



Photo: Steve Schuster, October Calendar Photo Contest Winner

Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

October 2023

EMPOWERING

communities with
innovative, sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER

80 YEARS

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Agralite Electric Cooperative is joining cooperatives
across the U.S. to celebrate.



Electric Co-ops Grow For The Communities They Serve

Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op. Electric co-ops, including Agralite, exist to serve their members.

Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs. This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement, and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do.

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies, and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

Co-ops Grow For You: At Agralite, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago—to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!

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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
8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.



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 Dean Pederson for finding his account number in the August newsletter.

Energy Saving Tip:



Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand?

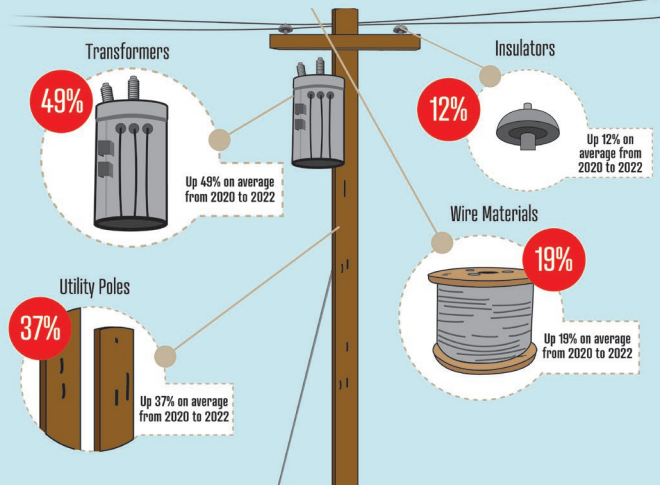
To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

Source: Dept. of Energy



The Rising Cost of Electric Utility Materials



Rate Increase For 2024

The mission of Agralite Electric Cooperative is to be a local, member-owned, progressive utility providing safe, reliable electric power and other related services to improve the quality of life in our region. We only raise rates when necessary to maintain our system infrastructure and the integrity of our system.

At the August board meeting, after careful consideration, the Agralite Board of Directors approved an effective rate increase of 4.1% beginning January 1st, 2024. The last rate increase for the cooperative was in January 2017, and in the past seven years, the cooperative has worked hard on cost-containment measures to maintain electric rates.

There are several factors contributing to the need for additional revenue. Over the past few years, the cooperative has seen increases in wholesale power costs, equipment and materials, fuels, long term interest rates, and other inflationary costs. In response to these challenges, a Cost-of-Service Study was completed to determine the level of revenue needed to maintain the quality of Agralite's distribution system. The cooperative generates some revenue through efficiencies to help absorb the increasing costs. However, as the Cost-of-Service Study for Agralite determined, the cooperative is beyond our operational ability to absorb.

The adjustment will include changes to Agralite Electric Cooperative's service charge and kWh energy charge. From the Cost-of-Service Study, the General Single-Phase rate, which includes the majority of our membership, will increase from \$39.00 to \$46.00, an increase of \$7.00 per month. The cooperative is also eliminating the seasonality component in the energy rate. The kWh rate will change from \$.1196 in the summer months and \$.1055 in the remaining months, to \$.1160 year-round. Depending on the usage of the residential account, there could be savings during the summer months. The exact change to each member's monthly bill will depend on that member's energy use and rate classification.

The service charge is common among electric utilities and it helps cover the fixed costs of the equipment such as poles, wires, and transformers that are incurred by the cooperative, regardless of how much energy is used. This makes sure costs are allocated more fairly among all users. Load management rates will remain unchanged.

While rate increases are not easy for anyone, Agralite is doing what it can to keep our rates as low as possible. This increase was necessary to continue to provide safe, reliable, affordable electricity to our membership into the future.

The cooperative will continue to provide valuable energy efficiency programs to assist you in managing your utility costs during these economically difficult times. 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 or visit our website at www.agralite.coop. We appreciate your continued interest in your electric cooperative.

AGRALITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL SERVICE RATES

As of January 1, 2024

General Single Phase

Service Charge	\$46.00
Energy Charge/kWh	11.60¢

General Multiphase

Service Charge	\$64.00
Energy Charge/kWh	11.60¢

Large Power - LP

Service Charge	\$90.00
Demand Charge/kW	\$10.75
Energy Charge/kWh	5.68¢

Large Power Service – LPS

Service Charge	\$120.00
Demand Charge/kW	\$26.84
Distribution Demand Charge/kW	\$4.25
Energy Charge/kWh	4.6¢

Irrigation

Service Charge 3-ph. (May – Sept.)	\$146.00
Service Charge 1-ph. (May – Sept.)	\$104.00
Uncontrolled Demand Charge/kW	\$28.30
Controlled Demand Charge/kW	\$10.50
Energy Charge/kWh	6.52¢
Energy Charge/kWh (non-summer)	11.60¢

Security Lights

Metered	\$7.50
Unmetered – 75 Watt LED	\$10.44

Interruptible Generation

Coincident kW, Jun-Jul-Aug	\$28.30
Coincident kW, Dec-Jan-Feb	\$19.65
Coincident kW, Others	\$15.15
Demand Penalty/kW/control	\$5.00
<200 kVA Service Charge	\$46.00
Energy Charge/kWh	8.02¢
>200 kVA Service Charge	\$110.00
Monthly Demand/kW	\$6.20
kWh	4.29¢

Service Charge for Load Management

\$2.50

Cycled Air Conditioning

kWh, summer/all other months	7.82¢/6.52¢
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Interruptible Heat/Peak Shave Water Heater

kWh, summer, (only heat)	11.60¢
kWh, summer, (AC, water heater)	7.82¢
kWh, all other months	6.52¢

Storage Water Heaters and Storage Heat

kWh, Jun-Jul-Aug	7.32¢
kWh, all other months	6.02¢

All rates subject to adjustment based on wholesale power costs.

CO-OPS
GROW

COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month. As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

CO-OP



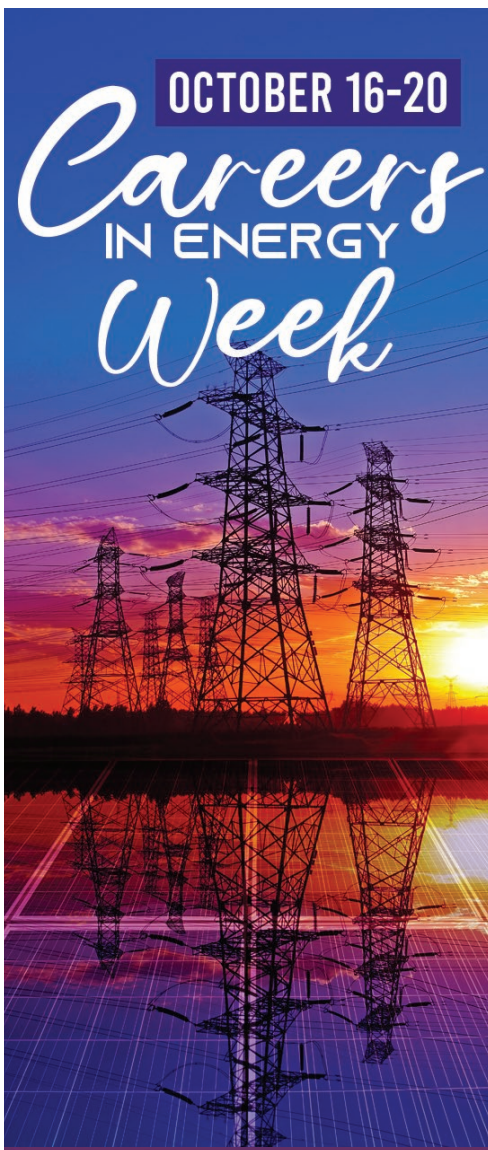
POWER
OUTAGES

Call Day or Night
1.888.884.3887

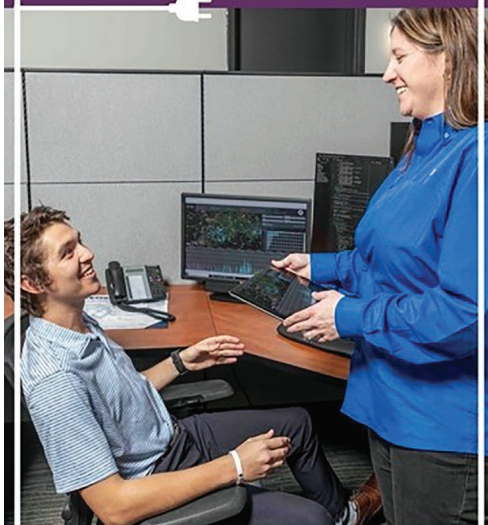
Do not call the office for outages

September Energy Payment is due
October 20.*

*We accept Visa, Discover
& Mastercard.



