



Photo: Teresa Guest, September Calendar Photo Contest Winner

# Agralite Electric Cooperative NEWSLETTER

September 2023

## Farm Safety & Health Week

Farmers and farm family members face dangers every day. Although tragedies such as tractor rollovers and grain bin suffocation receive the most attention, electrocution and electrical burn accidents are frequent on farms. Electrical safety is one of the priorities during National Farm Safety and Health Week, typically observed during the third week of September.

The simple movement of a portable grain auger from one bin to another can have tragic results if the individuals involved are not extremely careful. The use of tractors with large cabs and antennas and oversized grain wagons can also result in preventable electrocution incidents.

Electrical equipment around fields, such as power lines in the end rows, may get overlooked during such a hectic time of year as harvest. However, failure to notice overhead power lines can be a deadly oversight.

Most farmsteads could use a very careful overhead visual inspection of electric lines. The service may no longer meet the proper height codes because of age and/or damage to poles and pole guy wires. The sag may have increased over the years, while the height of the machinery being used today may be much higher.

However, today's farm equipment has a long reach when extended; and even when collapsed for roadway transport, many pieces of equipment may exceed the height of power lines. A daily check should be made of where equipment will be moving to ensure that it will clear power lines. Don't take matters into your own hands. They may not be as high as they look. Always use a spotter, someone with a broad vantage point, when working in the vicinity of power lines.

Maintain a 10-foot separation from a power line completely around it, whether you are driving underneath or passing a grain auger near it. A 53-year-old Michigan truck driver who was cleaning sugar beets out of his truck unknowingly raised the bed into a 4,800 volt overhead power line. As he stood in the wet field and touched the energized truck bed, he was fatally burned.

In addition to conducting a field survey of power lines to locate potential hazards, employers should obtain safety information from utility companies for the benefit of their workers.

Where possible, install electrical safety warning signage to prevent equipment and human contact with power lines. This will also be beneficial to your suppliers who may be making deliveries to your farm.



## EMPOWERING

communities with  
innovative, sustainable  
energy solutions

FOR OVER

80  
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

 Like us on Facebook



**Office Hours Beginning  
September 5:**  
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.

### Energy Saving Tip:

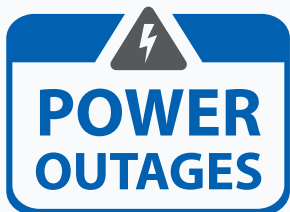


Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system?

Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Call Day or Night  
1.888.884.3887

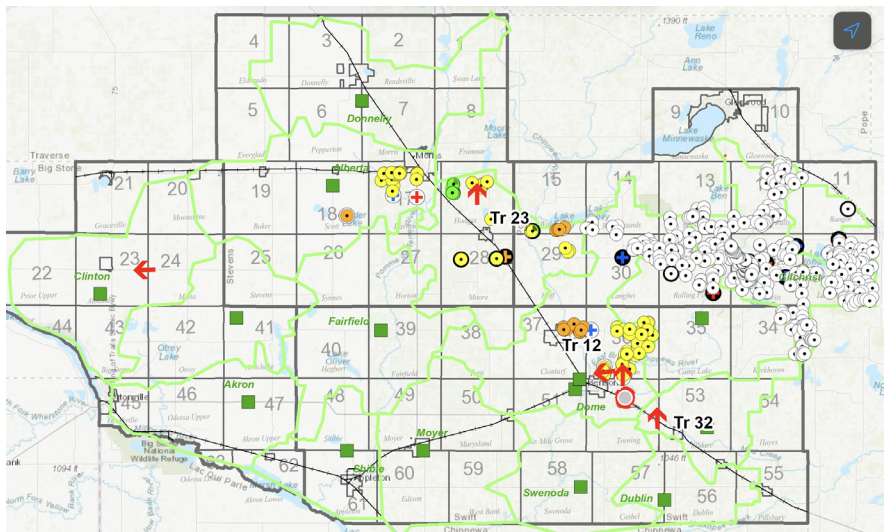
[Do not call the office for outages](#)

August Energy Payment is due  
September 20.\*

\*We accept Visa, Discover & Mastercard.

