



Photo: Sara Erdman, October Calendar Photo Contest Winner

NEWSLETTER

October 2026

A Prairie In Progress

If you've driven by Agralite's new headquarters lately, you may have noticed what appears to be a bold new landscaping strategy called "Let Nature Figure It Out."

Rest assured, the tall grass, wild-looking plants, and occasional burst of mystery vegetation are all part of the plan. What you're seeing is the beginning of our pollinator-friendly prairie. While a mature prairie is a beautiful mix of native grasses and colorful wildflowers, getting there takes time. In fact, we've been told that establishing a healthy prairie is typically a 3-to-5-year process. That means what currently looks like a weedy science experiment is actually an investment in a thriving ecosystem. Think of it this way: if prairies had yearbook photos, their freshman-year picture wouldn't be hanging on the refrigerator either. During the first few years, native plants are busy doing most of their work underground. While the visible growth above ground may seem unimpressive, extensive root systems are developing underneath the soil. Some prairie plants send roots several feet deep, helping them survive droughts, improve soil health, and create long-term habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

In the meantime, weeds inevitably show up to the party uninvited. That's normal. Prairie establishment requires patience, occasional maintenance, and a willingness to trust the process, even when neighbors might be wondering if the lawn mower has broken down. The end goal is worth it. 1273200 Once established, the prairie will provide food and habitat for bees, butterflies, and other important pollinators while creating a beautiful, low-maintenance landscape that reflects our commitment to the stewardship of the land we serve.

So, if you are looking at our headquarters and thinking, "That is an interesting collection of weeds," you're not entirely wrong. We're simply looking several years into the future, when those weeds will have given way to a vibrant prairie buzzing with life.

Until then, we'll continue to respond: *"Yes, it's supposed to look like that."*



EMPOWERING
communities

with innovative
and sustainable
energy solutions

FOR OVER
85
YEARS

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Agralite Electric Co-op
We're member-owned!

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1-800-950-8375

www.agralite.coop

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Office Hours:

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM



Touchstone Energy®

Agralite is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.



Find your account number and win a \$100 credit!

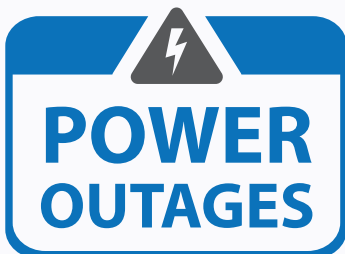
If your account number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) is one of the [four account numbers](#) hidden in this issue, give our office a call by the end of the month and you will receive a \$100 bill credit. If more than one member finds their account number in a single issue, \$100 will be split equally amongst them.

Energy Saving Tip:



Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they are turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers, and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. 1320001 Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: Department of Energy



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, and
Mastercard.

Agralite Electric Cooperative: Working To Keep Your Power Reliable And Affordable *by Jenny Stryhn, General Manager*

The cost of electricity is on a lot of minds these days, and we understand why. You count on Agralite Electric Cooperative to power your home, your farm, and your business, and we know affordability matters to every family and every operation in our community. That is not lost on us.

What makes Agralite different is that we answer to you, not shareholders. We are a not-for-profit owned and governed by the members we serve, which means every dollar you pay goes back into the system that keeps your lights on. When we make a decision, we make it as your neighbors, because that is what we are.

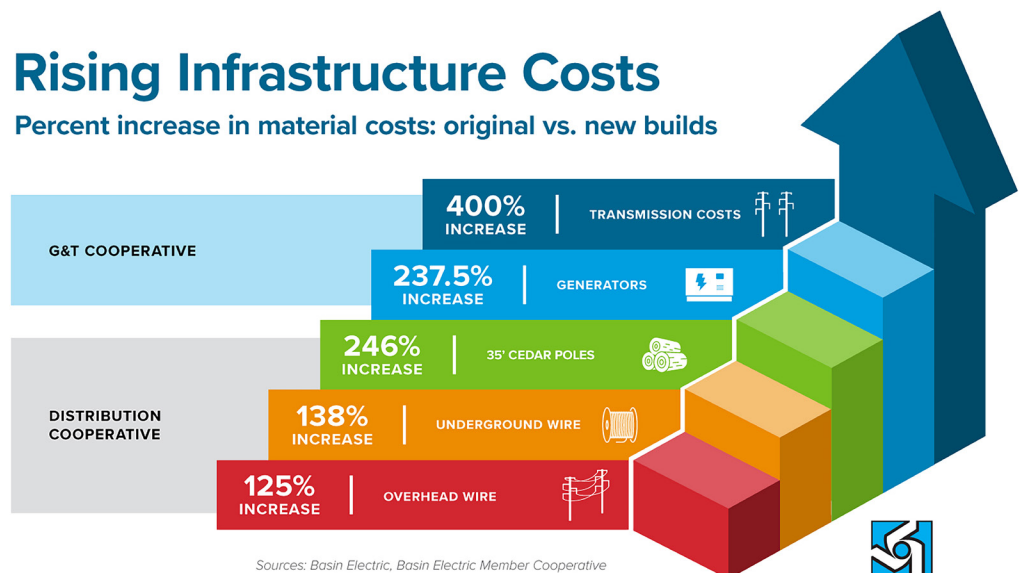
Because we answer to you, keeping your rates affordable is our job rather than an afterthought. Before we ever ask members to pay more, we look for savings everywhere we have control, whether that means pressing our suppliers for better prices or keeping equipment in service as long as it can safely do the work. We also partner with our power suppliers, Basin Electric, East River, and Great River Energy, to share expenses that would be far heavier to carry alone.

