



Cover Photo: Kelsey Schlieman, November Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

November 2021

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75

YEARS

Dual Fuel Members: Please Check Your Back-Up System

If you have a Dual Fuel Heating System, now is the time to be sure your back-up heating system is prepared and that you have adequate fuel supply.

- Dual Fuel Heating Systems are usually controlled during periods of high demand (such as frigid winter mornings and evenings), but other factors such as high market cost can lead to load control as well.
- There can be up to 400 hours of control during the heating season. However, most winters, the control has averaged less than 200 hours.
- Control Events typically occur in the morning and evening hours in the winter for approximately 4 hours at a time.
- Participants should expect less than 40 control days this winter.



COOK UP ENERGY SAVINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

- Clean oven burners regularly.
- Match the pan size to the burner you're using.
- Use small appliances like slow cookers and toaster ovens when possible.

From our table to yours,
Happy Thanksgiving!



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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
-  Follow us on Twitter

**We're Closed November
11, 25, and 26**



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 Charles Hagen for finding his account number in the September newsletter!

Energy Saving Tip:



Fall is the perfect time to prep your home for the upcoming winter chill.

One of the best ways you can save energy and stay comfortable is to caulk and weatherstrip areas that typically need sealing. Start by sealing around windows and doors. Seal plumbing, ducting, and areas where electrical wiring comes through walls, floors and ceilings for additional energy savings.

Source: www.energy.gov



Manager's Article: Building Update by Kory Johnson

As I have mentioned in previous articles, the staff and board of directors are considering the future needs for the cooperative headquarters. Over the years, since the existing facility was built, Agralite has added both materials and equipment to serve the needs of today's cooperative member. Today, Agralite installs and maintains underground primary lines that require equipment and materials that were not in use in the early 1960's when the current facility was designed and built. The members served today by the cooperative have greater electrical needs creating more dependence on reliable electrical services than the member of 1960. Today's digger derricks and bucket trucks are larger with additional lifting capacity and reach to allow our line workers to safely build and maintain the distribution system that serves our members. The cooperative has added specialty equipment to build and maintain the electrical system serving our members in a safe, reliable manner.

The staff and board have been considering two alternatives to serve the current and future need of the facilities:

Option 1 would be to put an addition onto the existing facility. This would accommodate the larger equipment needs of today. The addition to the building would require the cooperative to move one of the existing outbuildings to fit the addition onto the existing property. The existing warehouse would be repurposed. Relocating the warehouse in the existing building would allow access to the new addition. This option also includes remodeling the existing office space. The remodel would better utilize the existing space, allow for the upgrade to a new efficient heating and cooling system in the office, improve security in the office, and also bring the facility to current building code that will be required because of the addition. One key item with the building code would be the requirement of a fire suppression system throughout the building. A fire suppression system would require water holding tanks and fire pumps as the facility does not have municipal water service.

Option 2 would be an entirely new facility. The city of Benson is looking to develop an industrial park on the south side of the city adjacent to Hwy 29. The site would be served with water and sewer by the city, eliminating the need for water holding tanks and fire pumps. The new industrial site would provide the necessary footprint to accommodate the needs of the cooperative today and into the foreseeable future. 1374601

After reviewing the two options, the board has directed the staff to enter into discussions with the city of Benson to determine the cost to secure the property and the cost for the infrastructure to access the site for a possible new facility. The board considered the estimated cost difference between the two options and felt that the additional cost of a new facility was in the best interest long term for the membership. Investing in the addition and remodel of the existing site would leave us with limited space for any future expansion needs.

Special Notice: Surveying Members, Fall 2021

Agralite will be conducting a member survey beginning November 22. Please be aware that you may be one of several members who are randomly selected to participate in the survey - so if you get a call or email about a survey from us, it's legit.

Agralite is contracting 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 benchmark several areas of focus, including electric vehicles, member service, electric service, bills and payment options, etc. If you are selected, please take 10 minutes to participate. Thank you!