## July Storm Recap

Almost 14 months later, Mother Nature returned to wreak havoc on our system. Our automated meters started reporting outages on July 25th at about 10:00 pm. The first outages came from the Morris area moving to the east with the strong storms and wind. By 11:40 pm, we had approximately 580 meters reporting lost power in the areas of Morris, Hancock, Benson, Clontarf, Gilchrist, and Lake Johanna. The outages are depicted by the round circles on the map below. By this time, we had two crews out already and two more on their way in. 886601 The on-call crew worked in the Morris area where the trouble started while the second crew started around Clontarf working their way towards Gilchrist. The other two crews went to Gilchrist and Lake Johanna where we had significant damage and problems in the Gilchrist Substation.



Progress was slow in the first eight hours due to dark conditions, trees and conductors were down in most places, and the storms continued until about 4:00 am. The crews continued to work on getting conductors back up, as well as changing a few poles and replacing transformers that had been damaged. Trees were the biggest contributor to our damage in the Lake Scandi and Gilchrist Lake areas as you can see by the picture below. Yes, there is a pole underneath that mess.

By 5:00 pm, Wednesday the 26th, we had all the meters that could be energized without extensive repair back on. In the aftermath, we had approximately 10 poles, 4 transformers, and numerous conductor breaks damaged by the winds and flying debris.



## 'Standby' Me: The Pros and Cons of a Permanent Standby Generator

Many livestock facilities and big businesses rely on standby power when the power goes out – for the safety of their animals, employees, and customers as well as to power essential items. More and more home versions are being installed so that families can have backup power when they need it, to power appliances, and essential medical equipment, or simply for convenience.

There is more than one type of permanent generator. One has a transfer switch that must be manually “thrown” before turning on the alternate source of power, which is wired into a house. This type of generator is permanent but not considered “standby” because of the manual switch, and it should not be located near a home. 1412601 (Consult a professional electrician when installing or maintaining a permanent generator.) Not throwing the switch can result in back feeding, which sends electricity back into power lines, and it can seriously injure or kill electric line workers or others.

Another type of fixed generator is permanently housed in a metal box and is usually located near the yard pole. A standby version that is permanently and professionally installed to power your entire home.

When needed, a standby generator automatically transfers the power source from the electric grid to the generator. Agralite is a certified Briggs and Stratton dealer. We sell and maintain 12Kw, 20Kw, and 26Kw models all with a 6-year warranty, as well as many other models. The cost of this type of permanent generator varies depending on how much backup power you want. You can view our complete price list, as well as spec sheets from our most popular models at: [www.agralite.coop/generators](http://www.agralite.coop/generators).

Besides the cost of the system, there are also installation costs to consider since it will need to be installed by licensed and bonded contractors for both LP and electrical. (This is definitely not a DIY project.) We are typically seeing these costs come in at \$2,000-\$4,000.

When considering a standby generator, a representative from Agralite will assess your homes energy needs and will ask you what you would like to power in the event of an outage. We will also talk to you about the option of allowing us to load control it in the event of peak demands to the grid. By allowing Agralite to control your whole home generator, you will receive a discount on your energy rate. This can be a great option for many to get peace of mind and gain a return on investment.

To inquire about purchasing a standby generator or how permanent generators should be safely used and installed, contact Agralite Electric Cooperative at 320-843-4150 or 800-950-8375 and ask for Jeremy or Jonathan.



## Residential Standby Generator Systems

Save Money On Your Energy Usage By Allowing Agralite To Control It During Peak Demand Times

- Intelligently powers your whole house
- Automatically starts when the power goes out
- Runs on LP or natural gas
- Sold and maintained by Agralite
- Briggs & Stratton - The Power Experts™



Call us at (320) 843-4150

## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$20 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.4 billion in 2021 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



## Unclaimed Capital Credits

Your Board of Directors authorized the return of approximately \$1.3 million dollars in capital credits to members who purchased electricity during 1998, 1999, and 2018. 1031001

Agralite is trying to return Capital Credits to former members who are no longer at their last address on file with us. If you know someone who is on this list, please take a moment to let them know or let us know. Past members listed may claim their capital credit refund by contacting our office at 320-843-4150.

This list can also be found on our website at [www.agralite.coop](http://www.agralite.coop). Capital Credits belong to our members and we hope we can return the credits to their owners!

Unsure what to do with capital credit checks received from us or don't want to hassle with them? Donating those funds to Operation Round Up is always an option, where you can help the community that you live in.

