



Photo: Sharon Folkens, September Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

September 2022

## Stay Safe Around Power Lines

Coming into contact with a power line can be deadly, but you don't have to touch one of them directly to be in danger. Thankfully, some simple precautions are all you need to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Overhead power lines carry thousands of volts of electricity and have the potential to be harmful to anyone or anything that gets too close. Agralite Electric Cooperative wants our members to understand the dangers of electricity and to stay safe around power lines.

**When flying objects like kites and drones, make sure to look up and stay clear of power lines.** If you're carrying tall tools like ladders and boards, working on a roof, trimming trees, or using tall vehicles or equipment, be careful so these items don't hit a power line. You should always stay at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

**Mylar balloons pose a significant threat to power lines.** When a metallic balloon touches a power line, it can cause a surge of electricity that short circuits equipment and can lead to power outages, fires and injuries. Proper handling and disposal of these balloons can prevent this from happening and they should never be released into the air.

**If you see a tree touching a power line, don't climb it.** If something gets caught in a power line, don't try to knock it down yourself. Call Agralite to safely remove it. You should also never attach things to power poles, such as signs, decorations or basketball hoops.

**If a power line or pole comes down for any reason, always assume the line is energized and keep all people and pets far away.** When a line falls, the current can travel through the ground and nearby objects. Notify Agralite and call 911 as soon as possible to report a downed line or pole.

**If a person or vehicle has come in contact with a downed power line, do not touch either of them as they could also be energized.** Call 911 immediately. And if you're in a car that has encountered a power line, stay inside the vehicle. Call 911 and wait until help arrives and you can safely get you out. If you must exit your car, jump out with both feet and shuffle until you are a safe distance from your car.

Electricity is an important part of our everyday lives, but can be very dangerous when not treated with caution. The safety of our employees and members is of utmost importance. You should always keep a safe distance from power lines and other equipment the cooperative uses to bring electricity to your home, including transformers, meters and electric boxes.



## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER

75  
YEARS

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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

Hours beginning  
September 6th:  
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.

### Congratulations

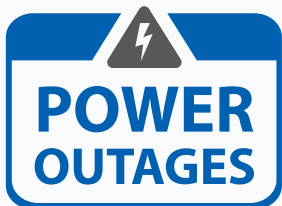
to Gram Farm, Ann Engen, Terry Sigler, and Todd Johnson for finding their account numbers in the July newsletter!

### Energy Saving Tip:



#### Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills.

To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified. [Source: Dept. of Energy](#)



**Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887**

[Do not call the office for outages](#)

August Energy Payment  
is due September 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

## Manager's Article by Kory Johnson

*Supply chain* is a term seldom heard of in past years but is becoming a common place term today. Since the onset of COVID, we have seen shortages of many common products ranging from toilet paper, to meat products, to baby formula. We see the supply chain issues as we drive by car dealers across the Midwest with new vehicles, a scarcity on the lots. I have heard examples in areas where new homes were built but they could not get windows for an extended period of time.

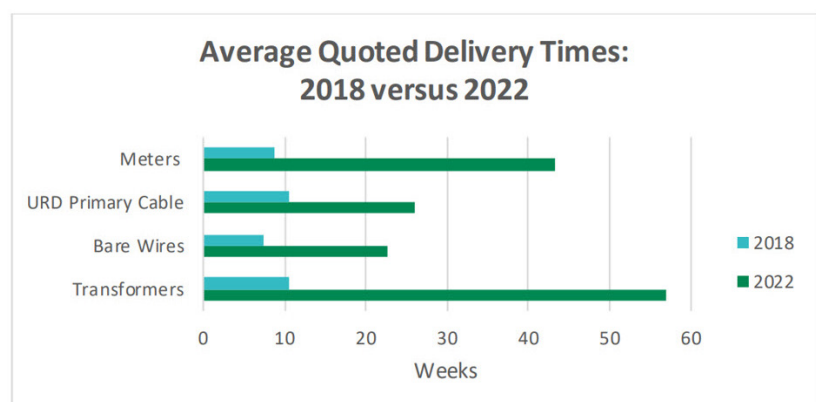
Supply chain delays are contributing to an unprecedented shortage of the most basic machinery and components essential to ensuring continued reliability of the electric system. The typical lead time for three phase transformers of 10-12 weeks has ballooned to eight months and longer. Agralite has seen a significant price increase on these items as well. We have seen transformers quoted at nearly twice the price that the cooperative has seen only a couple years back. Some manufacturers of pole mounted transformers are declining to accept new orders all together due to historic backlogs. Additionally, the lead time for substation transformers has been extended by a full year. Orders for electrical conduit have been delayed five-fold to 20 weeks and costs are up 200 percent year over year. Digital meters, bare wire and primary underground distribution cable are all taking longer to procure and the delay is impacting project schedules. Lead times on vehicles, such as bucket trucks and digger derricks can be two years or more. Also, manufactures of this equipment will not quote a firm price for these items as there are too many unknowns that far in the future. The cooperative recently called to order a load of poles and were told delivery would be 15 weeks out for the predrilled poles that are normally ordered. 621800 The cooperative was able to secure undrilled poles for quicker delivery.