Understanding Your Electric Bill

Every billing cycle, your meters are read via Agralite's automatic meter reading system and the usage data is entered into our billing system. Your bill reflects your use for the previous billing cycle (the previous month). For example, the bill you receive in November is for energy that you used in October. All bills are due by the 20th of every month. Payments received after the 20th will be assessed a penalty charge.

Agralite Electric Cooperative offers several ways to pay your bill:

1. Stop by our main office. Hours are 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.
2. Place your bill in the drop box outside. It is open 24 hours.
3. Call our automated phone service at 1-855-386-9925.
4. Go online and use Smart Hub® at www.agralite.coop.
5. Sign up for Agralite's Automatic Payment Plan.

Remember, if you ever notice that one of your meters isn't reporting any usage, please let us know right away so we can make sure we address or correct any meters or usage processing!

If you have questions about how your bill works or about charges on your bill, please call us today at: 1-320-843-4150 or 1-800-950-8375.

Agralite Electric Cooperative
320 East Highway 12
PO Box 228
Benson, MN 56215
(320) 843-4150 or (800) 950-8375
(320) 843-3738 Fax
www.agralite.coop

Account Number
Statement Date

BILLING SUMMARY
Balance From Last Billing:
Payments
Previous Balance
Total Current Charges Due
Total Amount Due

Page 1 of 1

Map Loc: **Phone:** **Serv Add:**

Meter	Pres kWh Rdg	Prev kWh Rdg	Usage	Mult
08/30/2012	25858	07/31/2012 25141	528	1
08/31/2012	31734	07/31/2012 31545	189	1

Monthly Usage
Off Peak Savings

Messages

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Account #: **Total Amount Due:** **Due Date:**

To help you understand how to read our bill, please see the example graphic and review the descriptions below:

- 1 This is your account number that is assigned to you when you become an Agralite Member Owner. Keep it handy for when you call the office.
- 2 The statement date is the date on which the bill was printed. Usage and billing information is for the previous billing cycle.
- 3 This is your billing summarized in this part of the statement.
- 4 This is the total amount is due on the 20th of every month.
- 5 We show your map location number for ease in looking up your account. 1607500
- 6 We put your phone number here as another account identifier and to help us identify you.
- 7 The service address is the physical address of this account. Please call to update it if it is not correct.
- 8 Each of your main and sub-meters are listed in this area. You will also see the meter rate and usage here.
- 9 Meter information including reading dates, the reading and usage information are listed here. If you ever notice you have no usage on one of your meters, please call us right away to confirm your billing is correct.
- 10 This section is referred to as the break down of your bill, it includes both items in 8 and 9. In Section 9, the second reading is included, if applicable. Again, it is good to verify that you have appropriate usage on these meters.
- 11 A 13-month graph lets you compare this cycle's usage to other months. This graph is the aggregate of all your energy usage.
- 12 The total amount you saved by participating in EnergyWise programs is shown here. These are the savings you have realized while participating in load management programs.
- 13 Messages such as events coming up or deadlines are listed here.
- 14 The due date is the 20th of every month.



Propane Prices Got You Seeing Blue?

In some areas, propane prices have climbed above two dollars per gallon. One of the best ways to lower your energy bill, increase your comfort, and protect yourself against fossil fuel prices is by joining Agralite's Energy Wise Dual Fuel program.

If you are paying more than \$1.50 per gallon for propane you could be saving money with Energy Wise heating. Installing an a plenum heater is a quick way to save on your heating bill. These electric units are installed in the ductwork – or plenum - of your furnace. They allow you to switch between electric and propane, taking advantage of the lowest costs. Right now, dual fuel electric is the lowest cost way to heat. When necessary, Agralite controls electric heat so your furnace automatically switches over to the backup heat. When control is over, and the house is up to temperature, the furnace switches back to electric. If, at some time in the future, propane is cheaper than electric, you can choose to run propane full time. Besides plenums, there are several other electric heating system options available, like heat pumps, electric thermal storage and radiant heat. If you are planning to build a new home, or are replacing your furnace or air conditioner, allow yourself the option to use the cheapest heating fuel. Install some form of electric heat.