Thinking about a new career path?



Consider a career in energy. Be part of an exciting industry that **powers life, 24/7!**

Playing It Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones, and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms, and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identify, banking, and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft. In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air, and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Agralite Electric Cooperative, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.



Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Agralite is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts. 513400 According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online:

- 1 Implement multi-factor authentication (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts.** The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.
- 2 Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- 3 Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted, or include unusual requests.
- 4 Create strong passwords, using long, unique, and complex words or phrases.** Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity, and notify you of potential phishing websites.

For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. 1205000 For Agralite, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



UNATTENDED COOKING
is the leading cause of
cooking fires and deaths.



STAND BY YOUR PAN.
If you leave the
kitchen, turn off
the burner.



Learn more about cooking safety at fpw.org.

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, 2024.

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

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 - Vice President

Andrea Thomson, Benson

District 6

Warren Rau, Appleton

District 7 - President

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS August 2023

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., August 31, 2023. 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 #548, and Special Equipment for July 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 stated a new all-time peak was set on July 24th, at 7:00 pm of 50,577 Kw. 1249104 He discussed the ALM project and stated that Nelson Electric of Ortonville has been hired to complete the project. He discussed Farm Fest and CVEC's solar project.

Ralph Martin, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of July. He discussed financials, FEMA, and insurance renewal quotes. He stated that the bank conversion from Bank of the West to BMO will take place September 1-4th. Ralph brought forth updated CoBank Incumbency Certificate and the Board approved it.

The financials were given by Ralph 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 discussed leaning poles and

ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SEARCH

Are energy vampires hiding in your home? These electronic devices consume electricity even when they're not in use and can drain home energy bills.

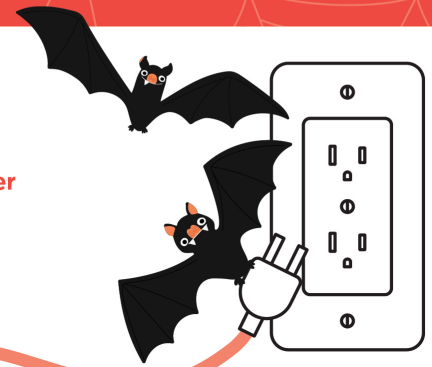
Read the tips below to learn how you can fight energy vampires, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



R	W	Y	E	S	B	G	S	V	F	S	V	V	X	Q
X	E	M	R	M	X	X	T	V	B	N	U	D	T	O
G	P	K	X	G	K	J	C	I	B	B	J	U	I	O
J	R	X	A	R	C	N	R	E	P	M	J	V	R	E
A	V	R	T	M	P	T	Y	Y	I	C	Z	U	W	L
T	R	W	Q	U	E	D	G	U	K	N	J	P	I	O
E	R	R	A	X	N	E	K	Z	X	C	D	E	F	S
F	E	K	Y	S	V	Y	F	A	Y	E	H	Z	E	N
Y	R	N	L	T	F	I	L	F	A	Q	W	O	U	O
O	A	A	W	V	Z	D	E	H	O	X	O	L	N	C
G	N	K	Z	T	T	Y	S	K	R	C	L	K	A	E
T	Q	S	D	G	M	J	S	W	W	X	S	N	M	
Z	E	R	E	G	R	A	H	C	E	N	O	H	P	A
B	A	C	T	T	Z	K	Q	N	U	X	E	M	Y	G
L	A	P	T	O	P	C	O	M	P	U	T	E	R	S

Tips to Fight Energy Vampires:

- If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **phone charger**.
- Tell your parents to unplug the **coffee maker** when they're finished brewing.
- When you're finished playing that new game, unplug your **game console**.
- Unplug **laptop computers** when you're done with homework.



the FEMA meeting. He showed pictures of a large transformer that went through Agralite's system on its way to North Dakota.

Tom gave the safety report.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the East River Manager's Meeting, MREA Energy Issues Summit, and the Basin Annual Meeting. She stated that East River processed Agralite's REC's for the first half of 2023 from the Basin marketing pool. She discussed Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power's new facility open house that she attended. A discussion followed.

The Power System Engineering 2023 Rate and

Cost of Service Study was discussed and the Board approved the 1-Step Rate Increase as presented effective January 1st, 2024.

Jenny will be the voting delegate at the 2023 CFC District Meeting.

A roundtable discussion was held including discussion on the Energy Issues Summit, Basin Annual Meeting, and member meetings.

The September board meeting was set for the 28th.

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