These factors will cause an increase in the costs of building new lines and services as well as projects planned for increased reliability and increased capacity on the distribution system. The cooperative had also ordered many of the key items necessary for projects planned for 2023. This was done early this spring as information on production delays and scarcity of key items was being talked about. The cooperative was also able to lock in some prices and schedule delivery of these items in a timely fashion.

As you look at projects that will need an upgrade in the electrical service, keep this in mind. If you do have plans for the fall, please contact Agralite to schedule the work.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, NRECA, has actively raised attention among federal policymakers throughout the executive and legislative branches to ensure they fully grasp the scope of how these supply chain challenges are impacting the electric sector. They have brought compelling examples of how equipment shortages and extended lead times can impact new economic development, storm recovery, implementation of projects funded through the 2021 infrastructure law, and the Biden administration's policy agenda.

The graph below is information gathered by NRECA showing examples of extended lead times on essential items to enable the delivery of reliable electrical service.







## The Power of Preparation

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever, it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, we want to remind members of our community about the power of preparation. While you don't have to achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.

[Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:](#)

- Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio and phone chargers.
- Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- Keep neighbors and coworkers informed of your emergency plans.
- Fill your car with gas.
- Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

## Caring For Vulnerable Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

*Article continues on page 4*



**We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.**

- **Keep clear of electrical equipment.**
- **Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.**
- **Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.**
- **Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.**
- **Never place deer stands on utility poles.**
- **Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.**

# Agralite Cooperative

## 2023 Calendar Photo Contest

### Back By Popular Demand!

Agralite is seeking local photographs for our 2023 calendar contest. Photos should be of a landscape, natural element, or interesting view from within the Agralite service territory. We want you to share the diversity and wonder of our local landscape.

Photos must be submitted by Agralite members. Photos must be submitted by **October 1st, 2022**. Digital photos only. You must specify the subject of the photo and where it was taken. Please include contact information - account number, phone number, and address in your submission.

Selected photos will receive a \$15 bill credit. Cover photo will receive a \$30 bill credit. Photos will be selected by Agralite employees. Please limit 5 photo submissions per member - 1 winning photo per member.

**Submit Your Photos To:**  
[jmessner@agralite.com](mailto:jmessner@agralite.com)

### Congratulations

to **Justin & Rebecca Sanders**  
 for winning a \$100 Visa Gift Card  
 for our paperless billing/SmartHub  
 promotion!

### 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).

### The Power of Preparation Continued

#### Keeping Four-legged Family Members Safe

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress especially if you need to make a decision during an emergency.

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications and other supplies).

At Agralite Electric Cooperative, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

#### Five Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty

America's electric cooperatives, including Agralite Electric Cooperative, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. There are many important policy issues that directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While Agralite is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. Through our non-partisan grassroots program known as "Co-ops Vote," we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. There's power in numbers, and when we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

**National Voter Registration Day is September 20**, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or simply make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty.

- 1 Don't assume your voter registration status is up to date.** 720600 Visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop), then click "Election Resources" to verify your status.
- 2 Get informed.** In addition to ensuring your registration is up to date, learning about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote.
- 3 Get active on social media.** Follow @coopsvote on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady; encourage your friends and family to do the same.
- 4 Help others prepare to vote.** Work a National Voter Registration Day event (visit [www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events](http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events)), volunteer to be a poll worker during midterm elections or offer to drive others to their polling places.
- 5 Vote!** It's the easiest—and most important—way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

We encourage everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact.