To be on the load management rate, the electric heat has to be permanently wired to a load management receiver to control use at peak times. You must also have an adequate backup system to keep the house warm during control times. All these systems qualify for Energy Wise rates when they can be controlled by the load management system and you have an adequate back up heating system. Storage heat and heat pumps qualify for a rebate on the new equipment. For more about electric heating options, visit our website (www.agralite.coop) and look under the Member Services tab or contact Agralite Electric Cooperative.

'Watt' Do I Need To Know About How Much Electricity My Appliances Use?

Determining how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use can help you understand how much money you are spending to operate them. Electricity is measured in units of power called watts, and one watt is a joule of energy used or produced per second.

The power consumption of small devices is usually measured in watts, while the power use of larger devices is measured in kilowatts (kW) (1 kW equals 1,000 watts). Knowing how much electricity an appliance uses and how much the electricity costs can help you decide whether to invest in a more energy-efficient appliance or make other cost-saving decisions, such as unplugging appliances when not in use. Becoming watt savvy is also helpful if you are considering purchasing a generator.

There are several ways to estimate how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use:

See The Data Plate

Appliances usually have data plates located on the back or inside the door. They tell you how many amps, watts, and volts are needed to power the appliance. If your appliance does not list watts for some reason but does list the number of volts and amps, you can multiply them to get the number of watts.

Review The EnergyGuide Label

The EnergyGuide label, a yellow-colored sticker or tag found on new products, provides an estimate of the average energy consumption and cost to operate the specific model of the appliance you are considering. The FTC requires the label, and the dollar amount is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.

Use A Monitor Or Meter

Wattage meters are affordable instruments that are easy to use and can measure the electricity usage of any device that runs on 120 volts. To put it to work, just plug the monitor into the electrical outlet and then plug the device into the monitor. The monitor will display how many watts the device uses. If you want to know how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity a device uses over a length of time, just leave everything set up and read the display later. Some monitors even allow you to plug in your utility's cost per kWh rate to determine how much that specific appliance costs you over a certain length of time.

Install A Whole-house System

Whole-house energy monitoring systems provide more detailed data on your home's energy use (as well as the ability to measure the energy use of 240-volt appliances). The features of these systems vary, and the cost and complexity depend on the number of circuits you want to monitor, how detailed the feedback is and the type of features available. 450900 The monitors are often installed directly into the main breaker panel of the home, and some require an electrician to install. Some monitors must be connected to your home's wireless network, with data being viewed on a computer or smartphone, while others come with a dedicated display. In addition to providing information on the energy consumption of your appliances, this type of monitoring system helps you understand where and when you use the most energy, allowing you to develop strategies to reduce your energy use and costs.

To learn more information about electrical safety and energy efficiency, visit SafeElectricity.org.

2022 Basin Scholarship - Qualify? Please Apply!

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a wholesale power supplier to Agralite, is again offering this generous scholarship. Basin Electric's scholarship program began in 1990. Each year, Agralite solicits scholarship applications throughout our service area.

How Much Is The Scholarship? The Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) Scholarship Program will award more than 180 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. The scholarships must be used for educational costs, and the student must enter college in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. Checks will be made payable to the school, and will be distributed to the school by BEPC. Scholarships will be distributed in August.

Who Is Eligible To Receive The Scholarship? Dependent children (including adopted or step-children) of member-system consumers and dependent children of member-cooperative employees are eligible. The applicant must also be a U.S. citizen and enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic record, potential to succeed, leadership, and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

How do I apply? Obtain forms and applications from your school counselor, the Agralite Electric Cooperative office, or www.agralite.coop.

