special Equipment for February 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 plans to offer a North Dakota Energy Tour June 20-22 to 25 of our members, along with Meeker Cooperative and the Board approved it. He gave an update on Operation Round Up and stated the next meeting is set for April 13th. He discussed plans for the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Jenny Stryhn discussed margins for the month of February. She discussed FEMA payments and patronage earnings. She stated RUS started their audit reviewing Work Orders from October 2016 through January 2023. She discussed 2022 capital credit allocations and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering

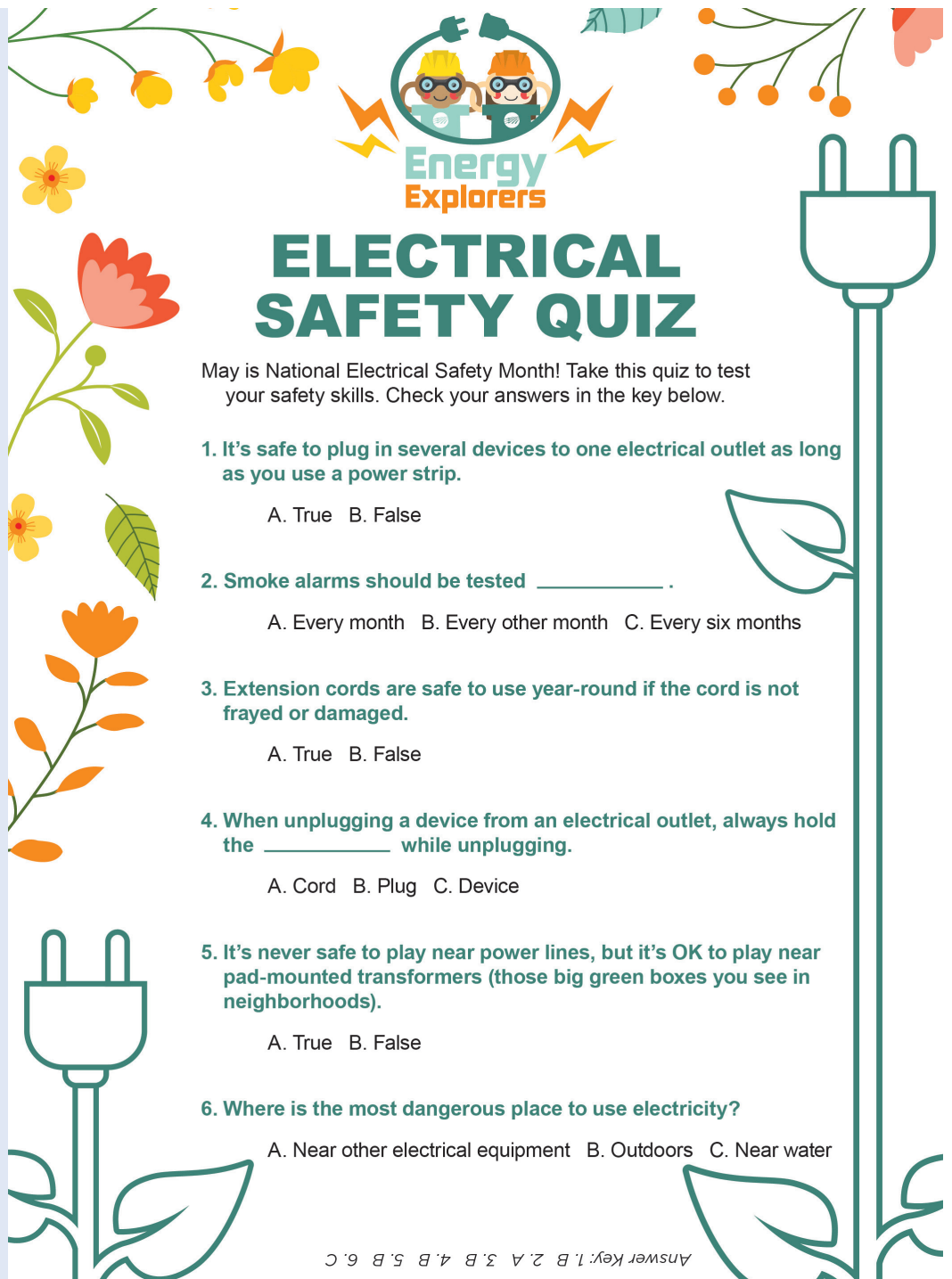


# ELECTRICAL SAFETY QUIZ

May is National Electrical Safety Month! Take this quiz to test your safety skills. Check your answers in the key below.

1. It's safe to plug in several devices to one electrical outlet as long as you use a power strip.  
A. True B. False
2. Smoke alarms should be tested \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. Every month B. Every other month C. Every six months
3. Extension cords are safe to use year-round if the cord is not frayed or damaged.  
A. True B. False
4. When unplugging a device from an electrical outlet, always hold the \_\_\_\_\_ while unplugging.  
A. Cord B. Plug C. Device
5. It's never safe to play near power lines, but it's OK to play near pad-mounted transformers (those big green boxes you see in neighborhoods).  
A. True B. False
6. Where is the most dangerous place to use electricity?  
A. Near other electrical equipment B. Outdoors C. Near water

Answer Key: 1. B 2. A 3. B 4. B 5. B 6. C



& 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 two grant applications he has been working on. Tom brought forth 2023 Substation Maintenance, 2023 Pole Inspection, and 2023 Pad-Mount Inspection contracts with STAR Energy Services; 2023 Underground Construction contract with Integrity Construction; and 2023 Right of Way Cleaning and 2023 Foliar Spraying contracts with Carr's Tree Service, and the Board approved them all. Tom gave the safety report. Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the recent meetings

that she attended and WAPA contracts. She gave an update on the City of Benson's feasibility study.

Ben Bratrud and Rich Macke, with Power Systems Engineering, joined the meeting to give a PowerPoint presentation to review the preliminary results of the Cost-of-Service Study they have been working on.

The April board meeting was set for the 27th. 1364701

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