# DOWNED POWER LINES

## DOs & DON'Ts

Downed power lines may not look dangerous, but don't be fooled. These lines are likely carrying electric currents strong enough to cause serious injury or death. If you come across a downed power line...

### DOs

50ft.  
↔

Stay at least 50 feet away from the downed line (about the length of two school buses).



If closer, bunny-hop at least 50 feet away keeping both feet together and landing at the same time.



Report the downed power line to Agralite Electric Cooperative. Call 911 if there is imminent danger.

### DON'Ts



Never touch a downed power line - always assume the line is live and dangerous.



Don't attempt to move a downed power line - even with items that are not typically conductive.



Don't touch a structure near or connected to the downed power line. They could be energized for thousands of yards and pose serious hazards.

### IF YOU SEE AN INJURY

If you see someone injured by a downed power line, call 911 for help.

Don't try and rescue the person. The electrical current can travel through the individual to you and cause serious harm.

The best thing to do is warn others to stay away and wait for help.

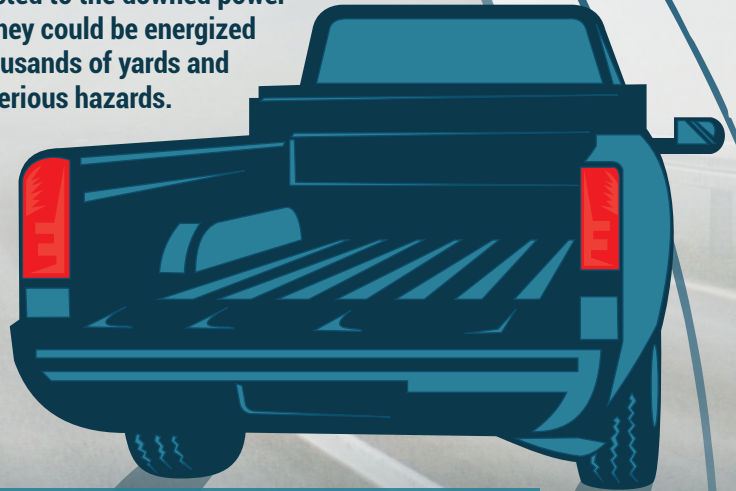


### If you are in a vehicle that comes in contact with a downed powerline:

Stay in your vehicle until help arrives. Avoid touching the metal frame or any other metal in your vehicle.

Call 911 and report the downed line.

If you need to exit the vehicle due to a fire, jump clear of the car keeping both feet together. Cross your arms over your chest and bunny hop at least 50 feet away from the vehicle. Never touch the vehicle and the ground simultaneously because this increases the risk of electrical shock.



## 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 July 2022

Board Chairman Orvin Gronseth called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:30 a.m., July 28, 2022. All members of the Board were present except Director Draeger and Director Nelson who joined by Zoom. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, and payment of capital credits of deceased members were approved.