## Unclaimed Capital Credit List

Anderson, Allen - Alexandria, MN	Hoberg, Chester - Starbuck, MN	Pederson, Todd - Starbuck, MN
Anderson, Martha - Brooten, MN	Hollen, Lowell - Belgrade, MN	Pugh, Charles - Alexandria, MN
Arneson, Frances - Benson, MN	Hughes, James - Spicer, MN	Rannestad, David - Spicer, MN
Ashburn, David - Hutchinson, MN	Huisenga, Garrie - Chokio, MN	Reigstad, Bros Turkey Farm - Benson, MN
Bednar, William - Benson, MN	Huizenga, Steven - Milbank, SD	Reyes, Thomas - Minneapolis, MN
Behrenbrinker, Kelly - Glenwood, MN	Hyatt, Bessie - Odell, NE	Rheingans, Terry - Ortonville, MN
Berglund, Lorraine - Benson, MN	Iverson, Stanley - Fayetteville, NC	Rieppel, Lee - Cumberland, WI
Bowen, Ivan III - St. Croix Falls, WI	Jeffers, Dave - New London, MN	Rosch, John - Morris, MN
Braaten, Eric - Starbuck, MN	Johnson, Enid - Sioux Falls, SD	Rosin, Greg - Big Lake, MN
Brumm, Thomas - Apple Valley, MN	Johnson, Heidi Arana-Barry - Nashville, TN	Rubendall, Roxy - Sac City, IA
Carlson, Mathew - Burnsville, MN	Jordahl, Gordon - Dawson, MN	Schleip, Elmer - Watertown, MN
Carpenter-Boggs, Lynne - Moscow, ID	Keagle, Joan - Hancock, MN	Schmidt, Kenneth - Ottertail, MN
Carstens, Tom - Grey Eagle, MN	Kellen, Kevin - Dickinson, ND	Schonbohm, Edward - Danvers, MN
Connelly, Patrick - Graceville, MN	Kerekes, Michael - Vacaville, CA	Sellin, Lowell - Ortonville, MN
Donnelly, Brian - Benson, MN	Kinney, Dave - Wagner, SD	Semrau, Leona - Clinton, MN
Egerstrom, Reed - Benson, MN	Knutson, Arloa	Septon, Norman - San Diego, CA
Emmerich, Anthony - Ham Lake, MN	Knutson, Gregg - Saint Paul, MN	Slaughter, Jamie - Benson, MN
Erickson, Jim Jr - Milbank, SD	Koenen, Scott - Montevideo, MN	Sloneker, Robert - Ottertail, MN
Findlay, Shirley - Wheaton, MN	Krikorian, Katherine - Chokio, MN	Steffl, Don - New Ulm, MN
Flaten, Kenneth - Brooklyn Park, MN	Kvam, John - Wayzata, MN	Steltz, Ahlica - Ortonville, MN
Flaten, Melody - Benson, MN	Larson, Merlyn - Montevideo, MN	Stindt, John - Benson, MN
Fuchs, David - Watertown, SD	Lauinger, Robert - Hancock, MN	Svea, Chester - Benson, MN
Fullington, Jerry - Council Bluffs, IA	Leaf, Beverly - Benson, MN	Swanger, Shirley - Council Bluffs, IA
Geer, Dale - New London, MN	Leenerts, Vernon - Ortonville, MN	Thompson, Becky - Morris, MN
Goracke, Melissa - Morris, MN	Liebl, Chad - Raymond, MN	Thompson, Greg - Starbuck, MN
Gray, James - Menahga, MN	Lindquist, L R (Donald) - St Paul Park, MN	Thompson, Richard - Montevideo, MN
Guthmiller, Terry - Bismarck, ND	Lundebrek, Aaron - Benson, MN	Tollefson, Edward - Plymouth, MN
Halverson, Francis - Saint Peter, MN	Marshall, Bruce - Montevideo, MN	Torgerson, Marland - Salt Lake City, UT
Halvorson, Gary - Lambertson, MN	Matthews, Ronald - Bloomington, MN	Traff, Cliff - Captiva, FL
Hamann, Rodney - Holloway, MN	Mattick, Dean - Austin, MN	Volness, Theodore - Appleton, MN
Hammond, Karee - Glenwood, MN	McNally, Mark - Morris, MN	Wagner, Brian - Rockford, MN
Hanson, Caren - Starbuck, MN	Medalen, Kent - New London, MN	Watson, Terry - Montrose, MN
Hegg, Muriel - Eden Prairie, MN	Nelson, Henry - Ortonville, MN	Wick, Leonard - Grove City, MN
Helland, Gloria - Champlin, MN	Norgaard, Carol - Tyler, MN	Wilson, Larry - Pensacola, FL
Hemstad, Martin - Shoreview, MN	Olson, Gerald - Morris, MN	Wilts, Stanley - Appleton, MN
Henkel, Fred - Lambertson, MN	Papiernik, Thomas - Volga, SD	WJS of MN Inc - Morris, MN