Some of the work ahead of us, though, cannot wait. Much of the grid was built generations ago, and the poles, wires, and equipment that have served us faithfully are aging. Replacing them costs more than it once did, and building an electrical system ready for the future takes real investment. We make those investments because keeping power reliable tomorrow means taking care of the system today. Not every cost sits within the Agralite fence, either. State and federal energy policies increasingly dictate how power gets generated and delivered, and those mandates can raise costs without making the grid any more reliable for rural Minnesota. This is where being part of something bigger pays off. Our statewide association, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, carries our voice to the Capitol, pushing for energy policy that keeps power affordable and reliable for communities like ours.

Affordability, though, is only half of what we owe you. Affordable power means little if it is not there when you flip the switch on a cold January morning, so we will not trade away the dependability you count on for a short-term savings. Striking that balance is the heart of cooperative service. So, while the pressures on the cost of electricity are real, they do not tell the whole story. The rest of the story is a cooperative that fights for you at home and at the Capitol, one that measures success not by profit but by whether your power stays on and your bill stays fair. That is the difference of belonging to an electric cooperative, and it is a difference we work to earn every day.

Rising Infrastructure Costs

Percent increase in material costs: original vs. new builds



Sources: Basin Electric, Basin Electric Member Cooperative



Minnesota's Electric Cooperatives To Honor Local Heroes

Is there someone in your community who consistently goes above and beyond to make a difference? Perhaps they've poured their time and energy into helping a local nonprofit thrive, assisted those in need, or spearheaded a community project that has made life better for everyone. If someone comes to mind, now is your chance to recognize their remarkable service and help support their cause or organization.

Agralite Electric Cooperative is proud to partner with Minnesota's Touchstone Energy cooperatives in launching the Cooperative Heroes Award. Minnesota is served by 44 distribution cooperatives, covering 85% of Minnesota and reaching every county. This award provides an opportunity for anyone served by an electric cooperative to nominate an individual who has made meaningful, positive impact in their community.

The Cooperative Heroes Award celebrates Minnesota's cooperative values: integrity, innovation, reliability, accountability, and commitment to community. Judges will carefully evaluate nominees for these qualities as they select three outstanding winners. Each winner will receive funding to support a local nonprofit or cause of their choice: First place \$1,000; second and third place: \$500 each. Together, let's shine a light on the community heroes whose dedication has touched lives and inspired change. Nominations are open from Oct. 1 through Nov. 15, with a short application process available at: <https://www.mrea.org/programs/touchstone-energy>.



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords.

Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder to crack than a short complex password.

Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection.



Source: NIST

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, 2027.

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



FOOD TRUCK

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OCTOBER 22



11:00 AM – 2:00 PM



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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.



Power Up Your Devices With Fire Safety In Mind

Agralite Electric Cooperative is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) to support Fire Prevention Week October 4-10. 1515800 This year's FPW theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower," focuses on the simple steps people can take to recharge safely. Safe charging means making smart choices every time you plug in.

Many devices used in our daily lives - phones, tablets, laptops, tools, toys, e-bikes, and scooters—run on rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, which store a lot of energy in a small space. If they are damaged or charged the wrong way, they can overheat, start a fire, or even explode.

How you charge lithium-ion battery devices can help prevent home fires. It comes down to using simple habits each time you plug in.