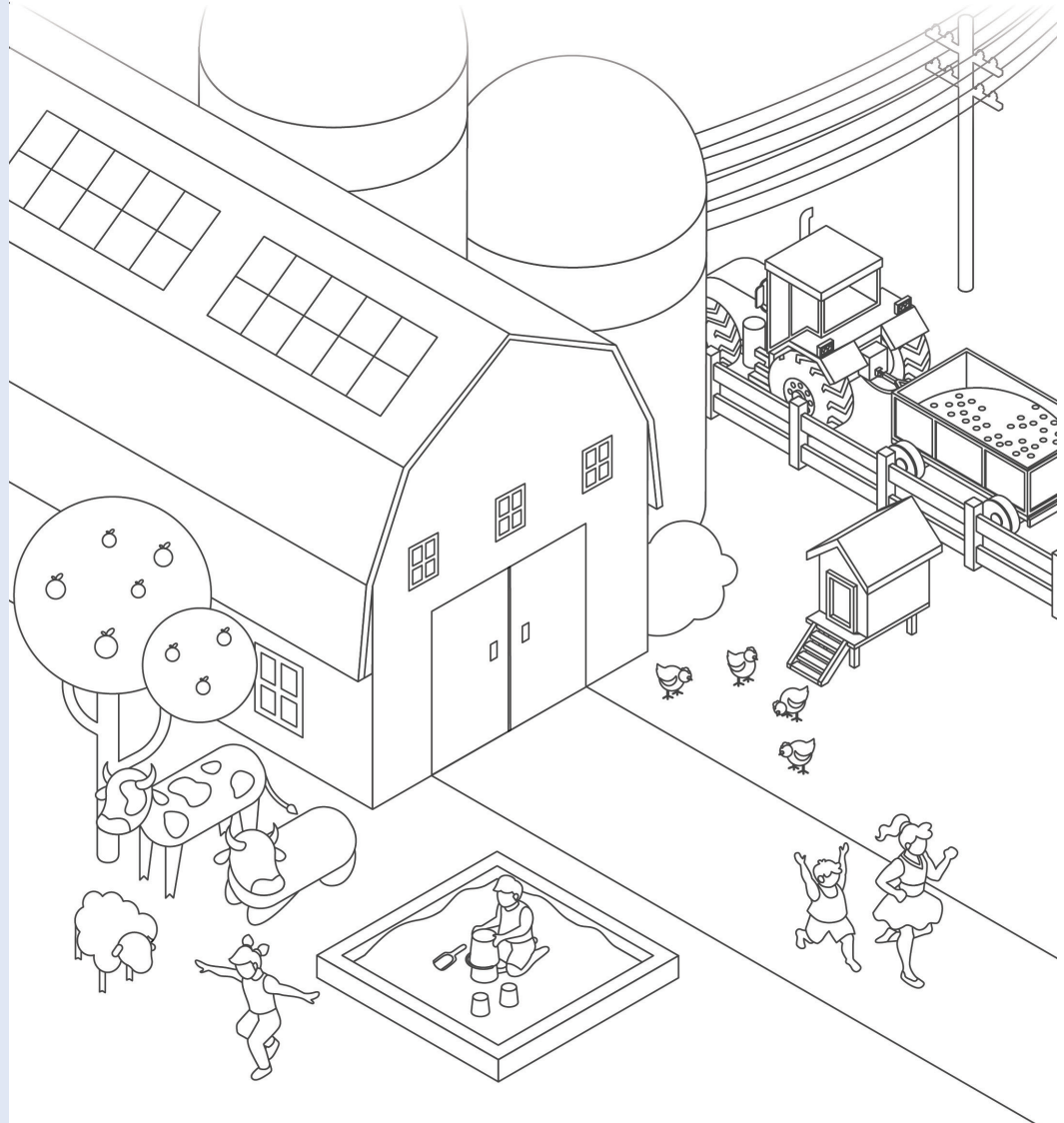
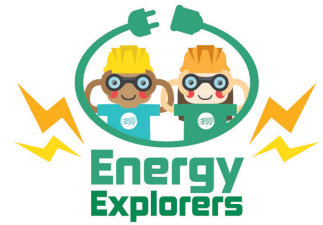
Kory Johnson reported on activities for the Member Services department for the month. He discussed load management and billing peaks. He discussed the Brigg's generator program and the annual meeting. He reported on the Operation Round Up meeting that was held July 21st.

Jenny Stryhn, Manager of Finance, discussed Agralite's margins for the month of June. She discussed Power Systems Engineering's cost-of-service study and the need for a potential rate study. The Board approved a rate study by PSE. She stated that the severe weather request from the week of May 12th received a federal declaration. She discussed the 2021 Key Ratio Trend Analysis report. She discussed the NRECA Interact Conference and Basin Managers Meeting that she attended. She brought forth Resolution of the Board of Directors Authorizing the Amendment and Restatement of The Retirement Security and/or 401(K) Pension Plans and the Board approved it.

Representative Paul Anderson joined the meeting to introduce himself to the Board.

## National Farm Safety and Health Week

Farm Safety and Health Week is September 18-24!  
Whether you live on a farm or in the city, always play it safe near power lines and other electrical equipment.



1060100 Jenny brought forth Work Order #527 and Special Equipment June 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. He stated that the May 12th storm was declared a federal disaster, so he will be gathering information and submitting the forms needed to the State and to FEMA. All the damaged poles from the storm will be hauled to a qualified landfill.

Tom gave the safety report.

Kory Johnson, General Manager, reviewed his report to the board. He discussed grid resiliency and East River Class D demand charges.

An Executive Session was held.

Director Rau will be the NRECA Voting Delegate at the Annual Meeting. Kory Johnson will be the alternate.

The August board meeting was set for the 25th.

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