The completed application and all other necessary information must be returned to Agralite Electric Cooperative **no later than February 18, 2022.**



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 60% 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.

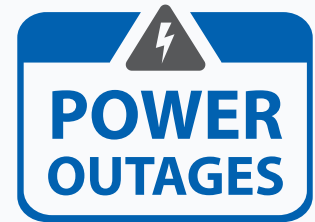
Energy Assistance Program

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 60% of the state median income (\$67,764 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2022.

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



Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

Do not call the office for outages

October Energy Payment
is due November 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

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 September 2021

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., September 30, 2021. All members of the Board were present except Director Nelson who was present via audio call. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, and payment of capital credits of deceased members were approved.

Rich Macke, from Power System Engineering, joined the meeting to give a PowerPoint presentation on the Cost of Service and Rate Design Study.

Don Wilcox, Agralite's Attorney, joined the meeting to discuss the headquarters facility. The Board of Directors held a vote by ballot. The results were unanimous in favor of building a new headquarters facility. Don gave an update on contract discussions. 1019301

Jonathan Messner, Manager of Member Services, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed load management and GRE demand side management assets. He stated that the Agralite website has been updated

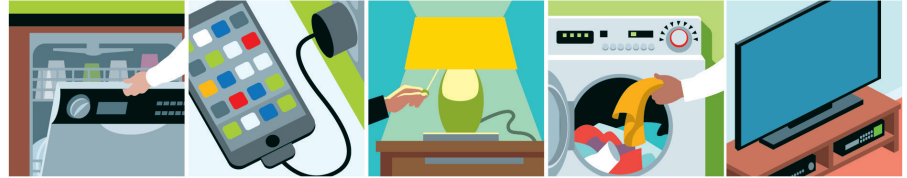
Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of August. She discussed insurance renewals, the MREA Finance Managers meeting she attended, the 2022 budget, and unclaimed capital credits. She stated that Casey Olson has been hired as the new Customer Service Representative and will begin October 4th. She stated that the Cold Weather Rule will go into effect on October 1st.

Jenny brought forth Work Order #514, Work Order #515, and Special Equipment August 2021 and the Board approved them. Jenny brought forth Resolution Authorizing the Amendment

ENERGY SAVINGS FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Saving energy at home can help your family save money and help our environment. Test your energy efficiency knowledge by completing this fill-in-the-blank activity.

Tip: Use the word bank for help. Don't forget to check your answers in the key below!



1. Turning off the tap water while brushing your teeth can save up to four _____ of water per minute.
2. Energy vampires, like TVs and phone chargers, consume _____ even when they're not in use. Turn these devices off to save energy.
3. Turning off _____ every time you leave the room saves energy.
4. Wash clothes in _____ water to reduce the load on your water heater.
5. LED light bulbs typically use 75% less energy than _____ light bulbs.
6. To save energy, only run full loads when running the _____.

Word Bank:

incandescent	dishwasher
electricity	gallons
lights	cold

Answer Key: 1) gallons 2) electricity 3) lights 4) cold 5) incandescent 6) dishwasher

of the Retirement Security Plan 24079-001, 24079-002, and 24079-003 and the Board approved it. Jenny brought forth Co-op Credit Union Corporate Authorization Resolution to add Stephanie Wroblewski and the Board approved it. Jenny brought forth CFC e-Pay/Paying Agent Service Board Resolution to add Stephanie Wroblewski and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Jenny with a PowerPoint presentation.

Kory Johnson discussed the 2022 Basin Load Forecast and the Board approved 2022 Basin Load Forecast Resolution.

Kory reported on activities of the Engineering & Operations department for the month. He discussed line crew projects,

recent outages, and blinking lights.

Kory gave the safety report.

The Board discussed an application for a donation to the Lake Hazel Church/Cemetery Association and the request was declined.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed the Mid-West meeting he attended.

Director Hufford gave an update on the East River board meeting.

The November board meeting was set for the 24th. Being no further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.