- Use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer. Using the wrong charger can damage the battery and increase the risk of fire.
- Charge devices on a table, desk, or other hard, flat surface. Do not charge them on beds, couches, or under pillows. Devices and chargers produce heat during normal charging. Soft surfaces can trap heat and block airflow, which can cause the battery to overheat.
- Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell. These are warning signs that the battery may be damaged or failing.
- Unplug your device when it is fully charged. Do not leave it plugged in longer than needed. Leaving a device plugged in too long can increase heat and stress on the battery.
- Charge larger items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside and away from exits. These batteries are larger and store more energy. If they fail, fires can grow quickly and spread.
- When charging on a plane, keep your device where you can see it. Do not charge devices in overhead compartments. Do not charge e-cigarettes or vapes on a plane. If a battery overheats or fails, it is important for the flight crew to respond quickly.



October is National **CO-OP** ⚡ **MONTH**

This month, we celebrate building brighter communities together!

CURRENT AGRALITE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Draeger, Clinton
District 1

Jeff Hufford, Morris
District 2 - Secretary / Treasurer

Bennett Zierke, Hancock
District 3 - Vice President

Steve Nelson, Starbuck
District 4

Dave Barrett, Murdock
District 5

Clay Molden, Danvers
District 6

Warren Rau, Appleton
District 7 - President

MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 2026

Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., August 27, 2026. 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 #604, and July Special Equipment 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 that July set new all-time records for irrigation load and for total system load. He stated that Agralite participated in the Touchstone Energy booth at Farmfest. He discussed staffing updates for his department.

Stephanie Wroblewski, Manager of Finance/CFO, reported on activities of her department for the month. She discussed margins for the month of July. She has been reviewing different plans for health and dental insurance for 2027. She discussed staffing updates for her department.

The financials were given by Stephanie with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He

Keeping Power Affordable: Why We Manage Peak Demand

Have you ever noticed that electric cooperatives seem to get very excited about a few hours each year?

While most members focus on how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) they use throughout the month, utilities also pay close attention to when electricity is used. In fact, a handful of high-demand hours each year can have a significant impact on the cost of providing electricity to all members. Think of it like a family road trip. Your vehicle might average 65 mph for the entire trip, but for a few moments you may need to floor the accelerator to climb a hill or pass another vehicle. Those brief moments require the most power from the engine. Electric systems work much the same way.

When thousands of homes, farms, businesses, grain dryers, air conditioners, water heaters, and irrigation systems are all operating at the same time, demand on the electric grid can spike dramatically. Utilities and power suppliers must build and maintain enough infrastructure to meet those peaks, even if they only occur for a few hours each year. That's where load management comes in.

Agralite's load management programs help reduce electric demand during these periods of unusually high system use. By temporarily cycling equipment such as electric water heaters, air conditioners, or other participating loads, we can lower our overall peak demand without significantly impacting member comfort. More recently, Agralite has also been exploring new technologies through our Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) pilot project. During peak demand events, stored battery energy can be used to help supply power, reducing the amount of electricity that must be purchased during the most expensive periods.

The goal is simple: lower system peaks, reduce wholesale power costs, and help keep electric rates affordable for all members.

The next time you receive a load control notification or hear us talking about peak demand, remember that we're not just managing electricity. We're managing costs. And sometimes, what happens during a few critical hours can make a difference all year long.

So, if you ever hear an Agralite employee excitedly discussing a "peak alert" on a hot summer afternoon, don't worry. The lights aren't going out, the sky isn't falling, and we haven't discovered a new mountain range in west-central Minnesota. We're just doing our best to shave a few kilowatts off the top and save members money in the process.

discussed line crew projects and outages for the month. He gave an update on the Stevens Milk Plant. He discussed coordinating with building moves through Agralite's territory and showed pictures from a recent house move. He discussed power line safety demonstrations at the Stevens County Fair.

Tom gave the safety report. 842701

Dr. Gabe Chan and BJ Allen, from the University of Minnesota, joined the meeting and gave a PowerPoint presentation on Distributed Energy Resources Feasibility Study Results.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She recapped the UMN Feasibility Study Results presentation and a discussion was held.

She gave an update on GRE financials. She discussed recent meetings she attended including the MREA Energy Issues Summit, East River Managers Meeting, and the Basin Annual Meeting.

Director Rau will be the CFC District Meeting voting delegate.

A roundtable discussion was held discussing the MREA New Director training, Nuclear Energy board class, and Energy Issues Summit; MREA proposed membership agreement; and the Basin Annual Meeting.

The September board meeting was set for the 24th.

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