## Meet New Agrabite Board President Warren Rau

Congratulations to Agrabite’s newly elected Board President, Warren Rau! Warren has been Agrabite’s District 7 Director since 2010 and Vice President since 2012.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to represent Agrabite and our membership as the Board and staff work to continue the success we have experienced in the past. I am grateful for the outstanding team we have at Agrabite and look forward to representing the coop as we share our concerns over maintaining reliable and affordable electricity for our members in a rapidly changing industry.”



## Agrabite Cooperative 2024 Calendar Photo Contest

### Back By Popular Demand!

Agrabite is seeking local photographs for our 2024 calendar contest. Photos should be of a landscape, natural element, or interesting view from within the Agrabite service territory. We want you to share the diversity and wonder of our local landscape.

Photos must be submitted by Agrabite members. Photos must be submitted by **October 6th, 2023**. Digital photos only. You must specify the subject of the photo and where it was taken. Please include your 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 Agrabite employees. Please limit 5 photo submissions per member - 1 winning photo per member.

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



## Operation Round Up

Giving back to the community we serve is a core cooperative principle. 1541700 The Operation Round Up program from Agrabite Electric Cooperative is a great way for the co-op and its members to give back.

Funds for the Operation Round Up program come from participating Agrabite members who allow their monthly electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the change allocated to a Trust Fund. The average donation is less than 50 cents a month. Since the program’s inception in 1993, Agrabite members have raised and donated more than \$538,000 for local community projects. Agrabite’s Operation Round Up grant applications are reviewed and recipients selected throughout the year by a nine-member volunteer Trust Board.

*You can find more information and applications to apply for funding on our website at: [www.agralite.coop/operation-round](http://www.agralite.coop/operation-round).*



**READY.**

**SET.**

**REGISTER.**

**9/19/2023**

**CO-OPS** **VOTE**



*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).

## 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 July 2023

Newly elected Board Chairman Warren Rau called a meeting of the Board of Directors of Agralite Electric Cooperative to order at 8:50 a.m., July 27, 2023. All members of the Board were present except Director Zierke who joined by Zoom. The agenda, minutes of the last meeting, the monthly disbursements, the payment of capital credits of deceased members, Work Order #546, Work Order #547, and Special Equipment for June were approved.

Jenny Stryhn reported on activities of the Member Services department for the month. She discussed load control for the month. She discussed the ALM project and DER Pre-Application requests for large-scale renewables. She recapped the Annual Meeting that was held June 22nd.

She recapped the MN Twins Youth Baseball Clinic that was held July 1st and showed pictures from the event.

Ralph Martin, Manager of Finance/CFO, discussed margins for the month of June. He discussed FEMA and patronage updates. He brought forth Corporate Authorization Resolutions for new accounts and the Board approved them.

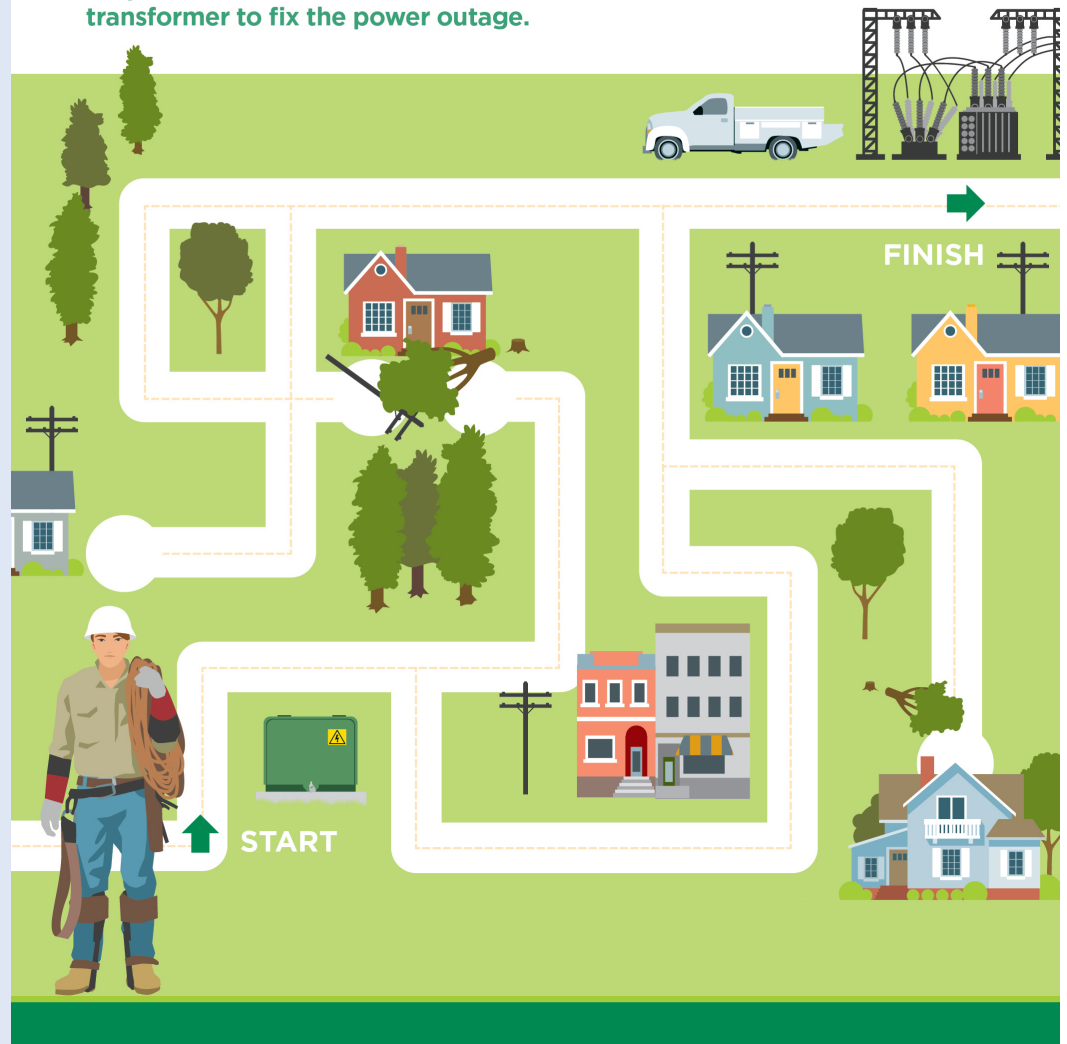
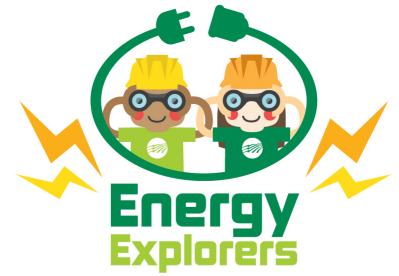
The financials were given by Ralph with a PowerPoint presentation.

Tom Hoffman, Manager of Engineering & Operations, reported on activities of his department for the month. He discussed line crew projects and

## HELP THE LINEWORKER RESTORE POWER

Occasionally, severe weather can cause power disruptions. When outages occur, our lineworkers get to work! They restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

Help the lineworker reach the transformer to fix the power outage.



outages for the month. He discussed and showed pictures from the July 25th storm. He stated that Hunter Mondor, Agralite's new locator, started on July 11th and has been training in. He stated that right-of-way clearing in Stevens County has been completed by Carr's Tree Service.

Tom gave the safety report.

Director Draeger gave an update on her solar storm presentation.

Jenny Stryhn, General Manager/CEO, reviewed her report to the board. She discussed the Annual Meeting, CVEC, and recent meetings she attended. She stated that NRECA dues are increasing by 4.5% in 2024.

Jenny presented a PowerPoint presentation on the updated Power System Engineering 2023 Rate and Cost of Service Study. A discussion was held and it was tabled until the August 2023 Board Meeting.

Director Gronseth will be the voting delegate at the 2023 NRECA Regional Meeting and Director Rau will be the alternate.

Director Zierke will be the voting delegate at the 2023 Basin Annual Meeting and Director Rau will be the alternate.

The August board meeting was set for the 31st.

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